

No cases of XBB variant in Oman

The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced that no cases of coronavirus variant XBB were reported in the Sultanate of Oman despite being widespread in some countries. Dr Said al Abri, Director-General of Disease Surveillance and Control at MoH, said that the ministry is carrying out genetic sequencing tests for coronavirus variants but no cases of XBB variant have been reported while the registration of Omicron cases continued in the Sultanate of Oman. **DETAILS ON P2**



P10

OMAN BEACH PRO TOUR FUTURE ACTION BEGINS IN SUHAR



P15

GCC SET TO POST FIRST FISCAL SURPLUS IN 7 YEARS



P20

THREE OF OMAN'S MOST FASCINATING ISLANDS



MUSCAT

MOC INKED TO STUDY INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) with Vale Company to conduct a feasibility study on developing a comprehensive industrial complex in Oman in line with international priorities of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050. The MoC was signed by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Rogerio Nogueira, Regional Director for Marketing in Vale Company. The agreement aims to achieve strategic goals within the framework of Oman Vision 2040. **DETAILS ON P13**

NEW YORK

US JUDGE BLOCKS PUBLISHING MERGER

A federal judge blocked publishing giant Penguin Random House from acquiring its competitor Simon & Schuster, siding with the US Justice Department which had argued against the mega-merger. The deal, worth \$2.2 billion, had been announced in November 2020 and would have brought together two of the five largest American publishers. US District Court Judge Florence Pan, in her ruling, said the government had convincingly shown that the merger would substantially lessen competition “in the market for the US publishing rights to anticipated top-selling books.” **DETAILS ON P6**

OMAN OBSERVER

FIRST DEDICATED ENGLISH NEWS APP IN OMAN



INSIDE



CROWD SURGE RESPONSE WAS 'INSUFFICIENT'

P6



WHAT HAPPENS NOW IN LEBANON?

P9

Call for building common economic bloc

ALGIERS: The 31st ordinary session of the Arab League Summit opened on Tuesday at Abdellatif Rahal International Press Centre, in Algiers, with the participation of Arab leaders, heads of State and governments.

Opening the summit, Algerian President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, head of the current session of the Arab Summit, stresses that the summit is being held under extremely complex regional and international circumstances.

The Algerian president called for building an Arab economic bloc that preserves common interests so that the Arab countries will be an economic power in the international community.

On Palestinian cause, he called for adhering to the Arab peace initiative, as it is the only way to achieve a just peace for the



HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said at the Arab League Summit. – ONA

Palestinian cause, and to hold a session of the United Nations General Assembly to grant Palestine full membership in the United Nations.

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the

Sultan, is heading the Sultanate of Oman's delegation at the 31st Arab Summit.

HH Sayyid Asaad is accompanied by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, Abdullah bin Nasser al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the Arab League, Saif bin Nasir al Badai, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Algeria, and the two advisers at the Office of HH Sayyid Asaad.

President Abdelmadjid

Tebboune also referred to the need to expedite the implementation of comprehensive reforms for the tools of joint Arab action, and calls on Libyans, Syrians and Yemenis for dialogue in order to reach consensual solutions to their internal issues.

The summit aims to reach agreements on several challenges facing the region, including the situations in Libya, Yemen, Syria and Palestine, according to the Algerian news agency APS.

Arab League Secretary-General Ahmed Aboul Gheit hoped that the gathering would “revitalise joint Arab action.”

The Secretary-General pointed out that the changes the world is witnessing have been unprecedented for decades, which makes the current Arab Summit a necessity for arranging papers and Arab positions. — **Agencies**



The Royal Guard of Oman (RGO) on Tuesday celebrated its annual day, which falls on November 1 every year, under the auspices of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth. The ceremony, which was held at the parade field of the RGO Command, included the passing out of the limited service officers and new recruits. It also included diverse programmes that depict the development and modernisation in the RGO under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. **DETAILS ON P2**

Majlis Ash'shura session set to begin on Sunday

MUSCAT: Following the orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Majlis Ash'shura will open sessions of its Annual Sitting (2022-2023) for the 9th Term (2022-2023) on November 6, in application of Article (38) of Oman Council Law.

Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi, Secretary-General of the Majlis Ash'shura, said in a statement that the Majlis is set to discuss the plans of its permanent committee: the legislative and legal committee, the economic and financial committee, the health and environment committee, the education, higher education and research committee, the services and social development committee, the youth and human resources committee, the food security committee and the media and culture committee.

The session will discuss ministerial statements of the last annual convening, the economic and financial committee's report on the mining sector, the establishment of an Omani investment centre and the government's plan to deal with revenues accrued from the difference in the estimated budget price global oil prices.

The meeting will discuss title deeds for housing and residential and agricultural land plots and the expansion of powers of branches of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning in governorates, said Al Nadabi. He said that the session will also touch on the draft State Budget for the year 2023, which was forwarded by the government to the council and is being studied by the economic and financial committee. — **ONA**

Blue whales eat 10 million pieces of microplastic a day

PARIS: Blue whales consume up to 10 million pieces of microplastic every day, research estimated on Tuesday, suggesting that the omnipresent pollution poses a bigger danger to the world's largest animal than previously thought.

The tiny fragments of plastic have been found everywhere from the deepest oceans to the highest mountains, and even inside human organs and blood. Now a modelling study published in the

journal Nature Communications has estimated how much is being ingested by whales.

A US-led research team put tags on 191 blue, fin and humpback whales that live off the coast of California to observe their movements.

“It's basically like an Apple Watch, just on the back of a whale,” said Shirel Kahane-Rapport, a researcher at California State University, Fullerton, and the study's first author.



The whales mostly fed at depths of between 50 to 250 metres, which is home to the “greatest concentration of microplastics in the water column,” Kahane-Rapport said.

The researchers then estimated the size and number of mouthfuls the whales had daily and what was filtered out, modelling three different scenarios. Under the most likely scenario, the blue whales ate up to 10 million microplastic pieces a day. — **AFP**



Royal Guard of Oman’s annual day celebrated



MUSCAT: The Royal Guard of Oman (RGO) on Tuesday celebrated its annual day, which falls on November 1 every year, under the auspices of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth.

The ceremony, which was held at the parade field of the RGO Command, included the passing out parade of the limited service officers and new recruits. It also included diverse programmes that depict the

development and modernisation in the RGO under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. HH Sayyid Theyazin then presented some RGO personnel

with the special service medal in recognition of their faithfulness in serving the country. After that, the graduates chanted the RGO anthem accompanied with a parachute performance by the RGO free jumping team and

proclaimed thrice Long Live His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander. The event was attended by some members of the Royal Family, ministers, chairmen of the State Council and Majlis

Ash’shura, commanders of the Sultan’s Armed Forces and other military and security units and some members of the State Council and Majlis Ash’shura, as well as senior military and civil officials. — ONA

NEW BATCH JOINS ROP



MUSCAT: A new batch of GED holders joined the Royal Oman Police (ROP) as part of its efforts to recruit citizens in coordination with the Ministry of Labour. The new police recruits will undergo an integrated training programme at the Institute of Police Recruits at the Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences that enables them to carry out their police duties. In addition to the military training, the programme also includes academic studies and practice.

No cases of XBB reported in Oman

OHOOO AL JAILANIYAH
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced that no cases of coronavirus variant XBB were reported in the Sultanate of Oman despite being widespread in some countries. Dr Said al Abri, Director-General of Disease Surveillance and Control at MoH, said that the ministry is carrying out genetic sequencing tests for coronavirus

variants but no cases of XBB variant have been reported while the registration of Omicron cases continued in the Sultanate of Oman. He affirmed that the vaccines for Covid-19 and seasonal influenza are available at the health institutions. Dr Al Abri called for commitment to the precautionary measures to avoid infection with the Covid-19 and the seasonal flu by wearing a face mask and avoid mingling with people in public

places in the case of respiratory infection. He confirmed that the seasonal influenza vaccine is available for the people at high risk of disease and those aged 50 years and above as well as the unvaccinated and people who have not completed Covid-19 doses. He advised all to be cautious against the relatively harmless seasonal flu viruses nowadays spreading fast due to changes in temperatures.

MoHT launches campaign to attract football fans

VINOD NAIR
VINOT_NAIR

As part of the Sultanate of Oman’s programme for the Fifa World Cup 2022, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) has launched the #HalfTimeForOman competition on social media platforms to win free holidays in the Sultanate of Oman, through the national travel operator platform — visitoman.om, in partnership with Oman Air.

Aimed at getting inbound tourists to the Sultanate, the competition will be held during the break between the halves of all matches of the Qatar 2022 World Cup. It targets fans from outside the country and gives them the opportunity to explore unique experiences, heritage and tourism sites. The upcoming Qatar 2022 Fifa World Cup is expected to boost the GCC tourism sector in the short term, according to experts at a webinar attended by Oman Observer on Tuesday. A recent Fitch Solutions report said, “While Qatar will be the



Aimed at getting inbound tourists to the Sultanate, the competition will be held during the break between the halves of all matches of the Qatar 2022 World Cup.

main beneficiary as host of the World Cup, the event’s impact will spill over to neighbouring countries as Qatar alone is unable to accommodate all visitors associated with the tournament. Forecasts suggest that growth in tourist arrivals to all GCC countries will accelerate in 2022,

with Oman and Saudi Arabia’s growth rates reaching triple digits to even around 150 per cent. “We expect the influx of tourists will provide a boost to the accommodation, retail, restaurant and recreation sectors across the GCC states, supporting overall economic activity in 2022.”



Mwasalat bags UK accreditation for defensive driving

MUSCAT: Mwasalat Training Institute of Oman received the International Accreditation Certificate from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents in the United Kingdom (UK) for the institute's training programme on second-level defensive driving.

The certification highlights Mwasalat Training Institute's commitment to the highest global quality standards in all its training programmes.

The institute pursues a strategic plan to provide world-class specialised training courses and programmes in the public transport sector, thereby consolidating its position as an accredited regional centre in this field.

The institute also exports extensive efforts to develop the skills of transport and logistics service providers and update their knowledge to ensure the operation of safe and reliable transport systems.

Badr bin Mohammed al Nadabi, CEO of Mwasalat, said that the company provides 26 training programmes for operators of the public transport sector and that it continues to supply the transport and logistics sector with skilled human resources.

— ONA

Oman Customs seeks broader regional ties to help pvt sector

KABEER YOUSUF
@KABERYOUSEF

Oman Customs is seeking ways for enhanced regional cooperation to provide better services to the private sector. It is working to ensure ease of doing transactions in the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking to the Observer on the sidelines of the first Customs Investment Forum under the auspices of Brigadier General Saeed bin Khamis al Ghaithi, Director-General of Customs, at the Customs Headquarters on Tuesday, Saif bin Hilal al Maawali (pictured), Director of Customs Cooperation, said the department helps business people carry out their transactions smoothly and safely.

"We are seeking ways for increased regional cooperation in the GCC as well as the Middle East in a broader sense in order to help people carry out their transactions faster and safer. Cooperation can bring benefits to both parties," he said.

The Sultanate of Oman has a bilateral FTA with the US, a multilateral FTA with Singapore, and talks are on for similar trade links with the UK, China, Pakistan, South Korea and Australia.

"We have made importing goods via the Sultanate of Oman's borders easy through air, land and sea borders via Bayan. Besides, we have implemented unified



procedures for all import-export trade and it is fully automated by the system, ensuring transparency and justice."

He further said that such a forum was organised to listen to the private sector companies about their concerns, issues and other challenges in their transactions with regional as well as global stakeholders.

"We are here to listen to the tradesmen, importers and exporters about their barriers and challenges in conducting their business in the country. We facilitate trade and commerce, enhance economy besides inspection and customs duty," Al Maawali said, adding that the customers can always turn to Bayan to know about anything, even before exporting or importing their goods, from



Saif Hilal al Mawali

Bayan, which makes doing business easy.

"Trusted tradesmen, and those who maintain their track record clean, are given consideration and procedures are made easier so that things can be easier for them," he said.

He further reassured that the private companies in the Sultanate of Oman could look forward

to receiving more support and better facilities, and they should come forward if they require any support from the Customs.

"Oman is positioned in a strategic location and can be a hub for trade, distribution, export and re-export and all the private sector companies should make use of these advantages and grow steadily," he said.

Besides the General Administration of Customs, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the General Administration of Passports and Civil Status were part of the Customs Investment Forum which was organised by the Royal Oman Police represented by the General Administration of Customs.

Salalah Airport receives first PIA flight from Sialkot

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 1

Salalah Airport received the first Pakistan International Airlines flight on Monday, the Oman Airports company said in a statement.

The airline will operate one weekly flight every Monday between Salalah Airport and Pakistan's Sialkot Airport.

Arriving at Salalah Airport, the inaugural Pakistan International Airlines flight was welcomed with a traditional water salute by Oman Airports.

These latest Pakistan International Airlines flights are set to further enhance the presence of Salalah Airport on the international aviation map while facilitating easier travel for the Pakistani community residing in Salalah and the Dhofar Governorate.

The flights will also assist in promoting tourism in the governorate by providing the opportunity for the direct arrival of Pakistani travellers into Salalah – without the need to stop over in Oman's capital Muscat before reaching their final destination. Salim bin Awad al Yafei, Executive Vice-President of Salalah Airport, welcomed the return of Pakistan International Airlines flights from Sialkot International Airport to Salalah Airport.

Speaking about the new schedule, he emphasised that these direct flights between Salalah Airport and other airports provide a great convenience for travellers as there is no requirement to stop in transit. "Salalah Airport recently began welcoming a growth in the number of direct international flights, which contributes to enhancing tourism and economic activity both in the Dhofar Governorate and in the destination countries that these airlines fly to."

Health workers feted for serving community despite odds

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Directorate-General of Health Services, Governorate of Muscat, honoured sever health workers at an event at Al Bustan Palace Hotel on Monday.

Sayyid Saud bin Hilal al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, presided over the event, while Ministry of Health (MoH) under-secretaries, Health Director-General of Muscat



and many other officials took part in it.

The event marked the

recognition of the efforts and sacrifices of the health workers in various circumstances, including



national calamities, Covid-19 pandemic, immunisation campaigns, and Aedes mosquito

control.

The ceremony was held to motivate health personnel to continue their hard work in line with the healthcare services for the community.

The event also presented the significant achievements of the DGHS in Muscat Governorate and honoured distinguished guests, walis of the governorates as well workers at the DGHS in Muscat and its affiliated health institutions.

Officials review Muttrah Tourist trail project

VINOD NAIR
@VINOT_NAIR

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Humaidi, Chairman of Muscat Municipality, on Tuesday, reviewed the Muttrah Tourist Trail project, which was presented through virtual reality technology.

In the presence of Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Tourism, officials reviewed the tourist trail of the Wilayat of Muttrah using the Metaverse and Scanner Camera technologies to simulate reality.

It will help the visitors to have an idea of the most prominent tourist attractions and landmarks



in Muttrah before visiting it on the ground when it is completed.

Muscat Municipality has begun the implementation stages of the works of the Muttrah Tourist Trail Path Project to promote tourism in the Sultanate of Oman.

The project will improve the efficiency of various services in the Wilayat, including the sewage

system, drainage, broadband, parking, road network, traffic flow, and civil defence services.

The project will preserve the city's cultural identity, preserve the historical position of Muttrah Souq, restore historical buildings and study the possibility of turning some historical sites and castles into tourist attractions.

Value of fish output tops RO 226 mn

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's fish production by the end of July 2022 reached 400,115 tonnes, comprising a decline by 21.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2021 when it stood at 510,020 tonnes, according to the latest data issued by NCSI.

The total value of fish production increased by 2.2 per cent to reach RO 226,465 million compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

Artisanal fishing, which constitutes the largest share of Oman's fish production, recorded a drop by 23.3 per cent to reach 375,992 tonnes by the end of July 2022 compared to 489,945 tonnes during the same period in 2021.

Al Wusta topped highest fish landing through artisanal fishing at 137,382 tonnes, comprising a decline by 33.1 per cent by the end of July 2022 compared to the corresponding period in 2021.

South Al Sharqiyah came second with production reaching 116,178 tonnes, constituting



Artisanal fishing, which constitutes the largest share of Oman's fish production, recorded a drop by 23.3 per cent

a drop by 25.3 per cent. It was followed by the Governorate of South Al Batinah and North Al Batinah with a production that stood at 40,821 tonnes, comprising a fall by 1.6 per cent.

Fish production through artisanal fishing in Muscat recorded a surge by 21.6 per cent by the end of July 2022 as production stood at 19,578 tonnes compared to 16,099

tonnes during the same period in 2021.

Commercial fishing and coastal fishing recorded a growth by 21.8 per cent and 8.7 per cent respectively. Small pelagic fishes constituted the largest share of artisanal fishing by the end of July 2022 as it stood at 193,982 tonnes, comprising a drop by 32.8 per cent compared to the same period in 2021.

— ONA



International photography competition to highlight beauty of Oman begins; Feb 28 deadline



The competition aims to highlight the beauty the Sultanate of Oman enjoys.

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 1

Oman Airports has announced the launch of a photography competition, titled “Oman through International Eyes 2022,” in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and sponsored by Oman Air and the Omran Group, coinciding with the Sultanate of Oman’s hosting of the Seventh International Forum for Photography “FIAP”.

The competition aims to highlight the beauty the Sultanate of Oman enjoys. The winning entries will be displayed in Muscat International Airport, Salalah

Airport and Duqm Airport as part of Oman Airports’ aims to promote Oman’s richness in nature, various terrains, ancient civilisation, along with wildlife and marine life.

“Photography is the only language that can be understood anywhere in the world.” What a more beautiful way to show the beauty of Oman than photos? In this contest, participants are requested to highlight the beauty and the opportunities of Oman through photographs. Reflecting the extraordinary landscapes, the amazing culture, the rich wildlife, or even simple details of unforgettable moments in

Oman. Creativity in content should encourage people to have a moment of silence in the busy airports to think of visiting Oman and will encourage people who have already been to Oman to come here again.

ENTRIES OPEN

Entries, which are open to all, must be original and each photographer may submit a maximum of three photos. All entries must include location details.

Basic editing, including colour enhancement, the use of filters and cropping of the photos is acceptable, provided any such editing does not affect the

authenticity and/or genuineness of the photos.

The photos must be landscape in size. Monochrome photos are excluded in this competition.

Entries must also be in JPEG format and must be 150 dpi in quality.

The deadline for submissions is February 28. There are no fees for participation. The participant must be over 18 years of age. Photos should not include faces of celebrities, influencers or any popular people.

Photos should not include any type of commercial branding.

For details visit www.psocontest.com

Sultan Qaboos Award winners to be announced on November 9

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science (SQHCC) will announce the names of winners of the 9th edition of Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature. Habib bin Mohammed al Riyami, SQHCC Chairman, will hold a press conference to unveil the names of winners.

The current edition has been dedicated to Omani contestants researching Omani heritage (culture) and theatrical

performance teams (arts), and essay writers (arts). The award was established by the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said in 2011 to honour Omani and Arab intellectuals, culture specialists, artists and literati for their contribution to the revival of thought.

The award gives tribute to all contributors to human civilisation. It is an annual competition which is made exclusive once to Omanis and open the next year for all Arabs.

Community training programmes in UTAS announced

QASIM AL MASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

As a mark of institution’s engagement with the community, University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Salalah has launched Community Training Programmes for the Academic Year of 2022-2023.

The programme started on October 25, 2022. “UTAS-Salalah seeks to strengthen its relationship and engagement with the society, community, industry and other external stakeholders and contribute to their advancement through the provision of training programmes and courses in the fields of information technology, engineering, administration, management, education and social studies,” said a source related with the programme.

The programmes are open to the public. They aim to contribute to the development of the members of the community and to reach a wider audience. These courses and programmes are available in

online mode.

Since the inception of the UTAS-Salalah’s Community Training Programmes in March 2021, the university has conducted 87 training programmes and general courses to the public and a total of 2,300 registrations made from the public and other stakeholders.

Commenting on the programme, Dr Mohammed bin Rashid al Maamari, Dean, said, “As a higher education institution, we at UTAS-Salalah have a commitment to be a responsible and ethical participant in the local and national community. We will continue to be an engaged institution which believes in strengthening our community roles and social responsibilities beyond our core objectives and vision.”

To view and register for the Community Training Programmes, interested people can visit www.sct.edu.om/cts/public or the university’s social media accounts for announcements at [utas_salalah](https://www.instagram.com/utas_salalah) (Instagram) or [utas_sll](https://twitter.com/utas_sll) (twitter).

Project to take stock of trees begins in Al Dakhiliyah

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, NOV. 1

Coinciding with the celebration of Omani Tree Day, the Environment Authority in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate started implementing the third phase of the project to take stock and document the perennial wild trees in the governorate.

This phase of the project includes installing metal plates on some of the perennial wild trees in the wilayats of Nizwa, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and Manah.

The project’s main aim is to educate the community and visitors to the Sultanate of Oman on these trees’ environmental, economic and social importance. The project also aims to spread the culture of planting local trees while preserving the existing ones and warning against encroachment on them. It also aims to identify the perennial trees in the governorate and their geographical distribution by putting GIS tags with details of the circumference of the trunk, height and general status of the tree.

Perennial wild trees are an essential source of seeds for several local species, which are included in the national initiative to plant 10 million trees. In addition to its benefits like absorbing carbon dioxide, trapping dust, it provides food and shelter for many organisms. The project will also promote ways of acquiring knowledge using modern technical means.

The Environment Authority in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate started implementing this project in April and plans to complete the documentation of perennial wild trees in the rest of the governorate’s wilayats soon.

As part of the Omani Tree Day event and within the national initiative to plant ten million trees, the administration, in cooperation with the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates “Madayn Oman,” planted 600 seedlings in the industrial city of Nizwa. They planted Ghaf, Sidr, Samar, and some ornamental trees. The initiative aims to preserve the environment and its natural resources.





TRA kicks off awareness drive

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) launched an awareness campaign via social media, entitled #YourRightYouKnow, which aims to protect the rights of telecom service users, by making them aware of their rights and obligations towards telecom service providers.

The telecommunication service providers also interacted during the launch by publishing a number of awareness messages via the hashtag #YourRightYouKnow, on the steps to file complaints that the beneficiary must follow. The campaign targets all segments of society, including citizens and residents.

The campaign will include a set of awareness messages on



several topics of interest to the beneficiary, including those identified by the Regulations on the Rights of Users of Telecommunications Services, such as international roaming, billing, advertising messages, beneficiaries' grievances and

children's rights, in addition to other issues such as fraud.

It is noteworthy that the TRA issued a list of beneficiaries' rights last September, which included 11 chapters divided into 75 articles, concerned with regulating the relationship

between beneficiaries and telecommunications companies or their licensees, with the rights and obligations arising from them. These efforts stem from the authority's strategy and responsibility towards taking care of the interests of beneficiaries and promoting the use of telecommunication services.

Communication with the authority is through their official channels, either by calling the number 1000 or the WhatsApp number 24222222 or through the authority's website. It is important to record the complaint number and to know its registration number, as well as to know the time required to resolve the complaint from the call centre. It is worth noting that keeping documents is one of the most important reasons for the complainant to ensure his right.

Seminar highlights investment opportunities

TOKYO: The Sultanate of Oman's Embassy in Tokyo organised a seminar on financial stability and investment opportunities in Oman.

The event was attended by representatives of various Japanese companies and financial institutions.

Dr Mohammed bin Said al Busaidi, Ambassador of Oman to Japan, gave a statement during the seminar in which he called upon



Japanese companies to explore the business atmosphere in Oman and utilise the available investment opportunities, especially in the field of green

hydrogen.

The seminar included several presentations that cover a spectrum of topics, namely financial stability and economic

recovery which has a positive effect on Oman's credit rating projections by international establishments.

The presentations also touched on investment opportunities in the green hydrogen sector and Oman's plan to achieve net zero carbon emission by 2050.

The Hydrogen Forum, due to be held in Muscat from December 5 to 7, was among the topics discussed during the seminar. — ONA



Sultan Qaboos University

RE TENDERS NOTICE

The Investment & Revenue Department at Sultan Qaboos University would like to invite companies to submit their quotations for:

S/N	Type of Business	Location	Date of Site Visit	Class	Tender #
1	Rent and operate a traditional meal restaurant	In Shop No. (8) in the Commercial Center	7/11/2022 9 am	All classes	SQU.IRD. 12/22
2	Construction & rental & operation Commercial building (coffee shop or restaurant/ minimart) With drive through	On the plot opposite the building of the Projects & Maintenance Department	8/11/2022 9 am	All classes	SQU.IRD. 13/22
3	Rent and operate ATM machine	Student Services Center	7/11/2022 10 am	All classes	SQU.IRD. 14/22
4	Renting and operating a restaurant	Faculty club Staff club	9/11/2022 10 am 11 am	All classes	SQU.IRD. 15/22
5	Rental and operate a bank branch	Student Services Center	7/11/2022 11 am	All classes	SQU.IRD. 16/22
6	Rental and operate a corner for coffee shop	Student Services Center	7/11/2022 12 pm	All classes	SQU.IRD. 17/22

- The priority will be for the Small and Medium Establishments (SME), which fulfils the quality requirements.
- Tenderers who wish to participate in this Tender may collect Tender Documents from The Section of Revenue and Expenditures at the Investment & Revenue Department, Sultan Qaboos University, during the working hours for an amount of OR.25 for each tender document (non-refundable). The last date for Collecting the Document is 24/11/2022.
- The Site Visit for the selected shop is necessary. It will be on the above-mentioned date and the assembly point will be at the Investment & Revenue Department.
- The last date for submission of the quotations: 6/12/2022. The quotations should be submitted in a sealed envelope addressed to the Director of The Investment & Revenue Department, located on the first floor of the commercial building at Sultan Qaboos University and deposited in the Tender Box kept in the Department, before 11:00 a.m.
- The exterior of the envelope should be marked with the name and number of the Tender being presented and should bear no identification or mark of the Tenderer.
- The Tenderer should submit (enclose) with his tender a Bank Guarantee Document for sum of 1% of the total Duration of contract rental value quoted by the Tenderer and valid for 120 (one hundred twenty) days from the date specified for submission of Tender. Tenders submitted after the deadline or without a Bank Guarantee will be excluded.
- The Tenderer should prepare the Site in accordance with the health requirements of Muscat Municipality and the requirements of civil defense in cooperation with the concerned authorities.
- Sultan Qaboos University reserves the right to reject any quotation not fulfilling the requirements and does not bid itself to accept the highest rent or any other quotations.

The Investment & Revenue Department
PO BOX 50, P.C. 123, ALKHOD, SULTANATE OF OMAN
Tel: 24142691 - 24142682- 24142685 - 24142684
E- mail: investment@squ.edu.om



GCC programming competition to discover, develop talents

MUSCAT: The 10th GCC Programming Competition was launched at the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) on Tuesday.

Around 150 students from 28 GCC colleges and universities are taking part in the competition as part of a two-day event code-named "National Initiative for Promoting Digital Competencies".

Organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, in cooperation with the SQU, Omantel and Specialised Programming Academy, the competition seeks to discover and develop talents in the field of programming and logical virtual thinking used as tools for troubleshooting and algorithm design within the context of the 4IR techniques.

The participants are put in 49 teams—29 of them from Oman, 9 from Saudi Arabia, 3 from Kuwait and 8 from the United Arab Emirates. — ONA



الشركة المتحدة للتمويل ش.م.ع.ع

United Finance Company SAOG

Board of Directors' Report for the period ended 30th September 2022

Report on material events covering the interim financials

Overview and Future Outlook
The three quarters of 2022 has been a very positive for Oman and there is much to look forward to. S&P has upgraded Oman's credit ratings to BB- from B+ with a stable outlook. The various initiatives taken by the government to curb spending and reduce the budget deficit have been successful. The high oil prices have helped, and so has the clear direction given by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al-Said that the surpluses from the oil prices will be used to reduce the country's debt, rather than any additional spending. This has buoyed both the Omani government bonds as well as the stock markets. Public debt to GDP ratio is expected to reduce from 63% in 2021 to less than 48% by the end of 2022, and real GDP is expected to grow by 4.4% in 2022.

This is excellent news for the economy and especially for the banks and finance companies. As the effects of the pandemic wind down, business activity has picked up and there is an air of positivity and hopefulness for the year ahead.

Performance highlights
United Finance Company SAOG has earned Installment Finance Income of RO 5.56 million for the period ended September 2022 compared to RO 5.16 million for the same period in the previous year. The Company recorded a net profit of RO 1.05M as against RO 601K for the corresponding period last year. The Net Debtors portfolio stood at RO 85.4 million as at 30th September 2022 as against RO 78.5 million in September 2021. We expect the increase in loan portfolio will continue in Q4 2022 as well. We are also being careful on who we lend to, and our capital adequacy ratio is in excess of 50%.

Provisioning position
The company has provided RO 563,861 as provision during first three quarters of 2022 taking the total provisions of the company to over RO 18.94 million, and we continue to maintain one of the highest provisions against non-performing loans amongst FLCs. In addition, the Company also maintains a special reserve of RO 2.37 million to guard against unforeseen delinquencies.

Funding
The company has adequate funds to meet its current business requirements. Market liquidity has improved and Banks continue to support us to meet our business requirements.

Acknowledgement
We thank His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, His Government, Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority and other regulatory authorities for their support and guidance during the quarter. We also thank our bankers, dealers and customers for their continued trust, confidence and support. We also extend our thanks to the management and staff of the company for their continued commitments and hard work.

Mohamed Abdulla Mohamed Al Khonji
Chairman

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

	2022 RO	2021 RO
ASSETS		
Property and equipment	2,293,076	2,342,217
Deferred tax asset	16,923	16,923
Deposit with the Central Bank of Oman	250,000	250,000
Investment securities	554,150	554,150
Installment finance debtors	85,406,360	78,508,771
Other receivables and prepaid expenses	253,972	247,267
Cash and cash equivalents	402,151	365,038
TOTAL ASSETS	89,176,632	82,284,366
EQUITY		
Share capital	34,914,441	34,914,441
Share premium reserve	528,402	528,402
Legal reserve	5,197,136	4,960,572
Special reserve	2,368,989	2,368,989
Foreign currency reserve	-	294,514
Impairment reserve	1,911,736	1,911,736
Retained earnings	2,411,213	1,035,061
Total equity	47,331,917	46,013,715
Liabilities		
Borrowings	33,818,056	27,508,342
Corporate deposits	3,350,000	4,000,000
Creditors and other payables	4,478,412	4,654,405
Taxation	198,247	107,904
Total liabilities	41,844,715	36,270,651
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	89,176,632	82,284,366
NET ASSETS PER SHARE	0.135	0.132

STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

	2022 RO	2021 RO
Instalment finance income	5,557,986	5,164,293
Interest expense	(1,284,577)	(1,520,194)
Net instalment finance income	4,273,409	3,644,099
Other income	419,508	309,297
Operating expenses	(2,823,107)	(2,156,591)
Depreciation	(66,860)	(71,728)
Allowance for expected credit losses	(563,861)	(972,518)
Profit before tax	1,239,089	752,559
Income tax expense	(185,863)	(151,227)
PROFIT AND TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD	1,053,226	601,332
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.003	0.0002

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of such request addressed to:
Chief Executive Officer, United Finance Co. SAOG
P O Box 3652, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24577300 Fax 24561557
E-mail: ufc@ufcoman.com, Website: www.ufcoman.com



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (42/2022)

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/22/112	2022/MM/ QS-55 (Re Call)	Annual Contract for Maintenance of Cables in Muscat Governorate (Re Call) (E-Tender)	25	21/11/2022	11/12/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/149	2022/MM/ QS-79	RFP for Procuring the Licenses of the Oracle Database Security Components (E-Tender)	25	21/11/2022	11/12/2022	Excellent & First
PRE/22/151	2022/MM/ QS-80	Consultancy Services for Supervision of Dualization of University Street (E-Tender)	25	21/11/2022	11/12/2022	First
PRE/22/152	2022/MM/ QS-81	Construction of Proposed Solution to Resolve Storm Water Problems in Hail North Wilayat AL Seeb (E-Tender)	25	21/11/2022	11/12/2022	First
PRE/22/153	2022/MM/ QS-82	Supply of Light Vehicles (E-Tender)	25	21/11/2022	11/12/2022	Specialist

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).

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.



Police admit crowd surge response was ‘insufficient’

SEOUL: South Korean police admitted on Tuesday their emergency response to a deadly Halloween crush had been “insufficient”, with top officials saying crowd management failures had likely contributed to the disaster.

At least 156 mostly young people were killed, and scores more injured, in a deadly crowd surge at the first post-pandemic Halloween party in Seoul’s popular Itaewon nightlife district.

An estimated 100,000 people had flocked to the area, but because it was not an “official” event with a designated organiser, neither the police nor local authorities were actively managing the crowd.

“There were multiple reports to the police indicating the seriousness at the site just before the accident occurred,” national police chief Yoon Hee-Keun said.

Police knew “a large crowd had gathered even before the accident occurred, urgently indicating the danger,” he said, acknowledging

the way this information was handled had been “insufficient”.

Transcripts of emergency calls reported by South Korean news agency News1 documented how desperate members of the public had flagged dangerous overcrowding hours before disaster struck at around 10:00 pm local time (13:00 GMT) on Saturday.

At 8:09 pm one caller told police: “There are too many people here being pushed, trampled, hurt. It’s chaotic. You need to control this.” Seoul’s interior minister, who had been criticised for earlier comments in which he claimed deploying more police would not have prevented the crush, apologised on Tuesday for the disaster.

Lee Sang-min expressed his “sincere apologies to the public as the minister in charge of the people’s safety for this accident”, before bowing his head before lawmakers and cameras.

He promised to investigate what had caused the crowd crush and to



People mourn at a group memorial for the victims of the crowd crush that happened during Halloween festivities, at Seoul City Hall Plaza in Seoul, South Korea, on Tuesday. – Reuters

ensure a disaster of this scale could never happen again. Seoul Mayor Oh Se-Hoon also made a public apology, weeping as he said he felt “infinitely responsible for this accident”.

Prime Minister Han Duck-Soo said on Tuesday that a lack of a proper crowd management system

South Korean President said the country needs to urgently improve its system for managing large crowds

may have caused the incident, adding that a full review was ongoing.

South Korea is typically strong on crowd control, with protest rallies often so heavily policed that officers can outnumber participants. But police deployed only 137 officers to Itaewon for Halloween, while 6,500 officers were present at a protest across town attended by about 25,000 people, local reports said.

South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol said on Tuesday the country needed to urgently improve its system for managing large crowds in the wake of the disaster. — AFP

US judge blocks Penguin Random House-Simon & Schuster merger

NEW YORK: A federal judge on Monday blocked publishing giant Penguin Random House from acquiring its competitor Simon & Schuster, siding with the US Justice Department which had argued against the mega-merger.

The deal, worth \$2.2 billion, had been announced in November 2020 and would have brought together two of the five largest American publishers.

US District Court Judge Florence Pan, in her ruling, said the government had convincingly shown that the merger would substantially lessen competition “in the market for the US publishing rights to anticipated top-selling books.”

Pan said her full reasoning for the decision would be issued under seal, as it relied on confidential business information.

The Justice Department hailed the decision, which comes only a week before crucial midterm elections in which Democratic President Joe Biden has tried to paint his party as defending consumers’ interests.

The Justice Department under Biden has been more aggressive than his predecessors in attempting to block mergers, with mixed success so far.

“Today’s decision protects



The ‘Big Five’ publishing companies are Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, HarperCollins, Hachette Book Group USA and Macmillan Publishers. – AFP file photo

vital competition for books and is a victory for authors, readers, and the free exchange of ideas,” said Assistant Attorney General Jonathan Kanter in a statement.

With 10,000 employees worldwide and nearly 15,000 books published per year, Penguin Random House — a subsidiary of the German Bertelsmann Group — dominates the industry in the United States.

Simon & Schuster, owned by Paramount, is the fourth largest of America’s “Big Five” publishing companies, which

also include HarperCollins, Hachette Book Group USA and Macmillan Publishers.

Big-name writers on the roster at Simon & Schuster include Stephen King and Doris Kearns Goodwin, while Barack and Michelle Obama and John Grisham have books published by Penguin Random House.

It is also preparing to release Prince Harry’s memoir, in early 2023. Penguin Random House said it strongly disagreed with the judge’s ruling and announced it will request an expedited appeal.

“We believe this merger will be pro-competitive, and we will continue to work closely with Paramount and Simon & Schuster on next steps,” it said in a statement.

But best-selling author King praised Pan’s decision, in a statement going against his own publisher.

“I am delighted that Judge Florence Pan has blocked the merger of Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster,” the “King of Horror” said in a tweet. — Reuters

Indian PM visits site of deadly bridge collapse

MORBI: Divers searched for more bodies on Tuesday after the collapse of a newly renovated pedestrian bridge killed 134 people in western India, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the disaster site.

Questions also grew about the possible cause of the catastrophe at Morbi, in Modi’s home state of Gujarat, on Sunday. Nine people have been arrested on homicide charges over the collapse of the 150-year-old structure.

The suspension bridge was packed with people celebrating the final day of the Diwali holidays.

Forty-seven children were among those killed. Horrific CCTV footage showed the rickety structure, a popular tourist spot, loaded with people and then suddenly giving way as cables snapped.

Several hundred fell into the river while others clung desperately to the twisted remains of the bridge, screaming in the dark for help. “I heard screams and a loud thud and then there was silence. Then slowly cries and screams,” survivor Madhvi Ben, 30, said.

Ben said one of her legs was tangled in “a steel rope”, leaving her almost entirely submerged before she managed to break free and be rescued.

Morbi businessman Rafiq



Prime Minister Narendra Modi visits the site of a suspension bridge collapse in Morbi town in the state of Gujarat on Tuesday. – AFP

Gaffar, whose two nephews aged 12 and 21 died, described the scene as “mayhem”.

“People were crying and wailing. It was a scene from doomsday,” said Gaffar, 45.

“There were bodies floating on the water everywhere and people trapped on the bridge who were frantically calling for help.”

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday joined other world leaders in sending his “deep condolences”. There were no further reports of missing people on Tuesday. — AFP

MANILA Floods, landslides affect over 2.4m in Philippines

Floods and landslides triggered by a tropical storm have killed 132 people in the Philippines, with a total of more than 2.4 million people affected, disaster agencies said on Tuesday.

Thirty-four people were still missing while over 100 were injured, the national disaster agency said.

Sixty-one of the dead were from the southern province of Maguindanao, where over 100 houses were swept away by floods or buried in landslides.



Seventeen people were still missing in Maguindanao, according to the provincial disaster agency. But authorities said it was less likely for survivors to be found at this point.

FRANKFURT Germany’s Scholz set for high-stakes China visit

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz makes a high-stakes trip to China this week, walking a tightrope between shoring up a key economic relationship and facing heightened concerns about over-reliance on Beijing.

Scholz, accompanied by a delegation of business executives, will be the first European Union leader to visit the world’s second-biggest economy since 2019.

During the one-day trip on Friday, he will hold talks with President Xi Jinping and Premier



Li Keqiang.

But the visit has sparked controversy, coming as Berlin reels from an over-dependence on Russian energy imports that left it exposed during war.

ISLAMABAD Pakistan PM in Beijing to seek investments

Pakistan’s Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Beijing on Tuesday to seek the revival of a stalled investment plan meant to give China access to key global markets through overland and sea routes. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a \$65-billion project under the umbrella of the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), was launched in 2015 but slowed down in recent years.

“There will be a lot of discussion on fast-tracking the



CPEC,” a Pakistani official said in Islamabad ahead of Sharif’s first visit to Beijing since taking office in April. Sharif is set to meet his Chinese counterpart and President Xi Jinping.



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

WEDNESDAY | NOVEMBER 2 | 2022

7

Brazil's Bolsonaro to accept election loss in speech to nation

SAO PAULO/BRASILIA:

Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro will not contest his election defeat and will address the nation later on Tuesday, Communications Minister Fabio Faria said.

The presidential address may defuse protests by his supporters who have blocked highways in many states across Brazil, along with pro-Bolsonaro truckers calling for him to defy the electoral victory of leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Bolsonaro has made no public remarks so far to the election result and had not called Lula after Sunday's vote.

Bolsonaro political allies, including his chief of staff Ciro Nogueira, have already begun to establish contact with the Lula camp to discuss a transition. Some, including the speaker of the lower house of Congress, have publicly said the Bolsonaro government should respect the election result.



A supporter of President Jair Bolsonaro sticking out of a car's sunroof displays a Brazilian national flag at a blockade, largely by truck drivers, on BR-101 highway in Palhoca, in the metropolitan region of Florianopolis, Santa Catarina State, Brazil, on Monday. — AFP

Truckers — who have benefited from Bolsonaro lowering diesel costs — are one of the president's key constituencies, and they have previously disrupted Brazil's economy with highway closures.

The Brazilian supermarkets lobby has reported supply

problems due to the protests and appealed to Bolsonaro to resolve the situation before shop shelves begin to empty.

The Supreme Court ordered police to remove scores of blockades that had blocked access to a key grains-exporting port, shut off the country's largest airport started

to affect the transportation of food and fuel.

The highways blocked by Bolsonaro supporters included key roads used to move grains from farm states to ports, as well as a major road linking the two largest cities, Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo.

The main access road to Sao Paulo's Guarulhos international airport, the busiest in the country, was temporarily blocked by dozens of demonstrators and 25 flights were cancelled, the airport said. But Governor Rodrigo Garcia said the highway was reopened on Tuesday morning.

"We honest Brazilians are against the return of that gang that looted state coffers," said truck driver Vando Soares, opposed to the return to office of Lula, whose 2003-2010 presidency was marked by widespread corruption.

"We are not moving until that bandit is stopped from assuming as president," he said. — Reuters



More grain ships leave Ukraine ports as per deal

ISTANBUL: Three outbound vessels had left Ukrainian ports by midday on Tuesday under the Black Sea grain export deal, the United Nations-led coordination centre said, the second day of sailings after Russia suspended participation in the initiative.

Turkey, one of the brokers and guarantors of the deal, sounded optimistic that a solution would be found to return Russia to the agreement and keep exports safe as the war rages on.

The Istanbul-based Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) said in a statement that the ships' movement was agreed by the Ukrainian, Turkish and UN delegations working there, and that the Russian delegation had been informed.

Amir Abdulla, the UN Coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, "continues his discussions with all three member state parties in an effort to resume full participation at the JCC," the statement said.

Separately, Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin that Ankara is making efforts with all sides to solve problems regarding the implementation of the deal.

Erdogan expressed during the phone call that "he is sure a solution-oriented cooperation will be established on this issue, as in many other topics," the Turkish presidency said.

The export deal was agreed by Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the United Nations in July to ease a world hunger crisis caused in part by Moscow's war of Ukraine and an earlier blockade of its ports. Twelve ships set sail from Ukrainian ports on Monday, the single biggest day of exports since the programme began, while two arrived.

Putin has said Russia's decision to suspend participation in the programme was a response to a drone attack on Moscow's fleet in Crimea on Saturday that he blamed on Ukraine. Moscow said on Monday it was "unacceptable" for shipping to pass through the corridor.

Kyiv has not claimed responsibility for the attack and denies using the grain programme's security corridor for military purposes. — Reuters



P.O. Box: 147, Jawharat A' Shatti, PC 134, Sultanate of Oman, Tel: 24073800, Fax: 24698496, Website: www.soharpower.com

Unaudited condensed financial statements for the period ended 30 September 2022

BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Sohar Power Company SAOG ("Sohar Power" or the "Company"), I am pleased to present you with the Directors' Report of the Company for the period ended 30 September 2022.

Sohar Power was incorporated in 2004 after the award of the Sohar IWPP project resulting from a competitive bidding process and started its operations in 2007. The Company owns and operates the 585MW electricity generation and 33MIGD seawater desalination plant in Sohar Port and Freezone industrial area. Till recently, the Company had a 15-year Power and Water Purchase Agreement ("PWPA") with the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC ("OPWP") for sale of electricity and water. Since May 15, 2022, the Company's PWPA Term has come to an end.

The Company has been listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange since 2008.

Health & Safety

The first 9 months of year 2022 has seen excellent Health and Safety performance for Sohar Power. There were no Lost Time Accidents (LTA), cumulating to 3,531 days without LTA at the end of the period. The Health and Safety of our employees, contractors and visitors has been and remains the utmost priority for the Company and its operator Sohar Operations & Maintenance Company LLC ("SOMC").

Operations

The Contract Year 15 ended on 31st March 2022. However, on account of Force Majeure events suffered by Sohar Power during the PWPA Term and approved by OPWP, the Term was extended in accordance with the PWPA until May 15, 2022; at 18:00 hours. All maintenance activities on the plant equipment was conducted during the 2021 – 2022 Winter Period.

Since May 15, the plant has been maintained under preservation by SOMC. Such preservation is required for possible future operations under frameworks being discussed with the Authorities.

The company was able to operate the Plant in July 2022 for supply of power to OQ's Liwa Plastics, under a direct sale of power framework for which the Authority had provided the Company a one-time approval. The operation was undertaken over a period of 23 days. This is expected to provide useful inputs for the formal framework expected to be announced by APSR.

Financial Performance

The Board of Directors would like to announce that the Company has ended the period with a net profit of RO 1.5 million compared to a net loss of RO 3.1 million in the same period of 2021. The net profit in the period is mainly due to lower depreciation charge as a result of the impairment charge of OMR 45.7 million that was recorded in December 2021 based on the market valuation study that was conducted after the annulment of Power 2022 procurement process, and has resulted in full equity erosion.

The revenues for the period amount to OMR 11.4 million against OMR 20.9 million for the same period last year. This is mainly due to lower tariff compared to previous period and the expiry of the PWPA on 15 May 2022 (i.e. 4.5 months in 2022 compared to 9 months in 2021). As per the PWPA agreement with the off-taker, the variation of the Load Factor has no impact on the Company profitability as the mainstream of the profit is generated from the available capacity and reliability of the plant (load factor is a pass-through item under the PWPA and financially neutral to the Company).

The direct costs have decreased from OMR 21.8 million in the first 9 months of 2021 to OMR 8.0 million in the same period in 2022, mainly due to the

partial impairment charge which was taken at the end of the period in 2021. In addition, there has been a reduction in operational cost considering that the Plant is under preservation since 15 May 2022.

The current principal, interest and swaps were settled on their due dates. The hedging deficit on the Company's swap agreements at the close of business on 31st March 2022, was OMR NIL, in comparison with valuations as of 31st December 2021 of OMR 0.6 million. As per IAS 39, hedging deficit is calculated on each balance sheet date and it represents a notional loss, which the Company may incur if it opts to terminate the swap agreements on this date. The swap agreements have expired at the end of their terms on 31st March 2022.

The reduction in finance costs by OMR 1.3 million in the first 9 months of 2022 in comparison to the same period in 2021 is associated with debt repayments during the period.

Under its Financing Agreements entered into with its lenders, Sohar Power is subject to a cash sweep mechanism which started on 30th September 2015 and will last until the full repayment of the long-term loans. The cash sweep mechanism prevents the distribution of dividends to shareholders since all the available cash is devoted to the repayment of the loans. This mechanism is common in financing agreements throughout the region and helps to provide a competitive tariff for an off-taker such as OPWP at the time of the bid. As previously disclosed, the payout of dividends ended in 2016, and there will be no more dividend distributions to shareholders unless the debt of the Company is refinanced and the cash sweep is successfully removed. The Company has suspended its exploration of opportunities to refinance its debt until new sustainable source of revenues is secured.

Given that revenues were expected from the Force Majeure extension period (Apr 1 to May 15) and the expected announcement by APSR of a bilateral framework for direct sale of power, the Company had received an extension to the Final Maturity Date until September 30 2022 from the Lenders. In order to allow SPC to explore further opportunities for sale of power / water, Lenders have provided their consent in principle to a further extension to the Final Maturity Date till 30 June 2023, subject to payment of interest due. This is currently pending finalisation of required documentation.

Corporate Governance

In line with efforts deployed in previous years, the Company ensured that its organization, systems, policies, and procedures follow the highest standards of governance to comply at all times with the Code of Corporate Governance promulgated by CMA, including the new Code requirements effective since July 2016.

Audit Committee and the Board have pursued the action plan arose from third-party consultant audit to review the internal audit system and process of the company was set to address the recommended action for further improvements.

After resignation of the internal auditor of the Company, the Audit Committee and the Board has appointed, after obtaining CMA approval, an external firm to perform the IA activities of the company until the end of 2022.

Employment

Pursuing their continued efforts to develop, train, and employ Omanis, the Company and its operator have maintained the Omanisation level at 93.5% at the end of period.

Outlook for second half of 2022

Following the annulment of the Power 2022 Tender by OPWP, one of the options available to the Company

for continued operations was the Spot Market, which went live on January 1, 2022. Revenues cannot be currently contracted in the Omani Spot Market due to oversupply; it may be possible in the future depending on the evolution of the overall supply and demand in the Market. Recently, OPWP published the 7 Years Statement for 2021 – 2027 (the latest one is yet to be published), which shows a demand increase by 2024. However this does not modify significantly, the earlier conclusions reached by an independent consultant engaged by the Company that it is very unlikely that the Company will be able to secure sufficient source of revenues under the current design of the Spot Market.

An option open to the Company for continued operations is the expected executive regulation from the Authority that would enable generators like Sohar Power to enter into bilateral contracts with customers for direct sale of power, using the existing transmission network. In anticipation of this Framework, the Company has proactively engaged in discussions with potential customers and has operated the Plant on a trial basis in July 2023 for supply of power to OQ Liwa Plastics. APSR has also announced that bilateral frameworks would be allowed from October 2022; however, the Guidance Note related to this framework is yet to be issued.

According to OPWP published the 7 Years Statement (2021 – 2027), the current over capacity shall persist for the next 2 years. Considering this Sohar Power submitted an offer to OPWP for the preservation of plant during 2 years. OPWP's response to SPC's proposal is still awaited.

The Company has an ongoing contract with SOMC for the continued preservation of the plant to ensure the availability of the plant for future use when the power demand is likely to pick up and also secure the retention of trained Omani workforce for such operation while avoiding demobilisation costs.

The outstanding debt at the end of the period is OMR 39 million. In case of none of the above options is feasible or viable, restructuring the outstanding debt will be very challenging. As stated above, the Final Maturity Date is currently September 30, 2022. However, the Company has requested the Lenders for a further extension to the Final Maturity Date to June 30, 2023 which is now been approved in principle, pending finalisation of required documentation.

Due to the erosion of more than 50% of the Company share capital, the board of directors called for an EGM pursuant of article 147 of the Company Commercial Law which was held on 27 March 2022. The shareholders have decided to wait for issuance of bilateral framework by APSR to evaluate and pursue bilateral deals with potential customers. The Company has since received an in principle approval from its Lenders for an extension to the Final Maturity Date to June 30, 2023. Accordingly, the Company announced to the Muscat Stock Exchange that it shall await (i) OPWP's response to its 2 years preservation offer and (ii) the formal Guidance Note to the bilateral framework announcement by APSR..

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank our valued shareholders for their continued support, trust, and confidence. I would also like to thank all the personnel associated with the operation and maintenance of the plant in Sohar and the staff of the Company for their loyalty, dedication and commitment.

I would also like to express our gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and His Government for their continued guidance, support and encouragement to the private sector

Miklos Almasy
Chairman of the Board

The National Museum Auction Notice

The National Museum hereby announce the following Auction:

Auction No.	Description	Document Price (RO)	Dates for Site inspection	Last date purchase Auction document	Bida submission date
(2/2022)	Management of the National Museum's Gift Shop	(25/-) Twenty-Five Omani Riyal (nonrefundable)	20-21/11/2022	15/11/2022	5/12/2022

1- Companies who are interested in participating in the above Auction shall collect the Auction documents from the General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs of the National Museum, al-Saiyda Street, historical Muscat, opposite Qasr al-Alam Palace.

2- Bids shall be submitted in closed envelopes, sealed with red wax and addressed to: the Chairman of Internal Tender Board Committee, the National Museum, Sultanate of Oman.

3- The tender number and the name of the tender shall be mentioned on the tender document. It is not accepted to indicate the Bidder's identity, name and/or its logo on the envelope.

4- The Bids should enclose a Bank Guarantee or a certified cheque certified by locally registered banks in the sum of (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of submission of the specified tender. Any Bids not enclosed with a Bank Guarantee will not be considered.

5- The Tender submission must be placed inside the Tender Case at the General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs before 10:00 am of the mentioned above date.

6- For more information please contact on Tel: 22081568
e-mail: ali.al-wahaibi@nm.gov.om



Where do last year’s climate pledges stand?

VALERIE VOLCOVICI

A year ago at the UN climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, countries, banks and business leaders announced a slew of climate plans and pledges. Here is an update on how some of the biggest promises have since progressed.

Nearly 200 countries agreed at last year’s COP26 summit to improve their emissions-cutting pledges, called Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs, in time for COP27, but only two dozen countries have so far done so. The world remains on a path to overshoot 2 degrees of warming beyond the pre-industrial average.

Those to upgrade since COP26 include Indonesia and South Korea as well as Australia, which pledged a 43 per cent emissions cut by 2030 from 2005 levels.

Brazil submitted a plan in March that actually allows for higher emissions than under its 2016 pledge, though Sunday’s election victory by Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva raises hopes of more ambitious action to combat Amazon deforestation.

The 27-country EU, the world’s third-biggest polluter, plans to upgrade its target in 2023. China has resisted pressure to improve its pledge to peak emissions before 2030 - a goal that doesn’t address the deep emissions cuts needed to avert disastrous global warming.

More than 100 countries pledged last year to end deforestation by 2030. Supporters included Brazil, Indonesia and Congo, which together contain more than 80 per cent of the world’s remaining tropical forests.

To achieve that goal, however, the area deforested would need to shrink by 10 per

MORE THAN 100 COUNTRIES PLEDGED LAST YEAR TO END DEFORESTATION BY 2030. SUPPORTERS INCLUDED BRAZIL, INDONESIA AND CONGO, WHICH TOGETHER CONTAIN MORE THAN 80 PER CENT OF THE WORLD’S REMAINING TROPICAL FORESTS

cent each year from the 2020 cover. Instead, deforestation fell last year by just 6.3 per cent, according to the Forest Declaration Platform which tracks progress on the goal.

Amazon deforestation last year hit its highest level since 2006, and preliminary

government data suggests it rose a further 23 per cent in the first nine months of 2022. Indonesia has seen deforestation slow since 2016. But Congo, which had promised to improve forest safeguards after COP26, instead announced plans to open up areas of pristine rainforest and carbon-rich peatlands to oil and gas drilling.

To date, 119 countries and blocs including the United States and the European Union have joined the COP26 pledge to slash methane emissions 30 per cent from 2020 levels by 2030. But only 15 of them have come up with concrete plans to do so, according to a report this month by the World Resources Institute.

Several countries are expected to provide methane strategies in time for the Egypt conference. And China could also give an update on its plan to

begin monitoring methane emissions - a promise made under the US-China agreement announced in Glasgow.

The focus on methane comes as the World Meteorological Organization warned of the biggest year-on-year jump in methane concentrations in 2021 since record-keeping began nearly 40 years ago.

Around 20 countries including Germany, the United States, Canada, Britain and France pledged last November to stop public financing for fossil fuel projects abroad by the end of 2022, except in “limited” circumstances that comply with climate goals.

COP27 is expected to see a handful of new countries make the pledge. Signatories are also under pressure to translate the non-binding commitment into concrete policy, which some including France have done. — **Reuters**

South Korea faces outrage over safety control

HYONHEE SHIN AND MINWOO PARK

The initial shock from a deadly crush among Halloween party-goers in South Korea is turning into public outrage over the government’s planning missteps, as business owners say police were more focused on crime and Covid than crowd safety.

The crush on Saturday night killed 156 and injured 152 as revellers flooded narrow alleyways. Experts blamed a lack of adequate crowd and traffic control for aggravating the surge: Police dispatched just 137 officers to the area despite estimating as many as 100,000 people would gather that night in the popular nightlife district of Itaewon.

The disaster that followed has angered many South Koreans.

“It’s no different from war,” said Kang Sung-Jun, 76, who was mourning the victims at a makeshift altar on Tuesday. “I think if people with responsibilities had paid more attention to the people’s movements, this kind of accident would not have happened.”

Yoon Hee-Keun, chief of the National Police Agency, apologised on Tuesday and pledged to investigate.

“We confirmed that there were multiple calls to our hotline before the accident which urgently warned of the danger of large crowd gatherings, but our on-site responses to those reports were insufficient,” Yoon told a news conference.

South Korean authorities have a long history of managing large political rallies, but the annual festivities in Itaewon in Seoul did not have a central steering entity.

Business owners in the neighbourhood have said they met with local police officials before the festivities, but officers were mostly focused on curbing drug and sexual abuses and other crimes, as well as the spread of Covid-19.

Oh Seung-Jin, a Seoul police official, acknowledged on Monday that authorities did not have a manual on how to respond to large gatherings without an organiser, and had focused on crime prevention.

Interior Minister Lee Sang-min has fuelled public anger by saying more police and firefighters would not have prevented the disaster, and warning against politically motivated criticism.

Opposition lawmakers slammed Lee’s remarks, urging President Yoon Suk-yeol to sack him.

Lee issued a statement on Monday saying he regretted his comment and would focus on finding the cause of the accident.

The deadly crush poses a crucial test for Yoon, who is already struggling with low approval ratings as he tries to fuel a post-Covid economic recovery and deal with North Korea’s nuclear and missile tests. — **Reuters**



David Brooks

The writer is a political and cultural commentator who writes for *The New York Times*

The rising tide of global sadness

Taylor Swift was quite the romantic when she burst on the scene in 2006. She sang about the ecstasies of young love and the heartbreak of it. But her mood has hardened as her star has risen. Her excellent new album, “Midnights,” plays upon a string of negative emotions — anxiety, restlessness, exhaustion and occasionally anger.

“I don’t dress for women,” she sings at one point, “I don’t dress for men/ Lately I’ve been dressing for revenge.” It turns out Swift is part of a larger trend.

Researchers Charlotte Brand, Alberto Acerbi and Alex Mesoudi analysed more than 150,000 pop songs released between 1965 and 2015. Over that time, the appearance of the word “love” in top-100 hits roughly halved.

Meanwhile, the number of times such songs contained negative emotion words, like “hate” rose sharply.

Pop music isn’t the only thing that has gotten a lot harsher. David Rozado, Ruth Hughes and Jamin Halberstadt analysed 23 million headlines published between 2000 and 2019 by 47 news outlets popular in the United States.

The headlines, too, grew significantly more negative, with a greater proportion of headlines denoting anger, fear, disgust and sadness.

Headlines in left-leaning media got a lot more negative, but headlines in right-leaning publications got even more negative than that.

The negativity in the culture reflects the negativity in real life. The General Social Survey asks people to rate their happiness levels.

Between 1990 and 2018, the share of Americans who put themselves in the lowest happiness category increased by more than 50 per cent. And that was before the pandemic.

The really bad news is abroad. Each year, Gallup surveys roughly 150,000 people in more than 140 countries about their emotional lives.

Experiences of negative emotions — related to stress, sadness, anger, worry and physical pain — hit a record high last year.

Gallup asks people in this survey to rate their lives on a scale from zero to 10, with zero meaning you’re living your worst possible life and 10 meaning you’re living your best. Sixteen years



PLACES LIKE CHINA AND INDIA HAVE GOTTEN MUCH RICHER. BUT DEVELOPMENT DOES NOT NECESSARILY LEAD TO GAINS IN WELL-BEING, IN PART BECAUSE DEVELOPMENT IS OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY WIDENING INEQUALITY

ago, 1.6 per cent of people worldwide rated their life as a zero. As of last year, the share of people reporting the worst possible lives has more than quadrupled.

The unhappiest people are even unhappier. In 2006, the bottom fifth of the population gave themselves an average score of 2.5.

Fifteen years later, that average score in the bottom quintile had dropped to 1.2.

In an interview, Jon Clifton, the CEO of Gallup, said that in 2021, 21 per cent of the people in India gave themselves a zero rating.

He said negative emotions are rising in India and China, Brazil and Mexico and many other nations. A lot

of people are pretty miserable at work.

In the most recent survey, Gallup found that 20 per cent of all people are thriving at work, 62 per cent are indifferent on the job and 18 per cent are miserable.

Part of the problem is declining community. The polls imply that almost 2 billion people are so unhappy where they live that they would not recommend their community to a friend.

This is especially true in China and India.

Part of the problem is hunger. In 2014, 22.6 per cent of the world faced moderate or severe food insecurity. By 2020, 30.4 per cent of the world did.

Part of the problem is an increase in physical misery. In 2006, 30 per cent of people who rated their lives the worst said they experienced daily pain.

Last year, 45 per cent of those people said they live with daily pain. Before the pandemic, the experience of living with pain increased across all age groups.

A lot of those numbers surprised me. Places like China and India have gotten much richer.

But development does not necessarily lead to gains in well-being, in part because development is often accompanied by widening inequality.

This is one of the core points Clifton makes in his book “Blind Spot: The Global Rise of Unhappiness and How Leaders Missed It.”

We conventionally use gross domestic product and other material measures to evaluate how nations are doing. — **The New York Times**

A green solution towards zero hunger

Whether a country is wealthy or impoverished, it is ruinous for its community if food is wasted. Redistributing food and helping reduce its loss and waste not only helps foster healthier communities but also paves way for the creation of a healthier planet.

According to estimates from the Food and Agriculture Organization, of all the food produced in the world, nearly one-third is lost or wasted every year. Roughly, 14 per cent of the world's food is lost between harvest and retail sale, and substantially more is wasted at the retail, food service, and consumer or household levels.

World Food Programme figures show that 135 million suffer from acute hunger largely due to man-made conflicts, climate change, and economic downturns. The Covid-19 pandemic could now double that number, putting an additional 130 million people at risk of suffering acute hunger by the end of 2020.

At the same time, as wasted food decomposes in landfills, it contributes 8 to 10 per cent of the world's greenhouse gases—ultimately intensifying climate change and causing further damage to our communities, our economies, and our planet! In the Sultanate of Oman, according to the Food Waste Index Report 2021, as much as 470,322 tonnes of food is wasted in households every year in Oman, while the wastage per person is estimated to be 95 kg.

As such the Omani government devotes its utmost attention to the issue of food security and food supply with a wide array of plans and programmes in tandem with UN Sustainable Development Goals, especially SDG 2 which aims at zero hunger by 2030.

The recent launch of Oman Food Bank involving both public and private sector entities is expected to help the government achieve its goal of providing food assistance to the needy and supporting sustainable food systems through multi-sector collaborations.

The move will also encourage the public to reduce the amount of food



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

THE OMANI GOVERNMENT DEVOTES UTMOST ATTENTION TO THE ISSUE OF FOOD SECURITY AND FOOD SUPPLY WITH A WIDE ARRAY OF PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

waste, and adopt best practices in food management to save the produce and build a sustainable future.

The global experience of food banks is that they intervene timely to prevent food from going to waste and ensure the distribution of safe food to the needy. Thus they play a critical role in not just promoting food security, but also saving the planet from the adverse environmental impact of food wastage. They are a green solution to hunger!

While playing an important part of a sustainable solution as food banks partner with farmers, packers, shippers, distributors, processors, grocers, food service, and transportation and supply chain companies to redirect wholesome food to people experiencing hunger.

Food banks focus their efforts on reaching out to communities most affected by poverty and mal-nutrition. The network of community-based organisations that run institutional feeding programmes, are the backbone of the food banks' supply chain.

They help distribute food products and meals at schools for underprivileged children, homeless shelters, old age homes, after-school programmes, orphanages, charitable hospitals, and other programmes for the needy.

Not all surplus food is fit or appropriate for redistribution, but when unmarketable food is safe and wholesome, redistribution is the responsible course.

In this context, Oman's 2040 Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy also aims to promote agricultural sector sustainability, increase economic revenues, create job opportunities for nationals, support rural communities, and limit structural imbalances in the agricultural sector.

Oman's strategies have been successful in controlling malnutrition diseases among children. The percentage of overweight among children under five years of age was reduced from 23.6 per cent in 1995 to 3.1 per cent in 2017 and wasting has also declined from 13 per cent to 9.3 per cent, while stunting dropped from 22.9 per cent to 11.4 per cent during the same period.

IN TRADITIONAL DRESS



A tourist wearing traditional Kashmiri dress poses amid maple trees in Srinagar, India, on Tuesday. – AFP

What happens now that Lebanon is without a president?

MAYA GEBEILY
AND LAILA BASSAM

Lebanon entered an unprecedented government crisis on Tuesday, with no president, a caretaker cabinet with limited powers and a deeply fragmented parliament.

The country is still struggling with a record-making financial meltdown that has impoverished most of the population.

What makes electing a president so difficult, what's at stake and who will govern Lebanon in this vacuum?

Lebanon's fractured, sectarian politics mean electing a new head of state or forming a new cabinet is never straightforward. Parliament elects the president in a secret ballot by lawmakers in the 128-member parliament, where seats are evenly divided between sects.

But the thresholds needed to secure a quorum and victory mean that no single faction or alliance has enough seats to impose their choice — resulting in trading votes for other political favours.

Forming a cabinet is equally complex, with parties dividing up their shares of ministries based on influence, sect, parliamentary bloc size and possible posts they could be

appointed to elsewhere in the state.

Aoun became head of state in 2016, thanks to a grand bargain endorsed by Hezbollah and Aoun's main Maronite Christian rival Samir Geagea, and which brought Saad al Hariri back as prime minister.

Foreign influence can play a part in forging deals to elect a president in a country where international rivalries have long played out in domestic crises.



Members of the presidential guards remove a Lebanese flag after former Lebanese President Michel Aoun's six-year term officially ended, at the presidential palace in Baabda, Lebanon, on Tuesday. – Reuters

Aoun's predecessor - Michel Suleiman - took office in 2008 as part of a deal brokered in Qatar with Western backing.

The horsetrading required to form a government or select a president has often left Lebanon either without a head of state or with a cabinet operating in a caretaker capacity.

But for the first time, it now has both simultaneously. The country held parliamentary elections in May, which triggers

the creation of a new cabinet while the old one continues basic governing work under a caretaker capacity.

Aoun nominated prime minister Najib Mikati to return as premier but did not approve Mikati's cabinet line-ups over the last six months - meaning no new government was formed.

In an interview with Reuters, Aoun warned of "constitutional chaos" if his term ended with no successor and no new cabinet.

In his final act as president, he declared the government "resigned" - reaffirming its caretaker capacity - and sent a letter to parliament urging it to keep Mikati in check.

The constitution stipulates that such a move compels parliament to meet in an extraordinary session until a new cabinet has been formed.

Parliament is set to meet on Thursday. Lebanon's president is responsible for signing bills into law, appointing the prime minister and approving the cabinet formation before it goes to parliament for a vote of confidence.

Cabinet is responsible for making executive decisions.

The constitution says a resigned cabinet shall operate "in the narrow sense," without more details. In a presidential vacuum, it says parliament should meet urgently to elect one.

In previous presidential vacuums, cabinet took on the president's powers by taking decisions unanimously - but on his way out, Aoun insisted a caretaker government shouldn't be allowed to assume those prerogatives.

That throws into question how Lebanon will deal with the worsening financial crisis, which has impoverished more than 80 per cent of the population and frozen savers out of cash in the paralysed banking system for three years.

The government reached a draft IMF deal in May that would unlock badly-needed aid. But Beirut has done little towards implementing reforms needed to seal the deal.

Deputy Prime Minister Saade Chami has said Lebanon could still submit its progress to the IMF board for review but was not sure if the final deal would require a president's approval.

— Reuters

LEBANON'S FRACTURED POLITICS MEAN ELECTING A NEW HEAD OF STATE OR FORMING A NEW CABINET IS NEVER EASY

Coorg Hocks claim Gulf fiesta title



**ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH**
MUSCAT, NOV 1

India's Coorg Hocks B beat Coorg Muscat 2-1 in the final to emerge men's champions of the UTSC Gulf Hockey Fiesta 2022 here at the weekend.

In a pulsating series of seven-as-side hockey matches, the hockey court of Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex came alive on two days of hockey festival on October 28 and 29.

Bangalore-based Coorg Hocks was coached by Ganapathy and included India international Vinay in their ranks.

In the semifinals, Coorg Hocks blanked Sohar 2-0 while Coorg Muscat edged out Ahli Sidab 3-2 in a thriller.

There were 12 teams in the competitions, six from Sultanate

of Oman and six international sides.

In the women's section, Dubai Hockey Club edged Oman Whites 1-0 to clinch the title.

Oman national women's team debuted in the tournament with presence of two teams Oman Whites and Oman Reds.

In the schools section, Indian School Al Maabela beat Indian School Wadi Kabir to win the boys title after Indian School Wadi Kabir girls claimed the crown edging Indian School Al Maabela.

The tournament was opened by Indian Ambassador Amit Narang in a ceremony presided over by Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma, Chairman of Oman Hockey Association (OHA).

Narang appreciated UTSC's efforts to conduct the large-scale event in support of hockey. The

Indian ambassador thanked the OHA chairman for the efforts to promote hockey.

He also offered all possible support for upcoming Hockey 5s World Cup to be hosted by Muscat in 2024.

OHA chief Dr Juma said it was a great for Oman hockey to host such an event.

"The event is very much in line with our efforts to boost the game in the country. Thanks to UTSC for their wonderful effort in organising such a hockey festival," Al Juma told the Observer.

He said that Oman national women's hockey team made reasonably well in playing their first ever tournament.

"It was a learning experience for them. We are in intense build up for the Hockey 5s World Cup," Al Juma added.

VIBRANT ATMOSPHERE

Adding colour to the event was a cooking contest and celebrity guests from South India, Sadhika Venugopal and Vaigha.

Both days attracted good turnout of hockey lovers and family crowd.

"It was a fun filled event with cookery contest and DJ live music and entertainment. A lot of families watched the tournament till the end. Many families and kids were keen on watching hockey games as well," said Lijihass Ussain of UTSC.

Sponsors for the tournament included Shahi Foods & Spices, Sea Pearls LLC, Muscat Overseas Group, FAP Oman, Al Nahla Solutions LLC, Badr Al Samaa Group of Hospitals, Sea Pearls Gold & Diamond Jewellery, Lulu Hypermarkets, Al Sarooj Constructions, NFPC and Lynx.



Kriv Patel goes massive with double ton

MUSCAT: Oman Cricket's Junior U13 League powered by Mazoon Dairy saw Kriv Rajesh Patel's thundering 231 off 78 balls with 42 boundaries for MCCC Yellow U13 pile up 394 versus Boshers Sports Centre's U13 B team.

Opting to bat first, skipper Kriv and his opening partner Siddheswaran went all guns blazing from the first over against BSC U13B bowlers. Sewing a partnership of 209, Siddheswaran retired at the score of 60 from just 31 balls. Vihaan and Vishnu supported Kriv to dominate the bowling of the opposition.

Kriv Patel, overjoyed by his innings said, "I certainly enjoy batting with aggression. It was tough to bat for long as it was hot and humid but these are conditions we train for and I hope I contribute to the team with many more runs."

In reply, BSC U13B could only jot 36 runs on board courtesy 3 wickets from Pranav N and 2 wickets from Kriv Patel.

In another U13 game this week,



MCCC Blue U13 beat MCCC Purple U13 by 145 runs.

Opting to bat first, MCCC Blue U13's openers got off to a flying start knitting a 110-run partnership for the first wicket. Opener Abdul Muqith went on to score 106 off just 49 balls with 19 fours. MCCC Blue U13 ended their innings at 262 in 20 overs.

In reply, MCCC Purple could only manage 117 runs.

BRIEF SCORES

MCCC Yellow U13 394-2 in 20 overs (Kriv Patel 231(78b, 42x4) beat BSC U13B 36 all out in 17.2 overs (Pranav N 3-2, Kriv P 2-4) by 358 runs. MCCC Blue U13 262-4 in 20 overs (Abdul Muqith 106 (49b, 19x4); Nimish D 1-19) bt MCCC Purple U13 117-8 in 20 overs (Manoj D 25 (33b, 2x4); Ayaan Adil 1-7) by 145 runs.

OOC holds sports medicine symposium

MUSCAT: Oman Olympic Committee (OOC), represented by Oman Sports Medicine and Anti-Doping Committee, in cooperation with Oman International Hospital, organised a sports medicine symposium on Monday.

Oman soccer legend Ali bin Abdullah al Habsi was the special guest in the presence of Shaikh Khalid bin Muhammad Al Zubair, OOC President and Taha bin Suleiman al Koshary, OOC Secretary-General and a number of board members, members of Oman Sports Medicine and Anti-Doping Committee, members of sports federations and committees, physiotherapists, physical therapists, physical trainers, and cadres working in the relevant authorities.

The importance of the symposium comes in light of the large number of sports injuries in Oman and international stadiums, especially with regard to cases of sudden cardiac arrest for athletes, and the emergence of the importance of having paramedics in the stadiums to provide cardiopulmonary



resuscitation urgently and in a scientific way that will restore the heart's work again.

The symposium aims to raise awareness of the importance of having trained staff in stadiums for all kinds of sports practiced in Oman, as well as the importance of medical examination for players of different ages.

It also shed light on the specialisation of sports medicine, which is one of the important medical specialties for different sports, and introducing the medical services that the practitioner of sports medicine should master.

A number of doctors, nurses,

and physiotherapists and rehabilitation specialists attended the symposium, where many topics were discussed, the most important of which are common sports injuries, doping and the importance of raising awareness among young people in this field, as well as the effects resulting from exposure to sunlight and excessive heat during exercise and how to prevent them and the rehabilitation for various sports injuries, and practical applications of cardiopulmonary resuscitation were also made.

At the beginning of the symposium, Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International

finished third, and the fourth was Sarah bint Ahmed al Saidia on 'Malibu' from Olympic Equestrian Center.

In the OEF beginners category 2 (100 cm height), 14 horses participated. Ahmed bin Ali al Kharousi won the first place on 'Vangia Ski' from Al Rayyan Stables, Sultan bin Rashid al Toqi on 'Dan de Berheit' from Olympic Centre was second, Al Yaqeen bint Taher al Canadian on 'Earl Jerry' from Al Rayyan Stables was third and 'Barajs', owned by Royal Oman Police, finished fourth.

Twelve horses from OEF competed in the junior category (110 cm height). Madin bin Saeed al Yousifi on 'Wadood' owned by Royal Cavalry took the top honours, Mazen bin Saeed al Yousifi on 'Anbirat' from Al Seeb Equestrian School was second, Sultan bin Hamoud al Touqi won third place on 'Abaq' from the Olympic Equestrian Center.

In middle category (height of 120 cm), six horses competed. Khaled bin Saeed al Wahaibi won the first place on 'Albi' from Al Rayyan Stables, Khaled bin Darwish al Subhi on 'Charming Gil' from Al Rayyan Stables was second.

Six horses competed in the grand category (height of 130). Hamoud al Touqi won the top honours on 'Talubat' from the Olympic Centre, Hamoud al Touqi took second riding on 'hangover' and Khaled al Subhi finished third on 'Perfect' from the Ryan Stables.



Second show jumping competition launched

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF) organised the second show jumping competitions for the season 2022-23, at Al Rahba farm in the Wilayat of Barka, among 100 horses of government units, and private stables.

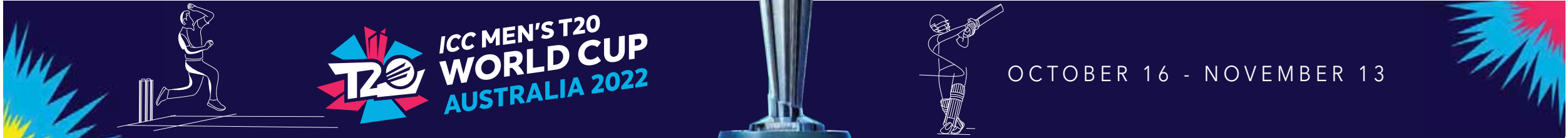
The competitions were held in eight categories, six for the OEF. It included the new category with hurdles height of 70 cm, beginners category 1 with hurdles height of 90 cm, the junior category 2 at the height of 100 cm, the minor category at 110 cm hurdles height, the middle category at a height of 120 cm, and the major category at a height of 130 cm. In addition there were two categories within the Al Rayyan Stables League for the Future Knights, which is the junior category at a height of 100 cm, and the major category at a height of 110 cm.

In the OEF category for new juniors at the height of the hurdles 70 cm, five horses out of eight managed to complete the round without errors. Thirteen horses participated in OEF beginners category 1 for height of 90 cm.

Ali bin Mustafa al Lawati on 'Roel' from Mojo Equestrian Centre won the first place, Fnida Chahboon on 'History' from the Olympic Equestrian Centre claimed second, Mazen bin Zayed al Mukhaini on 'Maltasir' from Mojo Equestrian Centre

Hospital, stressed the importance of this symposium given the increasing cases of sports injuries in international stadiums in general and in particular in Oman stadiums.

Dr Masoud Al Riyami, Chairman of Oman Sports Medicine and Anti-Doping Committee, stressed the importance of sports medicine and its role in diagnosing and treating all injuries that occur to the musculoskeletal system, injuries to bones, muscles and joints, and instructions and instructions to avoid sports injuries and ensure a better sports life for players.



England roar back to beat New Zealand

BRISBANE: Clinical England rescued their Twenty20 World Cup campaign as they held their nerve to beat New Zealand by 20 runs at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday.

England, who had been facing almost certain elimination had they lost, moved into the top two in Group 1 along with their opponents with one round of matches to go.

Only the top two reach the semifinals.

It puts enormous pressure on hosts and defending champions Australia, who must now win their last match against Afghanistan and hope England or New Zealand stumble.

“We had a poor performance (losing against Ireland) but there’s a lot of confidence in the group,” said England skipper Jos Buttler, who propelled England to 179-6 after he smashed 73 off 47 balls. Alex Hales also struck a half-century.

“We were aiming for 160-165, but we managed to push beyond that — we left it all out there tonight,” said Buttler.

The captain played a crucial role with the bat as England finally started to show why they were one of the pre-tournament favourites. Their fate is now in their own hands.

England got away to a perfect start in the field when New Zealand opener Devon Conway leg-glanced a ball from Chris Woakes and Buttler took a spectacular diving catch.

It got worse for the Kiwis when Finn Allen pulled a slower ball from Sam Curran to Ben Stokes at deep mid-wicket, leaving New Zealand 28-2 after five overs.

The Black Caps were struggling against a tight bowling attack, but the momentum swung firmly towards them when Moeen Ali dropped the in-form Glenn Phillips when he was on 15 and New Zealand 64-2.

Phillips skied an attempted pull shot straight to Ali, who somehow didn’t get a hand on it.



Phillips, who blasted a century against Sri Lanka in New Zealand’s last match, made the English pay as he raced to his half century off only 25 balls.

Buttler was ringing the changes with his attack as he tried seven bowlers in the search for a breakthrough.

His seventh choice finally paid off when Black Caps skipper Kane Williamson (40) squeezed a Stokes delivery to Adil Rashid at short third.

James Neesham came and went for six but Phillips kept on smashing the England attack all over the Gabba.

He lost Daryl Mitchell, caught on the boundary by substitute fielder Chris Jordan off Mark Wood, before falling the same way off Sam Curran almost immediately.

Once Phillips fell, New Zealand’s challenge was as good as over as the lower order struggled

to find the boundary.

BUTTLER MAKES BLACK CAPS PAY “Credit to the way England played,” Williamson said.

“They put us under pressure. They played beautifully, hats-off to them, they were pretty clinical.

SCOREBOARD

ENGLAND	
J Buttler run out	73
A Hales st Conway b Santner	52
M Ali c Boult b Sodhi	5
L Livingstone b Ferguson	20
H Brook c Allen b Southee	7
B Stokes lbw Ferguson	8
S Curran not out	6
D Malan not out	3
Extras (lb1, lb2, w1, nb1)	5
Total (6 wickets, 20 overs)	179
Fall of wickets: 1-81, 2-108, 3-153, 4-160, 5-162	
Bowling: Boult 4-0-40-0, Southee 4-0-43-1, Santner 4-0-25-1, Ferguson 4-0-45-2, Sodhi 4-0-23-1	

NEW ZEALAND	
D Conway c Buttler b Woakes	3
F Allen c Stokes b Curran	16
K Williamson c Rashid b Stokes	40
G Phillips c sub (Jordan) b Curran	62
J Neesham c Curran b Wood	6
D Mitchell c sub (Jordan) b Woakes	3
M Santner not out	16
I Sodhi not out	6
Extras (lb2, w5)	7
Total (6 wickets, 20 overs)	159
Fall of wicket: 1-8, 2-28, 3-119, 4-126, 5-131, 6-135	
Bowling: Ali 1-0-4-0, Woakes 4-0-33-2, Rashid 4-0-33-0, Curran 4-0-26-2, Wood 3-0-25-1, Livingstone 3-0-26-0, Stokes 1-0-10-1	

“It was a slightly above-par total. We tried to take it a little deeper, but credit to the way they bowled.” Earlier, Buttler was dropped twice during his entertaining knock, before passing former captain Eoin Morgan as the highest run-scorer for England in T20 internationals.

Williamson was left to rue letting Buttler off the hook.

“He’s one of, if not the best player in the game,” Williamson said. “If you do that he’ll make you pay, he made the boundaries look small, which they certainly are not.” New Zealand, England and Australia are all on five points after four games.

But New Zealand, last year’s beaten finalists, top Group 1 on net run rate, with England second.

New Zealand, who could have sealed a spot in the semifinals with victory, play Ireland on Friday — the same day the hosts are in action against already eliminated Afghanistan.

England face Asian champions Sri Lanka on Saturday to wrap the group up. — **AFP**

Sri Lanka keep hopes alive as Afghans exit

BRISBANE: Dhananjaya de Silva scored an unbeaten 66 as Sri Lanka kept their slim Twenty20 World Cup hopes alive with a six-wicket win over Afghanistan at the Gabba in Brisbane on Tuesday.

The Asia Cup champions moved to four points in Group 1 and can still make the semifinals, but they need other results to go their way.

The loss means Afghanistan are eliminated as they cannot make the semifinals with one group match against Australia remaining after having two washouts and a opening defeat to England.

Afghanistan captain Mohammad Nabi won the toss and chose to bat but Sri Lanka restricted them to 144-8, thanks largely to a fine spell from leg-spinner and player of the match Wanindu Hasaranga.

The Sri Lankan run chase got off to a poor start when Mujeeb Ur Rahman spun one back to bowl Pathum Nissanka for 10.

Kusal Mendis and de Silva recovered and took the score to 46

before Afghanistan trump card, leg-spinner Rashid Khan, drew a top edge from Mendis, giving keeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz a simple catch.

PLEASING EFFORT

Khan took the next wicket when Charith Asalanka was caught by Azmat Omarzai on the boundary for 19 but by then Sri Lanka had reached 100 and had taken control of the run chase.

De Silva played a perfectly measured innings, scoring his stylish 66 from 42 deliveries to guide the Sri Lankans home.

Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka was pleased with his side’s efforts with both bat and ball.

“I think we found some consistency today and it is important to continue it in the next game,” Shanaka said.

“The other games are beyond our control, but the aim is to win the next game with a healthy run rate.”

Hasaranga took 3-13 during

Afghanistan’s innings, not conceding a boundary in his four-over spell.

Afghanistan batted well in patches and looked on course for a big score, but every time they began to open up, Sri Lanka’s bowlers were able to take key wickets to keep them in check.

Despite six of Afghanistan’s batsmen getting a good start to their innings, none was able to convert to a big score with Usman Ghani’s 27 being the best.

The target of 145 was at least 20 runs short of a competitive total and Sri Lanka cruised home with nine balls to spare when De Silva hit he winning four to take them to 148-4.

“We had a good start in the powerplay but did not keep the momentum till the end,” Nabi said of the Afghanistan effort in the field.

“We tried to put up a good score but the pitch was too slow and we fell short.

“We did not bowl the right lines and lengths.” — **AFP**

SCOREBOARD

AFGHANISTAN	
R Gurbaz b Kumara	28
U Ghani c Shanaka b Hasaranga	27
I Zadran c Rajapaksa b Kumara	22
N Zadran c Hasaranga b De Silva	18
G Naib run out	12
M Nabi c Shanaka b Rajitha	13
R Khan b Hasaranga	9
A Omarzai not out	3
M Rahman st Mendis b Hasaranga	1
Extras (b3, lb1, nb1, w6)	11
Total (8 wickets, 20 overs)	144
Fall of wickets: 1-42, 2-68, 3-90, 4-113, 5-127, 6-140, 7-142, 8-144	
Bowling: Rajitha 4-0-31-1, Madushan 3-0-24-0, Kumara 4-0-30-2, Theekshana 4-0-33-0, Hasaranga 4-0-13-3, De Silva 1-0-9-1	

SRI LANKA	
P Nissanka b Rahman	10
K Mendis c Gurbaz b Khan	25
D de Silva not out	66
C Asalanka c Omarzai b Khan	19
B Rajapaksa c Gurbaz b Rahman	18
D Shanaka not out	0
Extras (lb1, w9)	10
Total (4 wickets, 18.3 overs)	148
Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-46, 3-100, 4-142	
Bowling: Farooqi 3.3-1-22-0, Rahman 4-0-24-2, Ahmad 2-0-25-0, Khan 4-0-31-2, Omarzai 2-0-17-0, Nabi 2-0-16-0, Naib 1-0-12-0	



business

MUSCAT STOCK EXCHANGE
4,390.893



CRUDE OIL PRICE

Oman Crude \$91.51
Brent Crude \$94.19
Light Crude \$87.68



Follow us on
omanobserver.om/business



Travel anywhere for any purpose
with our Travel Finance

2477 5777 | www.maisarah-oman.com

[f/MaisarahOman](#) [@MaisarahIslamic](#) [@MaisarahIslamic](#)

To know more



Terms & Conditions Apply



be'ah signs Emission Reduction agreement



MUSCAT: OQ Trading (OQT), the international energy and commodity trading arm of the Government of Oman and Oman Environmental Service Holding Company (be'ah) signed a cooperation agreement for the development of projects of emission reduction within the waste management industry in the Sultanate of Oman.

The agreement signed is an important initiative in helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Sultanate of Oman in line with ministerial decision 30/2010 issued by the erstwhile Ministry of Environment and Climate Affairs.

Greenhouse gas reduction forms an important part of be'ah's objective to structure the waste management sector and its related services in a sustainable manner.

The framework resulting from the cooperation agreement allows OQT to work collaboratively with be'ah to identify and develop projects which adhere to international emission reduction standards.

OQT has been at the forefront of Omani emissions efforts, having developed the first Omani carbon project in 2012 in conjunction with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals with the successful registration of Oman's

first Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) project.

The Certified Emission Reduction (CERs) credits issued by the project, alongside other Voluntary Emission Reduction (VERs) credits from projects that followed, have been successfully marketed to end-buyers – utilising OQT's understanding of carbon project development, energy pricing and international markets.

OQT and be'ah will be together exploring multiple opportunities for projects within the field of waste management and waste-to-energy that will aid Oman's decarbonisation and climate goals. Through their engagement to date, some potential areas which have already been identified include biogas and methane reduction projects through rehabilitation of landfills, as well as exploring the possibilities of various crediting systems related to recycling.

The partnership will enable the delivery of efficient and environmentally sustainable services within the waste management sector in Oman, with sound economical returns by playing a role in serving the compliance and voluntary carbon markets internationally. — ONA

OWWSC, OQ Trading ink pact on Emission Reduction Purchases

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

In line with national plans and the global drive to achieve zero carbon neutrality, Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company (OWWSC), a member of Nama Group, signed an agreement with OQ Trading, a wholly-owned commodity trading company of OQ Group, for supporting Emission Reduction Purchases (ERP) governed by the Clean Development Mechanism programme under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

The agreement was signed on November 1, 2022 at the Environment Authority premises, and in the presence of Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority. The agreement was signed by Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of OWWSC, and Said al Maawali, OQ Trading Executive Director - the Middle East.

Under this agreement, OQ Trading will purchase the approved units to reduce carbon emissions of methane from Kala Compost, as regulated by the UN Clean Development



Mechanism scheme, where each unit represents the equivalent of a metric tonne in a unit of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e).

Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company, said: "Today we have signed this agreement to be in line with Oman's objective of Net-Zero Emissions by 2050 (NZE 2050). The agreement covers a methane reduction project in Oman and is exploring other opportunities for collaboration in decarbonisation activities in line with government initiatives within the Sultanate of Oman."

Al Zakwani added that the agreement is a reflection of the company's efforts and commitment to the environment and aligned with the global trend in optimally dealing with global warming and protecting the ozone layer by addressing the carbon emissions resulting from the treatment of sewage waste represented in methane gas. He added that this agreement confirms the achievement of this benefit as the company seeks in the coming future to redouble its efforts in this aspect and in

line with national plans and global trends. Said al Maawali, Executive Director – Middle East at OQ Trading stated: "With this ERP Agreement having taken place, OQT and OWWSC will be looking into further opportunities to develop projects which can reduce emissions and drive decarbonisation in the Sultanate of Oman. The possibility of enabling clean water for communities and reducing the carbon footprint in line with Oman's NZE 2050 targets is a goal both companies are keen to work together towards."

Customs app for e-commerce to be launched soon

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) organised on Tuesday, November 1, the 2022 Investment Forum with the participation of a number of authorities to enhance partnership with the private sector, as well as review customs and trade facilities and initiatives.

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the ROP, facilitates all



commercial procedures for local traders and investors, as well as the movement of goods, whether through land, air or sea ports. The discussion session held at the headquarters of the ROP

Customs Headquarters in the Governorate of Muscat, was also attended by representatives of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and the Royal Oman Police (Customs and

Passports).

The overall goal was to resolve any obstacles that companies and investors may face in their business activities in the Sultanate of Oman.

In a presentation, Maj Sulaiman bin Masoud al Ghafri, Director of the Bayan System, stated that the goal of the ROP is committed to continually improving the standard of services provided to the business community.

TURN TO PAGE 15

Oman signs pact with Vale to set up industrial mega hub

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 1

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) signed a memorandum of cooperation with Vale SA, in partnership with the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and Oman's National Programme for Investment & Export Development (Nazdaher).

In the memorandum, the parties agreed to conduct a feasibility study to explore the prospects of

developing an integrated industrial complex (mega hub) in Oman that will contribute to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, in line with international priorities set forth in the Paris Agreement.

The memorandum was signed by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, and Rogerio Nogueira, the Global Marketing Director at Vale, during a signing ceremony attended by senior government officials, including Dr Saleh bin Said bin Salim Masan, MoCIIP



Under-Secretary for Commerce and Industry, and Eng Ahmed bin Hassan al Dheeb, Vice-Chairman of OPAZ.

With several long-term impacts, this cooperation aims to attract foreign direct investment to Oman, unlocking new prospects in manufacturing and creating opportunities for support industries revolving around the Mega Hub, while contributing to the national economy and environmental sustainability. Moreover, the memorandum is closely aligned with the national plans and target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2050, as approved by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

MoCIIP's growth strategy seeks to harmoniously integrate the industrial and energy sectors, while keeping pace with major energy developments in Oman, primarily in green hydrogen.

Plans made under this strategy focus on driving the manufacturing industry towards using renewable energy and reducing emissions in line with the global carbon neutrality agendas; the emphasis will be on industries such as cement, steel, methanol, urea, aluminium, petrochemicals and refineries.

TURN TO P15

dentsu M21
shortlisted for
Agency of the
Year Awards



MUSCAT: The Campaign Middle East and Haymarket have shortlisted dentsu M21 for the inaugural Middle East edition of the Campaign Middle East's Agency of the Year Awards 2022 under the Best Agency category.

"A proud moment for us and a historic first for Oman's advertising industry to be recognised at this competitive level. To be recognised among the best of the best in the region is truly an honour and a reflection of the highest creative standards that we offer," said Rajesh Raman, Managing Director.

"We have always stood firm in the belief that Oman's communications industry is on par with the rest of the region, and this selection is ample proof," he added.

According to Campaign Middle East, there were far more entries than expected which is a reflection of the robust ecosystem of the region.

It is noteworthy that the Campaign Agency of the Year Awards are unique in that they are based on business performance, which is a true measure to see which agencies are really working to drive the advertising economy.

Designed to recognise inspiring leadership, management excellence, outstanding business performance, and overall achievements in advertising and brand communications, the awards are independently audited by PWC. The eminent panel of judges comprising of leading clients have narrowed the selection to the final shortlist and will debate the final winners through a virtual jury room to reward the best agencies by geography, specialisation, people and teams.

ROP and Khedmah sign new pact

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has signed a contract with Oman Investment and Finance Company (OIFC), 'Khedmah', to provide a number of vehicle related services through the company's various channels.

The agreement comes as part of efforts to promote integration and partnership between public and private sector institutions to facilitate the provision of services to citizens and residents alike.

The contract was signed by Maj Gen Khalifa bin Ali al Siyabi, Assistant Inspector General of Administrative and Financial Affairs at ROP Police and Customs, and Said bin Ahmed Safrar, CEO of OIFC.

Under the contract, Khedmah, in the first phase, will provide for the payment of traffic violation fines and the printing service of Mulkiya. These facilities will be provided gradually through Khedmah's various channels, including its 68 branches across



wilayats of Oman, bill payment machines, Khedmah app, and the company's website. The channels available for each service will be announced in due course of time.

Initially, all Khedmah branches

will support payment of traffic fines, with an addition of Mulkiya printing services available in 25 self-service devices located in selected Khedmah branches including Khedmah kiosks in

shopping malls.

Said bin Ahmed Safrar, CEO, OIFC, said, "We are delighted to sign this agreement with the Royal Oman Police, which is one of the leading service providers to citizens and residents.

"This contract represents both parties' shared belief in offering additional benefits to the general public who use traffic services.

"The collaboration will save the public time, effort and money by allowing them to perform a variety of services under one roof, improving the overall customer experience."

"This contract also reflects Khedmah's strategy and efforts to expand and diversify the services it provides to its customers. We will continue to study customer needs and market developments, as well as forging effective partnerships with various public and private sectors to provide unique solutions that meet and exceed customer expectations," he added.

Alizz Islamic
Bank appoints
new General
Manager



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank announced the appointment of Ali bin Saif al Mani as the General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank. Al Mani is an outstanding Omani talent in the banking sector with 21 years of professional experience in both Islamic and traditional banking including retail, corporate, operations, finance, project management digital solutions and management.

Prior to joining Alizz Islamic Bank, Al Mani held several leading positions in different institutions and his last position was as a capacity of Deputy CEO in National Finance Company.

He was the Head of Retail Banking Services at Qatar National Bank and the Head of Sales at Bank Nizwa. He was the Head of the Alternative Distributions of the National Bank of Oman and the Head of Central Operations. Al Mani has always endeavoured to develop performance by innovating products as well as financial and banking solutions, improving services, enhancing customer experience and operations, bringing down costs and maintaining sustainability for all business activities.

Al Mani holds a Master's degree in Innovation, Leadership and Management from York University – United Kingdom. He also has a Bachelor's of Arts in Computer Applications and Internet from the University of Bedfordshire – United Kingdom, in addition to a number of qualifications and training courses specialised in banking and finance.

ahlibank adopts systemic approach to digitisation

MUSCAT: Adopting a customer-centric approach and digitising business process initiatives, ahlibank recently launched ahliexpress, an express digital banking service, under the umbrella of 'ahliDigital' at Madinat al Sultan Qaboos branch.

The multifunctional device enhanced its digital scope and ushered in a new standard in banking, with state-of-the-art facilities for tech-savvy customers, who prefer and believe in digital fulfilment over the traditional banking approach. The new branch is the bank's first digital branch.

ahlibank is driven by its customers' needs and by placing their requirements at the forefront of business priorities. The bank seeks to integrate and adopt innovative digital solutions to consistently exceed customer expectations. What began as a natural transition from traditional banking practices to digitalisation of services has today bolstered its digital transformation, with fully integrated banking solutions under a single platform, offering its customers tailored digital journeys to offer smooth operations at all



levels.

Commenting on the ongoing digital transformations endeavours of the bank, Taher al Balushi, DGM - Strategy and Transformation, ahlibank, said, "In line with the global trend towards digitalisation, ahlibank has set a new benchmark of excellence with its latest suite of innovative products and services. The bank continues to rely on a customer-centric approach to marketing and management, to retain its indigenous outlook, even while adhering to global digital trends in the banking sector."

He added, "The bank continues to analyse the latest market trends and focus on changing customer needs to bring its

digital transformation journey to fruition. For instance, the digital onboarding via mobile banking app is designed to offer our retail customers easy access to bank's products and services, 'anytime, anywhere'; which enabled fulfilling all our customers' needs and exceeding their expectations and accelerating the pace of digital transformation."

The bank's key objective of introducing innovative products and services that exceeds customer expectations has led to significantly revamping its mobile banking app recently. This initiative, as part of a well-articulated mobile first strategy, has positively impacted the bank in augmenting a growing base of young

customers, who rely on mobile apps for their daily banking needs. In addition to the mobile app, the bank has added an 'instant' savings account option to its suite of products under e-channels.

Under business banking, the bank currently offers ahliB2B to transact secure single, bulk payment locally and salaries transfer (WPS), ahliNET for safe and secure transactions, and ahliRDC for bulk and remote deposits of cheques, to enhance its customers' banking experience and enrich the local digital business environment.

As digital technologies continue to transform local and global economies, and across business segments, a digitally enabled entity like ahlibank will have its competitive advantage with its quality of service and its digital engagement with the community.

With reports indicating a surge in the number of digital banking users, expected to globally cross 3.6 billion by the year 2024, the future of banking will be dictated by digital technologies, which ahlibank has embodied with a full-scale digital transformation.

Bank Muscat, Al Maha Petroleum sign strategic partnership

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, and Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co, one of the major petroleum products marketing companies operating in Oman, have signed an agreement to extend Bank Muscat's 'Virtual Account' and 'Direct Debit' solutions to the Company.

Through this agreement, Bank Muscat is providing Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing with the bank's advanced digital capabilities to manage the collections more competently and efficiently.

The agreement was signed by Eng Hamed bin Salim al Maghdri, Chief Executive Officer, and Hiriyanra Narayanaswamy, Chief Financial Officer of Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co, and Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmi,

Assistant General Manager, Bank Muscat.

Speaking on the occasion, Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmi, Assistant General Manager, Bank Muscat, said: "Corporates require a partner who can help them streamline the complexities of payments, collections, account management and get the right information on their business to make informed financial decisions.

"At Bank Muscat, we always strive to empower our customers by being a reliable partner in providing industry-proven innovative digital solutions. Bank Muscat stands out as a pioneer in the banking industry, bringing industry-first customer-focused digital solutions.

"Our 'Virtual Accounts' and 'Direct Debit' solution provides complete control over the collection of funds. These solutions



Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmi

will benefit Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co with quick and seamless management of collections."

Eng Hamed bin Salim al Maghdri, Chief Executive Officer, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co, said, "We are proud to partner with Bank Muscat to use their unique collection solutions like 'Virtual Accounts' and 'Direct Debit' solutions, which will support in our commitment to provide a comprehensive network



Eng Hamed bin Salim al Maghdri

of service stations across Oman with streamlining of collections.

"We look forward to seeing the impact of this partnership in driving development and growth at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co."

Hiriyanra Narayanaswamy, Chief Financial Officer, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co, said, "The state-of-the-art digital collection solutions from Bank Muscat provides our treasury and finance function, the flexibility

to manage collections efficiently across our networks. Efficient and faster collections of funds is a critical component of our business and is a key element in seamless function of our service stations." Bank Muscat's Transaction Banking solutions enable achievement of automation in the activities of the treasury/finance team through the use of cutting-edge technology and processes aligned with corporate's needs.

The Account Services solution provides enhanced visualisation of the overall banking relationship across all banks which includes accounts with Bank Muscat as well as with other local/international banks. Direct Debit and Virtual Accounts are collection solutions, which facilitate automation in the reconciliation of receivables in addition to providing corporates with complete control and visibility

of collections.

'Sweeps' is an advanced liquidity management solution for account balance management and allows automation in funds movement between accounts as per pre-defined rules. The 'Trade Portal' is an online solution, which allows processing of trade finance requests efficiently and with complete transparency.

The bank's online Corporate Banking platform and the B2B Connect solution also facilitate salary payments for employees through a secure payment channel under the Wages Protection System (WPS) as mandated by the Central Bank of Oman and the Ministry of Manpower.

The bank has recently also launched contactless Visa Pre-load payment cards for corporates to streamline petty cash and cash expenses.



Crypto tech could support capital markets

ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK.

The technology that underpins crypto could help bolster traditional capital markets, according to the Bank of England. Deputy governor Sir Jon Cunliffe told an association for Financial Markets in Europe conference: "The greater impact on the financial system may well come from the transfer of technologies developed in the crypto world to the 'real' world".

Post-trade services, such as clearing and settlement, could be transformed by so-called distributed ledger technologies, known as DLT, he said. "It takes nanoseconds to strike a trade. Depending on the market, these processes take at least a day and often more," he said. The comments came as the "crypto winter" continues to shine a spotlight on how central banks and regulators approach digital assets. The collapse of several high-profile crypto companies has wiped around a million dollars in market value.

But regulators are also looking at the technology that underpins crypto and potential benefits for existing financial markets. The post-trade process often involves multiple firms doing individual tasks, which Cunliffe said DLT could consolidate.

"In the conventional trade and post-trade chain, there are layers of entities performing specific functions; in the crypto world, the functions in the chain can be brought together in a single smart contract," he told the conference.

Trading in most jurisdictions is conducted on a so-called T+2 basis, where trades are finalised within two days of the transaction date. Within that period, there are several risks that might cause a trade to not go through, including price changes

and one party being unable to complete the transaction.

Clearing and settlement occurs to reduce that risk; the clearing house will guarantee the trade for both the buyer and seller. "The potential gains in cost from consolidation could be very large. For the end investor, fewer intermediaries should mean less fees," Sir Jon said.

"A single entity and process carrying out all of these functions would require fewer participants in the chain and, in principle at least, bring resilience benefits from the simplified structure," he added.

Using DLT to settle trades could lead to "T+now, or instant settlement of trades. Sir Jon said that clearing houses might not be needed under that scenario. However, he said adopting DLT also come with risks. DLT-based systems still need to prove they can work over longer timescales, he said, while there were also issues around instant settlement and potential fragmentation of capital markets.

The latest fintech firm to enter the digital assets sector is Plum Fintech Limited. The firm is a registered account information provider with the UK Financial Conducts Authority. It plans to start offering European customers crypto trading services in weeks to come. The money management app has completed a deal with Peter Thiel-backed crypto exchange Bitpanda to enable customers to invest in cryptocurrencies via its app.

Based in London, Plum Fintech Limited said in a statement that the move reflected "rising investor demand" across Europe for easy crypto trading. Fintechs are increasingly looking to offer crypto services, either via partnerships with industry specialists or with in-house trading options.

Challenger bank Revolut offers crypto trading and has been rolling out more tokens for its millions of customers to trade, as part of a concerted push into the space. Trading app Freetrade is also planning to move into crypto as part of a European push. The trend comes in spite of a dramatic crash in crypto prices earlier this year, which cost many retail investors their life savings and led to thousands of job cuts across the industry.

Oman Sustainability Centre to drive Net-Zero innovation

Key functions: New energy transition think-tank to serve multiple roles

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 1

Oman Sustainability Centre, newly set up to spearhead the delivery of the nation's Net-Zero strategy, will also support technological advancement and scientific innovation to help accelerate the Sultanate of Oman's energy transition, according to a high-level official associated with this initiative.

Eng Faiza al Harthi (pictured), Head of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Priority Support at Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, said the new facility will serve as a hub of the following four centres: (1) Think-tank, Advisory and Follow-up Support Centre (2) Business Environment Centre (3) Centre for Technological Advancement, Innovation &



It will also facilitate the obtainment of the necessary approvals from the relevant decision-makers to achieve the targeted goals in a timely manner to future industries and sustainability.

ENG FAIZA AL
HARTHI

Head of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Priority Support

Scientific Research, and (4) Net-Zero Socioeconomic Centre.

In a briefing on the new centre, whose establishment stems

from the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the official noted that the entity will be supported by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, Environment Authority and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA).

"Its primary task is to ensure the implementation of the Net-Zero national plan in line with the follow-up methodology to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040," Eng Faiza said at the media briefing last week.

"It will also facilitate the obtainment of the necessary approvals from the relevant decision-makers to achieve the targeted goals in a timely manner," she stated. In its role as a Net-Zero think-tank, the centre will formulate strategies, policies and regulations in support of Oman's carbon emission reduction goals. Besides providing technical and advisory services, it will monitor progress in the reduction of greenhouse-gas emissions (GHG).

Further, in its role as a Business Environment Centre, the new entity will support the development of sustainable finance and circular economy programmes. Also as part of its remit, it will ensure infrastructure readiness for investment.

Importantly, innovation and scientific research will be a key objective of Oman Sustainability Centre. Towards this end, the centre will make recommendations on the financing of research and development activities, while also enhancing and accelerating scientific research and innovation.

Additionally, it will support the initiation of demo projects for energy transition technologies. Finally, as a Net-Zero

Socioeconomic Centre, it will conduct awareness and educational programmes in support of rationalised energy consumption and sustainability. It will also support local content development and capacity building within this emerging sector, she added.

Oman signs pact with Vale to set up industrial mega hub

FROM PAGE 13

"We believe that this important partnership with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion will be key to support the decarbonisation of the steel industry in Oman," said Rogerio Nogueira, Vale Global Marketing Director.

"Vale has always been a keen contributor to Oman's economic and environmental agenda. As a low-carbon solutions company, we believe that the green briquette used in direct reduction will revolutionise steel production. This Agreement is just the first step in realising the incredible potential in direct reduction as the demand for HBI is expected to grow at a rapid pace over the next 20 years."

The initiative is a key enabler to the successful decarbonisation of the steel industry, as it carves a new path for the provision of high-quality materials with a reduced carbon footprint at a competitive cost to the industry. Additionally, it contributes to Vale's commitment to reduce 15 per cent of net Scope 3 emissions by 2035. The company seeks to reduce its absolute

Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 33% by 2030 and achieve net-zero by 2050, in line with national and global priorities.

MoCIIP and Vale will cooperate in developing a Mega Hub to produce direct reduction metals, build concentration facilities and integrate processes.

The production of HBI using natural gas emits around 60 per cent less CO2 than the iron production; therefore, by achieving integration and using hydrogen, carbon emissions could be eliminated.

With roles and opportunities being explored by both parties, Vale is expected to invest, build, and operate a concentration and briquetting plant in Oman, ensuring a reliable supply of iron ore.

Meanwhile, MoCIIP, in cooperation with Vale, is expected to support the Mega Hub development by building the necessary logistics facilities and invest in building and operating the direct reduction plants. In the future, new parties may be invited to join the Mega Hub as partners, and the Hub is expected to supply markets across the globe while promoting decarbonisation in the steel industry.

Customs app for e-commerce to be launched soon

FROM PAGE 13

ROP Customs, he noted, welcomes any suggestions to help improve the service to enable everyone to complete their transactions in the fullest manner and reduce the time spent as well as saving effort and money.

The attendees, for their part, expressed their complete satisfaction with the services provided by the Customs Administration, as well as the digital services that have been rolled out by the competent authorities.

An information campaign highlighting the ease-of-convenience and other services available to investors will be conducted in all the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The official also underlined the need for eligible businesses to renew their tax exemption certificate in order to avoid any delays in the completion of transactions that may lead to unnecessary fines.

In addition, an electronic customs application will be launched soon, which will facilitate the work of many, especially for e-commerce, which will contribute to expediting and facilitating their procedures, and all procedures can be completed through this application.

GCC economies set to post first fiscal surplus in 7 years

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

With the rise in crude prices globally, the GCC economies are expected to turn positive their fiscal balance after seven years in 2022 at 7.3% of GDP followed by 6.0% of GDP in 2023, Kamco Invest said in a report. The last time the GCC experienced a positive aggregate fiscal balance was in 2014, the year that saw the decline in oil prices, at 3.1% of GDP.

Kuwait is expected to post the biggest fiscal surplus in the GCC this year at 14.1% of GDP followed by 12.5% of GDP for Qatar. The Sultanate of Oman, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are expected to post mid-single digit surpluses ranging from 5.5% to 7.7% of GDP in

2022 while Bahrain is expected to remain in the red with a fiscal deficit of 4.7% of GDP in 2022.

The divergence is expected to continue in 2023 with Bahrain once again expected to post a higher fiscal deficit of 6.0% of GDP, while on the other hand, Qatar is expected to lead next year with a fiscal surplus of 16.0% of GDP followed by Kuwait at 14.1% and UAE at 4.9%. Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund estimates that the GCC countries are expected to see a significantly higher savings rate and may save about a third of their oil revenues.

This is reflected in the average current account surplus for the GCC which is estimated to be in double digits in 2022 and 2023



at 16.7% and 13.7% of the GDP, respectively.

In a World Bank report, the GCC economies are projected to expand

by 6.9% in 2022 before moderating to 3.7% and 2.4% in 2023 and 2024. The increase in oil revenues this year versus last year has given a big boost to the GCC governments on the fiscal front.

The relatively higher revenues versus continued spending by GCC governments has resulted in a decline in fiscal breakeven oil prices in all the GCC countries, except the UAE, for 2022.

On the spending side, however, the projects market in the GCC has remained muted over the last few quarters with a steep decline in quarterly contract awards seen during Q3-2022 led by mounting global economic challenges and fears of an impending recession.

The total value of contracts awarded in the GCC during 9M-

2022 declined by 26.2% to \$53.0 billion, down from \$71.7 billion during the same period last year.

At the country level, except Kuwait and Bahrain, the breakeven oil prices for 2022 witnessed a downward revision for the rest of the GCC countries in IMF's latest report versus their projections in April-2022. Moreover, with current oil prices of around \$95 per barrel, only Bahrain has a 2022 breakeven oil price above the current oil price at \$127.6 per barrel.

Qatar continues to boast the lowest breakeven oil price this year at \$48.1 per barrel followed by Kuwait and UAE at \$56.7 per barrel and \$63.9 per barrel, respectively. Comparatively, the average price of Brent spot crude stood at \$ 104.1 per barrel during YTD-2022.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

• Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
• Choose from a wide range of brands & models
• PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
• Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

شوبين جفت Shoppinggift

GET FREE SHOPPING VOUCHER with every purchase of TallyPrime single user

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
<https://www.asiasolutions.net>

ASIA SOLUTIONS
TALLY GOLD PARTNER
TALLY FOR VAT

WEDNESDAY

NOVEMBER 2, 2022

RABEE AL THANI 7, 1444 AH

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

LAMASAT BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Accounting Services, VAT and Consultancy Services

Contact: **24571454** GSM: **95392251**

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

CABINS FOR SALE

3No. Cabins in excellent condition, mounted on an oilfield Skid are for sale.

Units are available for inspection.
(Contact: +968 95364097 for Location map)

Interested parties can submit your Offer on accounts@killultan.com

SIT. WANTED

LOGISTICS executive, GCC 9 years experience with a valid driving licence. Seeking a suitable position. Experience in exports and imports in all transport modes. Mob: +968 78426377.

FINANCE manager, M.Com, 17 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com, Call: 78002582.

INDIAN female (M Tech Civil Structural Engineering) having 7 years experience as Quantity Surveyor cum Quality Control Engineer, looking for suitable position. Contact: 96154505.

PLANNING engineer, PMP. Indian male Civil Eng. Around 10 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com, Call: 78002582.

GENERAL manager with 16+ years experience in Oman, MBA — BE, seeks suitable placement. Contact: 94008034.

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact: 79256679.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of Capital Reduction

IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Saham Alfidia for trading and constructions (LLC)**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1183805**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from RO **150,000,000** to **3,000,000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

النماني للشحن
AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRILANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

FREE PICK UP 24/7

Branches : Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Seeb, Barka, Suwail, Sohar

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

URGENTLY REQUIRED SALES ENGINEER

- ◆ One of the leading Omani Organisations is seeking to hire multiple sales engineers in their Oil & Division.
- ◆ Preference is given to candidates who have at least 3-4 years of experience in Trading of Instrumentation, Electrical & Mechanical Products to all the Oil & Gas industry in Oman. He must possess an Omani / GCC driving license.
- ◆ Salary is among the best in the best in the industry with fixed and variable components. Annual bonus and Incentives are provided against good performance.

Kindly send your CV's at
Recruit.oman4@gmail.com

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: **97239696**
95355638

Gulf Center Consultancy & Audit
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Sur

سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: **24501568, 24502479** • Fax: **24503566**
Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocroaches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: **24787606, 24787503**
Direct Line: **24786077**
GSM: **99382355, 99172309**
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SERVICES

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

FOR RENT

FLATS 2bhk and 1 bhk in Mumtaz. Contact 99341138 and 90991079.

BUILDING of 1.500 sqm 3 stories, accommodation, store and office at Misfa. ☎99432177, 99010964.

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

- Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
- Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. ☎972494490.

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

REQUIRED

URGENT REQUIREMENT - MARKETING EXECUTIVE

A REPUTED MEI (Mechanical, Electrical & Instrumentation) contracting company based in Sultanate of Oman looking for experienced marketing executives. Candidates with minimum 5 years relevant field experience in Oman with valid Omani driving licence may forward the CV to directrecruit2022@gmail.com

Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020 DHUL QAADA 18, 1441 AH

OMAN دُحْدُحُ DAILY
Observer

ESTABLISHED IN 1985 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: ABDULLAH BIN SALIM AL SHABLI VOL. 24 NO. 239 / PAGES 16

HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER

UN HAILS OMAN'S SUPPORT FOR PEACE IN YEMEN

NEW YORK: António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has congratulated the role of the Sultanate in supporting international efforts to establish security and peace in Yemen.

In a virtual video call, the secretary backing the global coalition mission, Guterres said that the international community is grateful for the Sultanate of Oman for its crucial role in enhancing efforts aimed at establishing peace and security in Yemen.

"The United Nations values this vital and positive role," he said.

Commenting that the Sultanate represents a unique model, not only in the Middle East, but also in the world, of engaged countries to follow the example of the Sultanate in advancing and supporting peace and stability — GUTERRES

MUSCAT: Sultanate of Oman's Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Dr. Saad bin Ahmed bin Sultan, and Chairman of the Supreme Court, Dr. Saad bin Ahmed bin Sultan, are seen during the ceremony.

Said bin Khalifa al-Rumayh, Chairman of the Supreme Court, is seen during the ceremony.

Said bin Khalifa al-Rumayh, Chairman of the Supreme Court, is seen during the ceremony.

Said bin Khalifa al-Rumayh, Chairman of the Supreme Court, is seen during the ceremony.

NEW RO 50 BANKNOTE FROM THIS MONTH

MUSCAT: To mark the 50th anniversary of the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Finance has issued a new 50 Omani banknote.

The new banknote is part of the 50th anniversary series of banknotes issued by the Ministry of Finance.

The new banknote is part of the 50th anniversary series of banknotes issued by the Ministry of Finance.

STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN

CAMPUS NEWS

MUSCAT: The frequent cases of COVID-19 have prompted the Ministry of Health to issue a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

The Ministry of Health has issued a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

The Ministry of Health has issued a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

SCIENCE PEOPLE NOT POLITICAL

MUSCAT: The frequent cases of COVID-19 have prompted the Ministry of Health to issue a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

The Ministry of Health has issued a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

The Ministry of Health has issued a warning to the public to stay apart and break the chain of transmission.

Three of Oman's most fascinating islands

As a creative and well-experienced graphic designer, Maryam bint Khamis al Ismailiyah was spellbound by Doodle Art, who mastered it after a couple of years of practice and experience. Today, she produces doodle illustrations that are printed on t-shirts, mugs, notebooks, walls and others... **P20**

Taylor Swift first artist to claim entire top 10 on hot songs chart

TAYLOR SWIFT MADE music history on Monday, becoming the first artist ever to simultaneously nab all ten of the top US song chart's spots after the release of her album "Midnights."

The total takeover saw her song "Anti-Hero" launch in the Billboard Hot 100's top spot. It's the first time in the chart's 64-year history that a

single artist has claimed the entire top 10, Billboard said. The last artist to come close was Drake, who took nine of the coveted spots in September 2021.

Swift released her highly anticipated album "Midnights" on October 21, also debuting at the top of Billboard's top album's chart with the



biggest week for a release since Adele's "25" in 2015.

Swift's release of her 10th album crashed Spotify for hours, but "Midnights" still set a record as the most-streamed album in a day, according to the platform.

The album's 13 songs tell "the story of 13 sleepless nights scattered throughout my life," Swift said.

Together, they form "a full picture of the intensities of that mystifying, mad hour."

Swift's latest album sees her returning to pop and recalling some of her earliest hits after two pandemic albums, "Folklore" and "Evermore," leaned into folk.

It also drops as the 32-year-old has found resounding success as she makes good on her vow to re-record her first six albums so she can control their rights. She has released two re-records of her six albums thus far: "Fearless" and "Red." Swift still has four left, after she was contractually allowed to begin the process in November 2020. — **AFP**

READ

BEYOND THE WAND

BY TOM FELTON

The actor known for playing the villain Draco Malfoy in the "Harry Potter" movies recounts his life on and off the set of the film series.



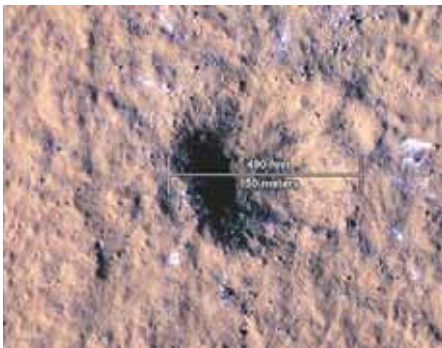
FASHION

Egyptian actress Yasmin Sabri arrives to attend the Fashion Trust Arabia Awards, a part of year-round cultural events culminating the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 football tournament, at the national museum of Qatar in Doha. — **AFP**



MOON WATCH

An impact crater about 490 feet (150 metres) across, formed December 24, 2021, by a space rock that struck in the Amazonis Planitia region of Mars, is seen in this annotated image taken by the High-Resolution Imaging Science Experiment (HiRISE) camera aboard NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter. — **Reuters**





In Iraq's Babylon, age-old building techniques heal climate scars

AT THE TEMPLE OF NINMAKH, the Sumerian mother goddess, Iraqi archaeologists are using 7,000-year-old techniques to protect the monument, and the rest of the ancient city of Babylon, from salt seeping into its heart and destroying it from within.

With carefully made desalinated mudbricks, they are repairing the ruins of the Unesco World Heritage site, which are being corroded by the intrusion of increasingly salty groundwater - a problem linked to prolonged droughts and soil erosion in climate-vulnerable Iraq.

"Salty groundwater is our greatest enemy," said Ammar al



Tae, an archeologist with the Iraqi State Board of Antiquities who oversees the project and calls himself wryly "the guardian of Babylon".

The ancient Mesopotamian city on the Euphrates River was once the centre of a sprawling empire, renowned for its towers and mudbrick temples. Its hanging gardens, built about 2,600 years ago, were one of the seven ancient wonders of the world.

Problems such as salt intrusion, extreme temperatures, flooding and soil erosion linked in part to climate change are threatening heritage sites in Iraq and around the world, from indigenous rock art in Australia to Bangladesh's 15th century "Mosque City".

Al-Tae and his team learned the painstaking, months-long process of making special low-salt mudbricks from a local artisan who had inherited the age-old technique from his father, and they produced their first batch for repairs this year.

First, the experts scoured the ground for more than a week before finding soil with tolerable salt levels. Even then, the soil had to be "washed" to make it even less salty, Al Tae said.

Next, the mud was mixed with sand, grit, straw and water, shaped into a large circle and left

to ferment for a month, a process that drives the remaining salt to the edge of the mix, producing a white, crystalline fringe.

After scraping away the unwanted salty crust, the remaining sludge was then shaped into bricks, which were laid out on plaited reed mats woven by local women's cooperatives, giving the blocks a distinctive pattern.

The whole process reduces the amount of salt in new mudbricks by almost three-quarters, Al Tae said.

Once they had been stacked in the shade of a tree for a couple of days to air, the bricks were spread out in the sun to bake for a month before being ready for use.

PREPARING THE DEFENCES

Al Tae's worst enemy, salt, is evident everywhere.

Modern maintenance work on some of Babylon's monuments used concrete and cement to repair damaged facades and fill cracks, a method he said had exacerbated damage arising from rising salt levels combined with the region's high humidity.

Another of the projects that Al Tae works on involves removing concrete from around the ruins and replacing it with more porous material, such as river stones, another construction technique employed by the area's residents

supplies - even clean water, which has become more expensive in drought-plagued Iraq.

The Iraqi government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In addition to warding off salt, Babylon's archaeologists must fight pests that have beset the ruins as the palm trees and vegetation around the ancient city have withered in the parched conditions of recent years.

Mites and wasps that used to feed on the greenery have started to eat away at the mudbrick walls and foundations. Chemical pesticides cannot be used due to the damage they might cause to the ruins, so Al-Tae has to smoke



in past millennia.

"Humidity doesn't like cement and concrete. It can't get out of it, so it began going after the weaker places. Of course, mudbrick is weaker, so it started exiting through it," he said.

That accelerated the erosion of the mudbricks and the numerous engravings that once adorned the walls next to the Ishtar Gate, a colossal structure that towered over Babylon's main thoroughfare.

An inscription of Marduk, Babylon's chief deity, still decorates the walls leading to the gate, depicting the god as a hybrid sphinx-like creature with the head of a snake, the front legs of a lion, and a scorpion's tail.

But below him, an image of Adad, the god of weather, is barely visible - lost to the ravages of time and climate change.

Of the original engraving of a bull, only a hoof can be seen today, and the lower parts of the walls are stained with salty white veins.

Despite the magnitude of the problem, Al Tae said he receives no support from the Iraqi government. His current projects depend entirely on foreign funding.

"The lack of support and investment from the government is our biggest challenge," he said, pointing to the high cost of basic

out the pests instead.

Many of Iraq's other ancient sites are also feeling the effects of worsening drought.

At the site of the Sumerian city of Girsu, the foundations of the world's oldest known bridge are being eaten away by salty sandstorms as desert-like conditions spread around the southern city of Basra, where seawater is seeping into the land and destroying fertile soils.

"It's like a weaponised dust storm - crystals that destroy," said Jaafar Jotheri, a professor of geoarchaeology at Iraq's University of Al Qadisiyah and one of those working on a project to conserve the 4,000-year-old bridge.

Salt is also causing damage at the ruins of Uruk, the first city where writing is known to have been practiced.

"You see cracks wherever you go," Jotheri said.

At Babylon, Al Tae thinks the country's ancient past can continue to be mined for solutions to its current difficulties.

"We should be just like the Sumerians," he said. "If we want to lessen the impact of climate change, then we should be using the right material to combat these changes in nature." — Thomson Reuters Foundation

FASHION

Parisian catwalk wants to show beauty has no age



HAND IN HAND, wearing white edgy outfits, elderly models and fashion students walked an unusual fashion show on Thursday evening in Paris, to promote a more inclusive stance on age.

"To live this at my age, it really moves me," said Daisy Salmon, 90, who added she was delighted to be there and talk with youngsters. "I will remember this for a long time."

Charity Les Petits Freres des Pauvres (little brothers of the Poor) organised the intergenerational show to challenge ageist views in collaboration with fashion school LISAA Mode Paris, whose students designed the clothes, or walked alongside Salmon and other models.

"Why not elderly people," 21 year-old Christian Gonzalez said. "We forget them too often in our society."

The charity's goal with the show is to shine a light on the need for more age diversity in fashion, as part of a broader campaign to raise awareness about the gap between elderly people's realities and social clichés, which can lead to their isolation.

— Reuters



TRAVEL TALES

Explorer's cameras found on Canada glacier — 85 years on



THE CAMERAS AND equipment of a famed US explorer, Bradford Washburn, have been found after being abandoned in the ice of a Yukon glacier in 1937, Canadian officials said.

Mountaineer Washburn was also a photographer, cartographer, and director of the Boston Science Museum, in Massachusetts, which he founded.

Last spring, three athletes "embarked on a mission like no other: to find an incredible piece of history," Parks Canada said in a Facebook post this week.

The team put together by extreme sports video makers Teton Gravity Research travelled to Kluane Park, in the Yukon Territory, with the mission of finding the long-lost cache of cameras and other equipment.

Back in 1937, Washburn had been on an expedition with three other mountaineers to attempt the ascent of Mount Lucania, which at 5,226 metres (17,145 feet) is the third highest peak in Canada. At the time it was the highest peak ever climbed in North America.

Faced in the descent with extreme conditions, Washburn and another American mountaineer, Robert Bates, had to reduce their equipment to the barest minimum, leaving behind cameras and climbing equipment that would one day become treasures found.

"Buried in ice since 1937, this cache contained three historic cameras with photos of what these mountains looked like 85 years ago," Teton Gravity Research said on Facebook.

Washburn died in 2007 at age 96. — AFP



find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use #OmanObserver and #BeAnObserver.

AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Disney unveils centenary events at London 'Mary Poppins' mansion



DISNEY ON THURSDAY held a glitzy presentation of planned European events for the Hollywood studio's 100th anniversary next year, returning to a London mansion used in its 2018 "Mary Poppins Returns" film.

Fiction's most famous English nanny with magical powers was on hand to greet arriving celebrity attendees, urging them to "run along" through the venue's columned hall filled with projections of Disney cartoons.

Events previewed at the show include a "Disney100" exhibition of historic film costumes and props that will be shown at ExCel in London next autumn.

The studio will also stage a multimedia concert tour, with the Hollywood Sound Orchestra performing movie sound tracks as audiences watch scenes from films, which will have eight UK dates starting in May.

Events will also take place in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and France through next year.

Brothers Walt and Roy Disney founded the company in 1923 and it has evolved over the ensuing century from making lavish cartoon films such as "Bambi" to entering today's video streaming market.

It is now increasingly behind dramas and documentaries, as well as movie franchises, while subsidiary operations include theme parks and TV networks.

"Over the past 100 years I think we've seen how it's changed, starting off with one of the first cartoons set to sound (a 1928 Mickey Mouse film called "Steamboat Willie)," said Nicole Morse, a company vice-president responsible for brand strategy.

The venue for Thursday's showcase, Bankside Hall in the City of London, was chosen because it featured in film "Mary Poppins Returns" released four years ago, she noted.

Silver models of Minnie and Mickey Mouse, artists drawing the famous characters for guests, alongside costumed Snoopy and Chip and Dale mascots, completed the Hollywood-evoking scene in the financial district building.

Last month, Disney held a preview of anniversary events for US fans at its D23 Expo in Anaheim, California.

The centenary comes as Disney+, its streaming service, is set to follow competitor Netflix in launching cheaper ad-subsidised subscriptions in December. — Reuters

ART

"Cities of Pastel" Exhibition at Gallery Sarah



GALLERY SARAH hosts the art exhibition "Cities of Pastel" by the two artists Rahma al Hajri and Samira al Yaqoubi.

The exhibition is the outcome of the artists' imagination, their perception of the environment around them and the lives of people in cities, which were expressed in an abstract and surreal style. The two artists participate with more than forty artworks, representing the features of cities through their use of different materials.

The exhibition was opened on November 1 under the auspices of Her Highness Sayyida Alia bint Thuwaini al Said, at Gallery Sarah.

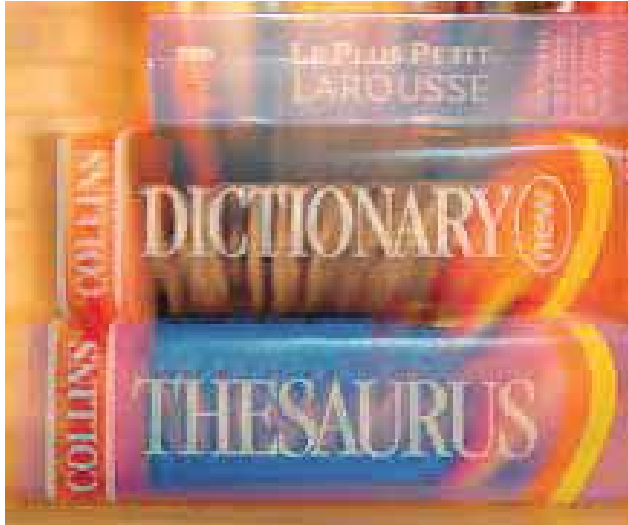
The artist, Dr Samira al Yaqoubi, has a Master's degree in jewellery design, and a PhD in philosophy in curricula and teaching. Her artworks highlight the Omani environment, which is rich with ancient heritage and panoramic nature, as she takes the details of this wonderful culture in a surreal style. Currently, she focuses on the multi-material method that gives life to the artwork.

The artist Samira participated in several exhibitions from 1998 until 2014, including a joint exhibition entitled (Once upon a time) at the Opera Galleria and a solo exhibition (Glory of Muscat) at the Omani Society for Fine Arts 2012. She also participated in several international exhibitions in the United Kingdom, Russia, Jordan and Qatar. The artist released her first book entitled "Silver" in 2012.

Artist and art teacher, Rahma al Hajri, is one of the artists who practiced art and explored it for a long time. Her works dealt with several topics inspired by the ancient history of her country, Oman, its heritage, mosques and domes, in addition to issues related to women. The artist worked on several experiments with materials such as paper and cloth, and her works depended on acrylic colours and inks. She has participated in several art exhibitions, including: the "Colour Imprints" exhibition at the Cultural Club in 2011, the "Spray of Art" exhibition at the Omani Society for Fine Arts in Dhofar Governorate in 2012, and the exhibition "Once Upon a Time" at Opera Galleria in 2013. The artist Rahma has a Bachelor's degree in art education from Sultan Qaboos University and a Master's degree in curricula and general teaching methods from Sohar University.

CHANGING WORLD

Collins Dictionary names 'permacrisis' its word of the year for 2022



COLLINS DICTIONARY has named "permacrisis" as its word of the year after a period which has seen people live through war, inflation, climate change and political instability.

The word, defined as "an extended period of instability and insecurity", is one of the several terms on the 2022 list which has seen increasing usage due to the ongoing crises across the world.

The dictionary said it chose the word as it "sums up quite succinctly just how truly awful 2022 has been for so many people".

Six words on Collins' list of 10 words of the year are new to Collins Dictionary.com, including "permacrisis", despite being first noted in academic contexts from the 1970s.

Another word on the list is "partygate", referring to the scandal over social gatherings held in defiance of public health restrictions and which contributed to an extended period of political instability.

"Kyiv" has also been added after the city became a symbol of Ukraine's stand against Russian aggression as well as "warm bank", which describes a heated building such as a library or place of worship where people who cannot afford to heat their own homes may go.

The personal impact of the ongoing crises has also influenced the list with the addition of "quiet quitting" - the act of doing one's basic duties at work and no more, either by way of protest or to improve work/life balance, as well as "vibe shift" which relates to a significant change in the prevailing atmosphere or culture.

The historic moment of the British Queen's death in September has also been marked as "Carolean" and is added to the lexicon, signifying the end of the second Elizabethan era and the beginning of the reign of King Charles.

"Lawfare", which is the strategic use of law to intimidate or hinder an opponent is also included as well as the more unusual term "splooting" relating to animals stretching themselves out in order to cool down - a phenomenon seen frequently during summer's intense heat.

Rounding off the list is "sportswashing", a word for how organisations or countries use sports promotion to enhance reputations or distract from controversial activities or policies, which has seen increased use in the year of the upcoming FIFA World Cup in Qatar.

Alex Beecroft, Managing Director of Collins Learning, said: "Language can be a mirror to what is going on in society and the wider world and this year has thrown up challenge after challenge.

"It is understandable that people may feel, after living through upheaval caused by Brexit, the pandemic, severe weather, the war in Ukraine, political instability, the energy squeeze and the cost-of-living crisis, that we are living in an ongoing state of uncertainty and worry.

"Our list this year reflects the state of the world right now - not much good news, although, with the determination of the Ukrainian people reflected by the inclusion of 'Kyiv', and the dawn of the new 'Carolean' age in the UK, there are rays of hope."

The lexicographers at Collins Dictionary monitor their 18-billion-word database and a range of media sources, including social media, to create the annual list of new and notable words.

Last year's word of the year was "NFT" (short for non-fungible token) which entered the mainstream after millions were spent on the most sought-after images and videos. — PA

Three of Oman's most fascinating islands



By Arwa al Hashimi
Photos by Adnan Dhaish
and Turki al Junaibi

The diversity of a country's natural landscape contributes a lot to the overall attractiveness and impression of a country. Oman can be included as one of the topmost attractive countries for its different natural destinations. And for that, it hosts large numbers of people every year. The natural delights of Oman include valleys, mountains, lakes, beaches as well as islands. The intriguing coastline of Oman is known for the splendid islands along it. Tourists and locals are entertained when they visit those islands meeting their cool refreshing air and wide beaches. Here are the five of the most charming islands in Oman:

MASIRAH ISLAND

Masirah is the widest island of all with an area of 649 km. It is located on the east coast of Oman. What's interesting about this famous island is that it's divided into northern and southern parts each of which is different from the other. The northern side of Masirah has more people compared with the southern side which is almost deserted. Masirah is special for its nice weather and wonderful scenery. Its water is spectacular and known for its aquatic diversity which makes fishing the largest profession in the area. Deep in the waters, you can see big numbers of turtles called Al Tursah. Those species are known for their large sizes which attract more people to watch them. Masirah is enchanting; many photographers see it as a wonderful spot for amazing pictures.

AL HALLANIYAT ISLANDS

Al Hallaniyat is an archipelago that has several wonderful islands including Al Hallaniyah, Al Sudah, Al Haskiyah and Al Qabliyah. It is located in Dhofar at latitude 17 30 from the north. Al Hallaniyah is the largest island in the archipelago, at 25 kilometres. It is located in the centre. Many people spend winter time on it for its calm atmosphere and cleanliness. Al Hallaniyat is especially known to have the best species of birds, cattle and beautiful tortoises. Splendidly, it has several archaeological places.

If you are looking for a more luxurious place, you shall go to Al Sudah which is known for its beautiful resorts and hotels that provide all the amenities that you desire. However, this island is only open for visitors as it is unfit for habitation. It is called Al Sudah which means "The Black Island" for its rocky mountains, plains and hills that have a dark black colour.

Al Haskiyah is located nearby Al Hasik town. It is not populated and is uninhabitable. It has many old rocky caves and tall mountains. People visit it to relax and escape from the city's regular bustle.

TELEGRAPH ISLAND

The last island that you shall visit is named telegraph. It has got this special name for the very first telegraph wire in the middle east passed through it. It connects Iraq to India. Telegraph island is located in the Wilayat of Khasab in Musandam. At first, it belonged to the United Kingdom of Britain, and after several years, the Sultanate of Oman regained control over it. It is one of the most visited destinations among Oman islands. Many tourists from different countries of the world come to take souvenir photos next to its scenic landscapes. Despite its small space, Telegraph island has a large number of diverse terrains as well as high mountains.

The beautiful islands of Oman have always contributed to promoting tourism in Oman and made it one of the most wonderful countries in the area. With their cool weather and splendid views, visitors get the chance to spend their most amazing moments and enjoy their time.

