

THEYAZIN TO PRESIDE OVER T20 CRICKET WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS

HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will preside over the opening ceremony of the final qualifiers of the T20 Cricket World Cup, hosted by the Sultanate, on Sunday. The tournament will be held at the Oman Cricket Academy in Al Amerat and concludes on October 21 with the participation of Oman, Bangladesh, Scotland, Papua New Guinea. The opening ceremony will be held at 1 pm following which Oman will take on Papua New Guinea while Scotland will meet Bangladesh at 6 pm. — **ONA**



P15

NEW TELECOM TOWERS MUST BE AESTHETICALLY DESIGNED: TRA



P19

THE MIDDLE EAST TRANSFORMS INTO A PREMIER ENTERTAINMENT DESTINATION



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OMAN

SALUTES ITS DAUGHTERS

SQUADRON LEADER FATIMA AL MANTHERIYAH was piloting one of four helicopters heading to North Al Batinah from Muscat as the tropical cyclone Shaheen ravaged the governorates of North and South Al Batinah. Speaking on the eve of the Omani Women’s Day, Fatima said: “We set off at 4 am on October 4 from Muscat after the tropical cyclone passed the city. The weather was fine but after we crossed Barka there was heavy rain and the closer we got to the affected wilayats the rain became extremely heavy. At the end all four helicopters landed peacefully in the wilayats of Al Suwaiq and Al Khabourah.”



Succour for Shaheen victims

MUSCAT: In coincidence with the Omani Women’s Day, the Ahd Foundation will roll-out Ahd Al Khair convoy on Sunday to help citizens and residents, especially women and children affected by the tropical cyclone Shaheen.

The Honourable Lady, Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, is keen on Omani women associations to take part in the Ahd Al Khair convoy.

The move comes as confirmation of the importance of the charitable and humanitarian work particularly in times of calamity which proves the unity and cohesion of the Omani society.

The convoy will be led by the staff of Ahd Foundation, representatives of the Omani women’s associations in all the governorates and women volunteers from the Royal Court Affairs. The participants will distribute essential items in the areas affected by the tropical cyclone.

The caravan will set off from Muscat and make the first stop in Wilayat of Al Musannah in South Al Batinah Governorate and then move on to the wilayats of Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah and Saham in North Al Batinah Governorate and the last stop will be in the Wilayat of Ibri in Al Dhahirah Governorate. — **ONA**

SEE MORE REPORTS ON P2 & 3 ON OMANI WOMEN’S DAY

HEALTH SURVEY IN CYCLONE-HIT AREAS



ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnassri

The Ministry of Health will conduct a survey to assess risk of disease outbreaks in the areas hit by cyclone Shaheen for 10 days from Sunday. The ministry urged people in the governorates of North and South Al Batinah, extending from the Wilayat of Al Musannah to the Wilayat of Al Khabourah to cooperate with health workers to investigate possible cases water, food and vector borne diseases, besides active investigation of

suspected cases of fever, rashes as well as jaundice.

The survey will also study type and density of mosquitoes that transmit diseases using several types of traps.

All facilities will be surveyed sequentially on lines parallel to the streets and tracks (so that the geographic systems team can follow-up on the work and know the un-surveyed facilities) to place traps.

Sites will be randomly selected by the geographic systems team.

The data to be collected will be uploaded online or apps. In addition, the insect information and geographical locations will be linked via a barcode placed in the larval container and sent to the laboratory for classification.

The data will be analysed using geographic information systems to identify levels of risk in the scanned boxes to direct appropriate interventions and immediate control work through electronic linking to the application.

The National Committee for

Emergency Management on Sunday said the power supply has been restored by 98 per cent in North Al Batinah, water supply, telecom, fuel supply (all 100 per cent), road network (92 to 98 per cent) and waste management (85 per cent).

The relief and shelter sector has urged those wishing to conduct aid to the affected areas about the need to coordinate with the official authorities. Relief convoys with prior approvals will not be received in the affected areas.

People return to homes after services restored

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Cleaning the heavy mud loads accumulated on the streets of Bidiya and the surrounding wilayats, one of the worst affected by the cyclone Shaheen on October 3, has been completed. Roads are back to normal, and life is on track here, according to Muscat Municipality sources.

Most areas in Bidiya were inundated that affected telecommunications, basic infrastructure, houses and vehicles.

“Our technical teams deployed in and around the wilayat have succeeded in making this area back on track, thanks to the incessant, day and night efforts of all the teams as well as the NGOs”, a source at the civic body said.

For several days and nights, the teams were engaged in repairing the electric lines, erecting the pylons that were felled by the storm, cleaning and sweeping streets, and removing and transporting waste accumulated in and around the streets and houses.

“It was a herculean task to get rid of the mud accumulation on the streets, repairing the electric poles which were drenched to the core, and cleaning up the households and elsewhere in the affected areas”, he described.

Most of the rehabilitation camps have been closed as people return to their houses, while the Royal Oman Police (ROP) and Defence Wings continue to camp in the affected areas.

Sultanate celebrates Omani Women's Day today



Today (Sunday) October 17 is the twelfth anniversary of the Omani Women's Day which is accorded great attention by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The Omani Women's Day documents an important period of Oman's history in terms of the changes and transformation in the roles played by the Omani women and their active participation in the nation-building process. The Omani Women's Day is a medal of honour and a source of pride because it was directed by the late

Sultan Qaboos to enable Omani women to participate with their male partners in serving the nation.

His Majesty has affirmed that the women's participation in shaping the present and the future is a major pillar of the national action and the Omani women now enjoy their legal rights and are working side-by-side with their male partners in various aspects of national services. His Majesty affirmed his permanent attention to these national constants.

The honouring of a number

of female personalities by the Honourable Lady, Spouse of His Majesty the Sultan, on the Omani Women's Day last year, comes in appreciation of their leading roles.

The latest statistics show 82,988 women work in the public sector and 69,387 women work in the private sector which represents realisation of the government's plan to activate the role of the Omani women and their participation in the process of development in line with the Oman Vision 2040. — ONA

WOMEN OF TODAY

SUPPORTIVE

— ENTERPRISING

— INSPIRING

— EMPOWERING

LAKSHMI
KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

50 years since the renaissance began; women in Oman have reached the status of equal partnership in their contribution towards the development of Oman. Education has been the foundation for the empowerment of women in Oman.

From education to health, leadership to team building process the Omani woman continues to aspire and achieve and has been leaving her mark in volunteerism, environment to human rights and science, engineering, medicine administration, literature as well as art in its various forms from canvas to theatre. Entrepreneurship has become a fertile ground and the young women in Oman have captured the essence of the digital world and have been enterprising in using social media for small businesses. Education has been her core leading to success in the chosen paths.

So what are her challenges and strengths?

The *Observer* caught up with women who are not just achieving success for themselves but making a difference in others' lives too.



Ghaya al Barwani

GHAYA AL BARWANI is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credentialed by the International Coaching Federation (ICF); she is a corporate and business leadership coach and trainer. Ghaya is also the Vice President of ICF Oman Chapter and this is what she has to say when it comes to weakness in women of today: "As women, we are trained and raised to be helpful, supportive and generally not discuss our prowess and strengths. Being powerful and strong is not seen as "valuable assets" in a woman. Yes, I know men in our culture have the same issues, it is acceptable for a man to be assertive; same assertiveness in a woman can come out as "pushy".

Education and the job that led stood as the pillar for **MARIAM AL FAZARY**, who is still mourning for her father but is bravely wearing a face of confidence as she continues with her job at a money exchange where she has been working for the last two years. Being the eldest, she has become the leader of the house in earning and shouldering responsibility alongside her mother in looking after her sisters in college and two younger brothers in school along with one more sister in school.

"I believe in being confident especially in front of my siblings so they move forward successfully. Education is the most important aspect in life. My father taught me that and I want to pass it on to my younger siblings. My parents have always wished me the best and they made



Amna al Sharji

sure I have the confidence to face the world. Today there are times when I feel the pressure of the responsibility, without my father around, but I have to be strong for my mother and siblings. When I do not feel good, they are not happy, they become nervous and miss my father unbearably. I should become responsible. I tell my brothers and sisters to focus in school and college because education is their future. It made me independent," said Mariam.

She says she has learnt a lot from her father and one of them was reading books.

"He had immense knowledge in various areas and he would sit with us and discuss them. He also taught me, 'before you do anything think about it.' He would advise constantly on focusing on work and not to incur mistakes. He would spend a lot of time interacting with us and now I do all that with my family. He had a passion for people and I am picking on that skill because it is important in my job. Before I go to sleep everyday

my mother advises me about how to be at work and how to handle people with respect and care, and when customers come seeking my assistance I feel great," explained Mariam.

NASRA AL ADAWI is an accomplished poet in the country. Nasra did not stop there; she went on to help others use writing as a therapy.

"Poetry has been an escape since childhood. In teen years, it was self expression and the future. In adulthood, poetry helped me in overcoming grief and inner guilt. Now it is for everyone to enhance emotional and mental wellness," said Nasra.

She reflected, "In 2002, as a poet I thought poetry is to be appreciated by others. Then in 2019, I found poetry changes people's life, through inspiring them to write by themselves, to enable them to pour their internal voices into reflections and understanding oneself. So we bring to the community healing pen, to equip individuals with writing tools in order for them to increase their emotional resilience."



Nasra al Adawi

AMMA AL SHARJI is a horse rider and her ability to ride, communicate with a being larger and stronger than her has had an impact. She has participated in many shows and competitions and is now aiming at international events to compete.

"It has a profound impact on the personality in terms of emotional connection rather than physical strength," said Amma. She spends about two to three hours every day practicing horse riding.

Ask her about women empowerment and this is what she has to say, "Empowerment of a woman is giving her all her rights in different ways and making her voice matter in the society. Most importantly evaluate or judge her according to her skills and not gender. So in terms of job opportunity, upgrades, educational opportunities — she should be judged according to her skills, capabilities and accomplishments and not by her gender."

Amna's role model has been her mother who also happened to be her first coach. "She continues to coach many and she is an internationally certified judge. She started riding and she taught me and my siblings riding as well and slowly we developed the passion for horses and horse riding and the entire industry." The passion has also turned out to be her career.

Horse riding has had an impact on her outlook, "Horse riding has taught me how to be patient and persistent. Most importantly horse riding teaches you how to be humble. All this criterion are in me."



HONOURING AN ICON

SARAH AL SHARJI

On this day last year, I sent a text message to someone who had a huge impact in shaping my professional persona. Dr Suad al Lamki had just been honoured by the Omani Society of Lawyers, and I wrote to her to say that of all the women that were honoured on Omani Women's Day, she was the one I was proudest to see. I told her how grateful I was for the opportunity to work closely with her, and for her being my mentor, and how she will always be an icon for Omani women. She replied with a humble thank you, and suggested we meet up as it had been a while since we met. I promised her I would, and made a mental note to arrange to see her when circumstances permit. I wish I had known then that that would be my last direct contact with her, as on the evening of May 7th, my beloved Dr Suad al Lamki's soul departed to the Almighty. A flame that burned fiercely for 83 years finally went out, and looking up at the sky that night, I could swear it was noticeably dimmer.

She loved life, and her love for life was contagious. I had the honour and privilege to have worked with her in the formative years of my career. From my first week at my first job, she took me under her wing, and I was unofficially her shadow from then on for a good few years. In the early days I asked her what area of law her PhD was on, and she answered "I don't know why people keep referring to me as Dr, I'm not a PhD holder". People didn't just do this out of respect; as one former minister told her, "your credentials exceed even those of PhD holders." Indeed they did.

Oman has produced a good number of extremely competent legal professionals, but Dr Suad was on another level entirely. She may still be the first Omani female to have ever worked as a judge; she was appointed in Tanzania many years ago, and even considering my modest work experience at the time, it was clear that she must have been great at the job as she had an innate sense of justice that was obvious in all her interactions. Her motto at work and other aspects of her life was "Justice delayed is justice denied." She never tired of stressing how you must be fair in any decision you need to make, especially in our line of work. Forgot your familial and friendly relationships; when it comes to people's rights, justice must absolutely prevail without other considerations.

She had a presence that com-



Dr Suad al Lamki

First female lawyer who has inspired generations of women to come

manded respect. She wore an elegantly matched suit to work and exuded power and confidence in her discussions. She loved to read, and we were always exchanging books on one legal subject or another. She was the first of many things; the first Omani woman to graduate with a western law degree, the first Omani woman (and perhaps the first and possibly only Omani woman yet) to work as a judge, the most senior Omani legal adviser in the government at the time...the list is long. But all that meant little to her. It was not how she defined nor introduced herself. What was important to her was that she served her country to the best of her ability and that she used her skills to benefit people. And few would deny that she earned the title of "best" in many areas.

I learned first-hand what it means to take pride in your work, and that you absolutely must work hard in this life. She occasionally used a walking stick to assist her in getting around, but that did not stop her from anything. She travelled the world, drove to meetings and still had a voracious appetite for learning until her retirement. I remember the lift at work would frequently break down, and I would call her to tell her to stay put at home until it was up and running, as it would be difficult for her to walk the four flights

of stairs to her office. But each time, despite living just five minutes away from the office, she would come in anyway and ask for her work to be brought down to the reception area where she set up a makeshift office, and that's where she got her work done that day. Problem solved!

She also loved to travel, and I was lucky to have accompanied her on a number of official trips. I have so many joyous memories of spending time in airports, at hotels and exploring the world with her. We regularly attended an annual, international conference and she charmed delegates from all parts of the globe; she always had a circle of friends surrounding her at these events who always looked out for her at the start of each conference. She loved to shop, and was a great travel partner in her eagerness to experience everything. She loved her tea; she was very particular how she has it (she warms the cup first and brews it strong), and we had countless conversations on matters of life over tea, which I will cherish forever.

Perhaps the one thing I admired about her the most was how fierce she was. She was never afraid to speak up when something needed to be said, and even more so when a situation was unfair to anyone. If there was one thing I always yearned to be more like her in, it was her

fearlessness.

I can tell you from a lot of experience, if there was ever an opposing opinion, you wanted her on your side! She was a great storyteller and had an infectious sense of humour. Some of my colleagues and I always looked forward to hearing about her life experiences and vicariously live through them and learn from them by proxy. As for her humour, to this day I find myself in a situation practically every week that reminds me of something she frequently used to say, and I hear her voice in my head saying "Who said common sense was common!"

She was a generous soul with everything she had — her time, money and heart. And a patient teacher; she got so much satisfaction from just knowing that because of her, someone was better informed with the knowledge she had imparted.

Lastly and most of all, beyond anything else, she loved her family dearly and was so proud of them. She spoke of her children and grandchildren with such pride and joy; her late parents, siblings, uncle and aunts. But I always wondered if she had any clue just how proud her family must be of her. It is unfortunate that many years ago, she blazed a path for Arab women in the judiciary only to walk alone for so long, with just a handful privileged to follow, and even more unfortunate that none — yet — are Omani. We both had such high hopes when it was boldly announced at the conclusion of the Omani Women's Forum in 2009 that one of the recommendations made and endorsed was to aim for Omani women to join the judiciary. But alas, it was not meant to be for her.

I started writing this piece on the night she passed. I was in a state of shock and just felt the urge to write, maybe in the hope of holding on to her. But I need not have worried. A part of her will always live in me. Because that is the type of legacy she leaves behind.

My dear Dr Suad, I miss you so very much. I am at a loss for words, as I can't just say thank you; these two words don't start to convey the depth of my gratitude to you. I am forever indebted to you for the life lessons you taught me that have carried me to where I am, and have no doubt that I am good at what I do because I learned from the best. I take comfort in the fact that Allah chose you in the holiest days of Ramadhan. How fitting an end that is for you. You have earned your place with the greats of this country long ago, and your legacy will remain for all of Oman to take pride in and learn from.

(Sarah al Sharji is a lawyer who spent 12 years in government service as a legal adviser, a lawyer appearing before the Courts of Appeal and now works as in-house counsel for a government company. During her 12 years working for the government, she worked closely with the late Dr Suad al Lamki, reviewing government contracts and advising the government on various legal issues ranging from children's and women's rights to investment treaties and major construction projects)



Royal Army of Oman continues its efforts of reopening of roads

MUSCAT: The Royal Army of Oman (RAO) continues its field efforts to complement the opening of roads by the Sultan's Armed Forces' (SAF) Engineering Services within the framework of the efforts exerted by the Main Military Committee for Emergency Management.

In addition, SAF is contributing to the ongoing process to remove debris from the public places, installations and government departments in North Al Batinah Governorate. — ONA

Nearly 3,000 visually impaired in Sultanate

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The number of people with visual impairment in the Sultanate reached 2,945. Of them, 64.8 per cent are male. However, 63 per cent of visual disabilities in the Sultanate are due to pathological causes, according to the electronic census 2020.

The census revealed that the number of Omanis with disabilities stood at 42,304, according to the electronic census

2020, constituting 1.55 per cent of the total Omanis.

The rate was the largest in Al Dhahirah Governorate with 18.5 per thousand, while the minimum rate was in Al Wusta Governorate with 10.1 per thousand, the Bulletin issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information said.

The Ministry of Social Development works to provide special care services to persons with an impairment that need care and rehabilitation. There are many

programmes and activities offered to the disabled to enable them to rely on themselves in managing their lives without relying on others. This is done by providing the appropriate environment for achieving social integration and providing the necessary programmes and services to help them achieve their ambitions like their counterparts in society. The disabled are sponsored and qualified by several institutions as per their impairment under many regulations and legislation.

In 1997, the Al Noor Association for the Blind was established, headquartered in Muscat, and has three branches in Dhofar, Al Dakhiliyah and Al Batinah. Its services extend to the various governorates and regions of the Sultanate.

It aims to educate the community and introduce it to the issues of people with visual disabilities and to integrate them into society. As of now, it provides services to 300 blind males and females.

Walk of Oman begins, to arrive in London on Oct 21

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The sixth edition of Walk of Oman, the leading military charity Walking With The Wounded (WWTW), will arrive in central London on October 21.

The expedition started from Pen-Y-Fan in Wales. The 6-man team then walked through Hereford and Gloucestershire before arriving at the start of the infamous Thames path.

Due to various physical

injuries, some team members will only be able to walk part of the route — overcoming their individual situations to achieve what they can.

According to information from WWTW, before arriving in London, the members of The Grenadier Walk of Oman will have covered a long-distance walking trail from the River Thames source in the Cotswolds and along the historic Thames Path.

They will finish at the Anglo-

Omani Society in London. The team will be supported by a Grenadier vehicle for parts of the route.

Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex and patron of the expedition said, "The team at Walking With The Wounded understand that it's not about where you walk — it's about walking together with a common purpose and shared mission."

"These men and women know what service is, they've seen and overcome adversity, and they

won't let obstacles get in their way. They are paragons of inspiration for communities everywhere. We wish them good luck and good weather," he said.

Walking With The Wounded expedition was scheduled to cross the Omani desert earlier this year.

However, due to the global Covid-19 pandemic, the expedition was shifted to the UK, walking the equivalent distance of 10 marathons in 12 days, to raise funds and awareness for Walking With The Wounded.



CAIRO: The Arab Parliament held the first session of the second term of its third legislative chapter with the participation of the Council of Oman in the Egyptian Capital Cairo, on Saturday.

The Council of Oman's delegation comprised Dr Hassan bin Ali al Madhani, member of

the State Council, Shaikh Ali bin Nasser al Mahrouqi, member of the State Council, and Hameed bin Ali al Nasseri, member of Majlis Ash'shura.

The session deliberated the conditions in the Arab region and the developments in this regard and discussed the committees' reports. — ONA

1,464 applicants vying for 85 jobs in government sector

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour has embarked on the second phase of the written tests for the seventh advertisement of job vacancies in the public sector. The ministry invited 1,464 applicants vying for 85 job vacancies in the government sector.

Saif bin Sulaiman al Shaqsi, Head of the Department of Job Vacancies and Announcements at the Ministry of Labour, said that the new batch of tests for job-seekers comes within the framework of the second phase of the seventh advertisement. He added that the step comes in complementation of the Royal Directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik who gave his directives to prioritise the issue of employment of job-seekers. — ONA





Experts advise PMB for durability of roads

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

Roads and bridges can live longer than expected and withstand adverse climatic conditions to a great extent, provided that groundbreaking technologies are implemented to engineer the constituent materials.

Usually, roads and bridges in any country are subject to several distresses. In general, a lot of deterioration happens due to many factors such as traffic loading, ageing, moisture and extreme temperatures.

The majority of our roads are paved with Hot Mix Asphalt (HMA), which comprises aggregates of different sizes and asphalt binder. The major distress experienced by this type of road/pavement is rutting, fatigue cracking, pothole, transverse cracking.

According to the experts who attended a seminar in Muscat, the frequency and magnitude of traffic loading have been increasing over

the past few decades and the climate has also been changing. These factors have significantly affected the performance and life of our roads and bridges; consequently, more than before, there is a need for engineering the construction materials to enhance durability.

Speaking to the *Observer* on the sidelines of the seminar, Dr Mostafa Abu Hashema, Expert in Roads and Bridges at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) said that the new technologies such as polymer modification could save a lot of resources and money for the exchequer.

“Due to many reasons, a lot of deterioration is happening to the roads and bridges after they are constructed. To safeguard roads and bridges or to increase their lives, we have to improve the quality of HMA. We can do so by using some asphalt binder additives such as polymer,” Dr Mostafa

told the *Observer*, adding that “Most of the roads made with unmodified binders had failed under severe circumstances.

“We need polymer modifications to derive the best results,” added Dr Mostafa.

The seminar on transportation infrastructure materials conducted by Atlas Commerce and Energy, a leading bitumen supplier in Sultanate, aimed at promoting the use of polymer for modification of asphalt binders for further strengthening the road networks that connect all the governorates of the country with each other.

HOW TO PROTECT OUR INFRASTRUCTURE?

According to Dr Arash Motamed, who is an expert from the US (Lead Engineer, and Manager at TxDOT), there are different types of additives such as polymers, fillers and acids that can help us to improve the performance of asphaltic material. Dr

Motamed’s presentation in this seminar provided good information and details on polymer modification of asphaltic materials, the art and science involved, and its benefits for public agencies.

“Basically, the HMA produced using Polymer Modified Bitumen (PMB) will be more stable and durable, and it can support high traffic on Oman’s roads. Furthermore, using PMB can also reduce the cost of annual maintenance for these infrastructures,” Dr Motamed adds.

At this seminar, it was also emphasised on the need for using several advanced test methods to ensure the quality and compatibility of produced PMB. During this event, Atlas Commerce and Energy demonstrated its technical knowledge and partnerships, along with an advanced binder laboratory for research and quality control required for PMB production in the country.

Tariq al Barwani invited as keynote speaker at GITEX GLOBAL 2021

MUSCAT: Knowledge Oman Founder and popular ICT Expert, Tariq bin Hilal al Barwani, is all set to join regional government leaders and senior ICT industry experts at the largest technology exhibition and conference in the middle east, GITEX GLOBAL 2021, to discuss Arab World Technology innovations. GITEX GLOBAL 2021 will take place in the UAE at the Dubai World Trade Centre from October 17-21.

Big tech companies, government entities to next generation start-ups across the globe are expected to attend the event.

“Cybersecurity and privacy



protection are baseline requirements to maintain law and order in a digital world, I am excited to be part of conference and look forward to highlight the challenges in

cyberspace so as the role of open collaboration between public and private sectors,” said Tariq.

CYBERSECURITY

Tariq will be delivering a keynote session along other senior ICT leaders on cybersecurity opportunities, issues and challenges at the “Huawei Arab Innovation Day” scheduled to be conducted at the GITEX GLOBAL 2021 conference. The session will highlight the role of open collaboration between organisations for a resilient digital economy.

“Openness, transparency and collaboration in

cybersecurity is a key factor for a resilience digital economy,” emphasised Tariq.

GITEX GLOBAL 2021 will unite international innovators across the globe in artificial intelligence, 5G, cloud, big data, cybersecurity, blockchain, quantum computing, Fintech and immersive marketing. The annual event will gather the region’s government leaders, academia, industry analysts and regulators under one roof to showcase cutting edge technologies so as engage on comprehensive series of summits and exhibitions from leading tech firms around the world.

Due to many reasons, a lot of deterioration is happening to the roads and bridges after they are constructed. To safeguard roads and bridges or to increase their lives, we have to improve the quality of HMAs

DR MOSTAFA ABU HASHEMA

JOB VACANCY / REAL ESTATE MANAGER

A private company dealing with real estate in the Sultanate of Oman is looking for an experienced and multi-tasking Omani national, with good knowledge and understanding of the Omani real estate market to help its real estate business grow.

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Assist in identifying new land parcels and business development opportunities.
- Assist in identifying partners for development of real estate projects.
- Liaising with external lawyers for due diligence, drafting of various agreements, legal issues etc.
- Assist in developing financial model.
- Analyze research reports.
- Conduct demand assessment for the proposed projects.
- A comprehensive understanding of market analysis, development feasibility analysis, proforma cash flow, development management, approval processes etc.
- Tender analysis.
- Establishing/revising property management forms, reports, and manuals including updates, changes, and additions.
- Represent the company in meeting with partners, government officials, project team meetings etc.
- Preparing MIS & reporting.

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIREMENT:

- Post Graduate (Engineer/Business Management).
- At least 7 years’ experience in the Omani real estate market.
- Planning, Organizing and Analytical skills.
- Excellent communication skills (Oral & Written) in both Arabic and English language.
- Experience with Ministries especially in Ministry of Housing.
- Good computer skills in Excel, Word, PowerPoint and e-mail.
- Presentable and quick learning attitude.

(JOB VACANCY FOR OMANI NATIONALS ONLY)

Interested and qualified candidate are requested to apply with your updated CV & cover letter to: **manager.info2021@gmail.com**

NATIONAL BUREAU COMMERCIAL INFORMATION SAOC (UNDER LIQUIDATION)

INVITATION TO THE EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The liquidators of National Bureau Commercial Information SAOC (Under Liquidation) are pleased to invite all the shareholders of the Company to attend the Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be held at 3.30 PM on Sunday the 7 of November 2021 at the liquidator’s (Moorestephens) office, building no.1022” Walaj street, office no 41, fourth floor, Qurum, Sultanate of Oman, in case the qurum is not met, the date of the next meeting is scheduled on Monday 8 November 2021 at same place and time.

The agenda is as follows:

1. To study and approve the Final Liquidator’s Report including the final financial account during the company’s liquidation period.

Notes:

- Any shareholder of the Company may give a written proxy to another person to attend the meeting and vote on his behalf in accordance with the format attached with the invitation. Adult natural persons are requested to attach the proxy with copy of their ID card or passport for women and minors who have no ID card. Non Omanis are requested to enclose a copy of their residence card or Passport. Juristic person proxy should be sealed and signed by an authorised signatory and enclosed with the CR certificate and specimen signatory copy. Based on Articles 168 and 169, the representative may be from among the shareholders or from others, and it is also permissible to represent one or more shareholders, if it is on behalf of more than one shareholder, it must not be more than 5% of the company’s shares, The board of directors may represent one of the shareholders, otherwise it will be void
- All are requested to kindly be present at the venue 30 minutes prior to the stipulated time of the meeting.
- For any queries regarding the agenda, kindly contact the Company’s Liquidator on 92779898 during working hours from 08:30 and 16:00 hrs, Sunday to Thursday.

Moore Stephens LLC
Official Liquidator

SHUROOQ INVESTMENT SERVICES HOLDING CO SAOG AND ITS SUBSIDIARY (UNDER LIQUIDATION)

INVITATION TO THE EXTRA ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING

The liquidators of Shurooq Investment Services Holding Co SAOG (Under Liquidation) are pleased to invite all the shareholders of the Company to attend the Extra Ordinary General Meeting (EGM) to be held at 3 PM on Sunday the 7 of November 2021 at the liquidators (Moorestephens) office, building no.1022” Walaj street, office no 41, fourth floor, Qurum, Sultanate of Oman, in case the qurum is not met, the date of the next meeting is scheduled on Monday 8 November 2021 at same place and time.

The agenda is as follows:

1. To study and approve the Final Liquidator’s Report including the final financial account during the company’s liquidation period.
2. Distributing the final proceeds from the liquidation, after settling all the claims owed by the company, in accordance with the applicable laws and in accordance with international accounting standards for all shareholders out of the collected amounts available for distribution.

Notes:

- Any shareholder of the Company may give a written proxy to another person to attend the meeting and vote on his behalf in accordance with the format attached with the invitation. Adult natural persons are requested to attach the proxy with copy of their ID card or passport for women and minors who have no ID card. Non Omanis are requested to enclose a copy of their residence card or Passport. Juristic person proxy should be sealed and signed by an authorised signatory and enclosed with the CR certificate and specimen signatory copy. Based on Articles 168 and 169, the representative may be from among the shareholders or from others, and it is also permissible to represent one or more shareholders, if it is on behalf of more than one shareholder, it must not be more than 5% of the company’s shares, The board of directors may represent one of the shareholders, otherwise it will be void
- All are requested to kindly be present at the venue 30 minutes prior to the stipulated time of the meeting.
- For any queries regarding the agenda, kindly contact the Company’s Liquidator on 92779898 during working hours from 08:30 and 16:00 hrs, Sunday to Thursday.

Moore Stephens LLC
Official Liquidator

Sudanese rally for dissolution of government



Sudanese protesters take part in a rally demanding the dissolution of the transitional government, outside the presidential palace in Khartoum. – AFP

KHARTOUM: Hundreds of Sudanese protesters took to the streets on Saturday demanding the dissolution of the transitional government, saying it had failed them economically and politically.

The protests came as Sudan's political scene reels from divisions among factions steering the country through a rocky transition following the April 2019 ouster of president Omar al Bashir after mass protests against his rule.

SPLINTER FACTION

Saturday's demonstrations were organised by a splinter faction of the Forces for Freedom and Change, a civilian alliance which spearheaded the anti-Bashir protests and became a key plank of the transition.

"We need a military government, the current government has failed to bring us justice and equality," said Abboud Ahmed, a 50-year-old protester near the presidential palace in central Khartoum.

Critics of Saturday's protests alleged that the demonstrations were driven by members of the military and security forces, and involve sympathisers with the former regime.

Protesters carried banners calling for the "dissolution of the government", while others chanted "one army, one people" and "the army will bring us bread."

"We are marching in a peaceful protest and we want a military government," said housewife Enaam Mohamed in central Khartoum.

On Friday, Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok warned that the transition is facing "the worst

We need a military government, the current government has failed to bring us justice and equality

ABBOUD AHMED
A protester

and most dangerous" crisis. Support for the transitional government has waned in recent months mainly following a tough raft of IMF-backed economic reforms.

It slashed subsidies on petrol and diesel and brought in a managed currency float, measures deemed by ordinary Sudanese as excessively harsh.

The government has also been beset by protests in east Sudan where demonstrators have blocked trade through a crucial Red Sea port since mid-September.

On September 21, the government said it thwarted a coup attempt which it blamed on military officials and civilians linked to Bashir's regime.

Ahead of the demonstrations, members of an unidentified armed group removed security barriers around government buildings and prevented the police and security forces from going about their work, Khartoum State governor Ayman Khalid said in a statement.

At the root of the conflict are disputes on issues of justice, military restructuring, and the dismantling of the financial apparatus of Bashir's regime, analysts say. — **Agencies**

■ OLIVE HARVEST BEGINS



A Palestinian woman harvests olives in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. Palestinians begin the olive harvest in October, a staple for many local farmers that also use them to make oil. – AFP

Lebanon's Prime Minister says govt won't interfere in judicial matters

BEIRUT: Lebanese Prime Minister Najib Mikati said the government is keen not to interfere in any file related to the judiciary, according to a statement from his office on Saturday.

The statement came following a meeting with the justice minister and the head of the higher judicial council after seven people were killed in violence in Beirut on Thursday.

"The judicial authority must take whatever measures it deems appropriate," Mikati added.

Lebanon's higher judicial council will meet with Beirut blast probe judge Tarek Bitar on Tuesday to listen to his opinion on the course of the investigation, LBCI TV said in a tweet on Saturday.

The investigation into the August 4, 2020 explosion, one of the biggest non-nuclear blasts in



A member of Hizbullah fires his gun during the funeral of some of their members who were killed during clashes in the Tayouneh neighbourhood of Beirut on Friday. – AFP

history, has made little headway amid a smear campaign against Bitar and pushback from powerful Lebanese factions, with Hizbullah chief Hassan Nasrallah saying Bitar was biased and politicised.

In another development, the

head of the Christian Lebanese Forces party (LF) denied on Friday his group had planned street violence in Beirut that killed seven people, and said a meeting held the day before was purely political. — **Agencies**

Coalition says killed 180 Yemen fighters in Marib battle

RIYADH: The Saudi-led coalition supporting Yemen's government said on Saturday it had killed 160 Ansar Allah rebels in strikes south of the strategic city of Marib, where loyalists say rebels have made advances. "We carried out 32 strikes... in Abdiya over the past 24 hours," the coalition said, cited by the official Saudi Press Agency, adding that "11 military vehicles were destroyed and more than 160 terrorist elements eliminated".

The rebels rarely comment on losses and the toll could not be independently verified.

An operation "destroyed 10 military vehicles and killed more than 180 terrorist elements" in Abdiya and surrounding areas, south of Marib, the coalition said, cited by the official Saudi Press Agency.

The coalition has said hundreds of Iran-backed rebels have been killed in the battle for Marib in recent days.

The Yemeni civil war began in 2014 when the Ansar Allah seized the capital Sanaa, 120 km west of Marib, prompting Saudi-led forces to intervene to prop up the government the following year. — **Agencies**

■ FAREWELL CHANCELLOR



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan hosts German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Istanbul on a farewell visit on Saturday. – AFP

TEHRAN

Iran ex-central bank governor gets 10-year jail term

A former governor of Iran's central bank was sentenced on Saturday to 10 years in jail over the loss of \$160 million and 20 million euros in foreign currency trading. Valiollah Seif, who headed the monetary authority between 2013 and 2018, is the first Iranian central bank governor ever to be indicted.

Seif, 69, remains free pending an appeal. The judiciary's website said he had repeatedly broken the law along with his deputy, Ahmad Araghchi, who was



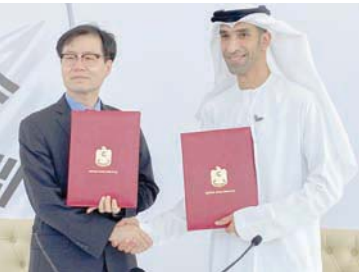
handed an eight-year jail term. A third senior figure at the central bank, Rassoul Sajad, received a 13-year sentence for illegal foreign currency trading and taking bribes.

DUBAI

UAE, South Korea agree talks on trade deal

The United Arab Emirates and South Korea on Thursday agreed to start talks on a bilateral trade deal they hope will expand economic opportunities, including cooperation on technology and climate change.

The UAE as part of a push to boost its economic clout last month said it would seek broad economic agreements covering trade and investments with eight countries: India, Britain, Turkey, South Korea, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Israel and Kenya. "This will be



our first free trade agreement with a country in the Middle East," South Korea's Minister for Trade Yeo Han-Koo said, adding that the UAE is their largest trading partner in the Middle East.

ROME

Captain gets jail for handing migrants to Libya

A ship's captain who rescued a group of 101 migrants from the Mediterranean sea before handing them over to the Libyan coastguard has been given a one-year jail term, in the first such case heard by Italy's courts.

Giuseppe Sotgiu was convicted of violating international laws that forbid the forced return of people to countries where they are at risk, according to a copy of the ruling dated October 13.

Rights groups hailed the



judgement, with Doctors Without Borders (MSF) calling it "an important first step" and urging a radical change in Italian and European policies to stop forced returns.

SHORT TAKES

In brief

BALI



EARTHQUAKE KILLS THREE, INJURES SEVEN

Three people were killed on Saturday when an earthquake struck the Indonesian tourist island Bali, the disaster agency said.

The 4.8 magnitude quake struck at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometres northeast of the town of Banjar Wanasari. Shallow quakes tend to do more damage than deep tremors.

Two people died when the quake triggered a landslide that buried their house in Bangli regency while another person was killed in the port town of Karangasem, officials said.

“The quake was felt strongly for five seconds,” said disaster agency spokesman Abdul Muhari.

ALMATY



PLANT SHUTDOWNS LEAD TO POWER RATIONING

Kazakhstan is limiting power supply to some consumers after three major coal-fired power stations suffered shutdowns, grid operator KEGOC said.

It said limits are being imposed on consumers using greater-than-planned amounts of energy and warned the outages could pose a risk to grid operations.

“These emergency power plant outages will lead to unacceptable power deviations at the border with Russia’s energy system, overloading the interstate power transmission lines and creating a risk of a systemic malfunction,” it said in a statement.

SYDNEY



DURIAN FRUIT SPARKS ‘GAS LEAK’ EMERGENCY

Canberra firefighters rushed to a store in Australia’s capital after reports of a gas leak — only to find the smell was caused by the penetrating waft of durian fruit. Emergency responders instructed the public to avoid the area as they hunted in vain for the source of the leak at the Dickson shopping precinct.

“After an hour on scene” Canberra’s emergency services agency said “the owner of a tenancy above the shops advised of the potential source of the incident.”

“It was not a gas leak, but in fact a Durian fruit. The fruit gives off a very pungent smell and can waft some distance.”

MANILA REOPENS



People visit the newly reopened portion of Manila Bay filled with artificial white sand as the country’s capital region loosens coronavirus disease (Covid-19) restrictions in Manila on Saturday. — Reuters

Myanmar junta leader excluded from Asean summit in rare rebuke

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: Southeast Asian countries will invite a non-political representative from Myanmar to a regional summit this month, delivering an unprecedented snub to the military leader who led a coup against an elected civilian government in February.

The decision taken by foreign ministers from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) at an emergency meeting on Friday night, marks a rare bold step for the consensus-driven bloc, which has traditionally favoured a policy of engagement and non-interference.

Singapore’s foreign ministry said on Saturday the move to exclude junta chief Min Aung Hlaing was a “difficult, but necessary, decision to uphold Asean’s credibility”.

The statement cited a lack of progress made on a roadmap to restore peace in Myanmar that the junta had agreed to with Asean in April.

A spokesman for Myanmar’s military government blamed “foreign intervention” for the



Flags are seen outside the Asean secretariat building in Jakarta. — Reuters

decision.

Junta spokesman Zaw Min Tun told the BBC Burmese news service that the United States and representatives of the European Union had pressured other Asean member states. “The foreign interventions can also be seen here”, he said. “We learned that some envoys from some countries met with US foreign affairs and received pressure from EU.”

More than 1,000 civilians have been killed by Myanmar security forces with thousands of others

arrested, according to the United Nations, amid a crackdown on strikes and protests which has derailed the country’s tentative democracy and prompted international condemnation.

The junta says those estimates of the death toll are exaggerated.

Asean’s current chair Brunei said a non-political figure from Myanmar would be invited to the October 26-28 summit, after no consensus was reached for a political representative to attend.

— Reuters

IS claims second deadly Afghan mosque attack that killed 47

ISLAMABAD: The IS militant group has claimed responsibility for an attack on a mosque in the city of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan on Friday that left at least 47 people dead.

A statement posted by the group’s Amaq news agency said that two IS suicide bombers killed the mosque security guards before detonating their explosive vests in the middle of a crowd of over 300 people attending Friday prayers.

The state-run Bakhtar news agency initially reported a death toll of 32, but a local Taliban official said on Saturday that the death toll had risen to 47 and that there had been at least 70 people injured in the blast.

The attack on the Imam Bargah mosque is the second



An Afghan family rides a motorcycle past roadside shops in Kabul on Saturday. — Reuters

deadly explosion at a religious site in Afghanistan within a week.

A suicide bombing at a mosque in the northern Afghan

city of Kunduz killed more than 40 worshippers a week ago. That attack was also claimed by IS.

— dpa

Chinese astronauts arrive at space station for longest mission

BEIJING: Three astronauts successfully docked with China’s new space station on Saturday on what is set to be Beijing’s longest crewed mission to date and the latest landmark in its drive to become a major space power.

The three blasted off shortly after midnight on Friday from the Jiuquan launch centre in northwestern China’s Gobi desert, the China Manned Space Agency said, with the team expected to spend six months at the Tiangong space station.

The space agency declared the launch a success and said the crew “were in good shape”.

The Shenzhou-13 vessel carrying the three completed its docking with the radial port of the space station less than seven hours after the launch. The mission, which is expected to last twice as long as a previous 90-day visit, will involve the crew setting up equipment and testing technology for future construction on the Tiangong station.

Mission commander Zhai Zhigang, 55, a former fighter pilot who performed the country’s first spacewalk in 2008, said the team would undertake “more complex” spacewalks than during previous missions.

The crew include military pilot Wang Yaping, 41, who is the first woman to visit the space station after becoming China’s second woman in space in 2013.

The other team member is People’s Liberation Army pilot Ye Guangfu, 41.

Pictures released by the space agency showed the three astronauts waving to wellwishers who held up slogans of encouragement at a send-off ceremony before the launch. A previous record-breaking crew — making the

first mission to Tiangong — returned to Earth in September after spending three months on the space station.

China’s heavily promoted space programme has already seen the nation land a rover on Mars and send probes to the moon.

Tiangong, meaning “heavenly palace”, is expected to operate for at least 10 years.

Its core module entered orbit earlier this year, with the station expected to be operational by 2022.

The completed station will be similar to the Soviet Mir station that orbited Earth from the 1980s until 2001. The latest mission is set to “expand China’s technological boundary” and verify the space station system’s capacity for a longer duration of human occupation, Chen Lan, an independent space analyst at GoTaikonauts, said.

“I don’t think it is very challenging, as China’s technologies (are) quite mature, though anything in space is always challenging”, Chen said.

SPACE RACE

Saturday’s blast-off came shortly after China launched its first solar exploration satellite into space, equipped with a telescope to observe changes in the Sun.

The Chinese space agency is planning a total of 11 missions to Tiangong through to the end of next year, including at least two more crewed launches that will deliver two lab modules to expand the 70-tonne station. China’s space ambitions have been fuelled in part by a US ban on its astronauts on the International Space Station, a collaboration among the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan.

— AFP



A general view of the Long March-2F Y13 rocket. — Reuters

SPD chief moves closer to succeeding Merkel as chancellor

BERLIN: The leader of Germany's centre-left Social Democrats (SPD), Olaf Scholz, took a major step towards succeeding Angela Merkel as chancellor on Friday, announcing that he and the leaders of two smaller parties aimed to move into formal coalition talks.

The leaders of the SPD, who came first in last month's election, the Greens and the business-friendly Free Democrats (FDP) said exploratory talks had been constructive and allowed them to establish a roadmap for more formal negotiations.

Party committees are expected to vote over the weekend on whether to do so, bringing them closer to forming a "traffic light" alliance after their respective red, yellow and green colours — the first of its kind at federal level.

The Greens and FDP have kept open the option of turning to the conservatives, who have been in office for the last 16 years, should talks with the SPD stumble. The conservatives criticised the roadmap as contradictory and short on detail.

But polls show most voters back a traffic light alliance and even senior conservatives have given up on leading the next government.

"A new start is possible with the three parties coming together,"



Olaf Scholz

Scholz told a news conference.

He later told RTL television: "We want to do so well that we get re-elected," adding that tax cuts for low earners and better wages were crucial to his vision.

"If parties that are so different could agree on joint challenges and solutions, then that would be an opportunity to unite our country," said Christian Lindner, leader of the FDP, the outsider in a marriage that includes two left-leaning parties.

According to the roadmap for coalition talks seen by Reuters, the parties agreed on major points like the central role of the transatlantic partnership and Nato in German security and the need to strengthen the European Union.

"I can say with complete certainty that it will be a pro-European government," Merkel told reporters in Brussels. "And that's an important message for EU partners." — **Reuters**

Security review after British MP stabbed to death in 'terror' attack

LEIGH-ON-SEA, United Kingdom: The fatal stabbing of British lawmaker David Amess was a terrorist incident, police said on Saturday, as MPs pressed for tougher security in the wake of the second killing of a UK politician while meeting constituents in just over five years.

Veteran Conservative MP David Amess, 69, was talking with voters at a church in the small town of Leigh-on-Sea east of London when he was stabbed to death on Friday.

Police said they arrested a 25-year-old suspect and were investigating "a potential motivation linked to Islamist extremism".

Police have said the investigation is in the "very early stages", though multiple UK media outlets, citing sources, reported that the suspect was believed to be a British national with Somali heritage. *The Sun* tabloid reported that the attacker stabbed Amess multiple times in the presence of two women staff, before sitting down and waiting for police to arrive.

Police said they believed the attacker acted alone and carried out searches at two addresses in the London area.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson visited the scene to pay his respects on Saturday, laying floral wreaths outside the church with the leader



An arrangement of UK daily newspapers photographed as an illustration in London shows front page headlines reporting on the fatal stabbing of British lawmaker David Amess. — **AFP**



A Member of the public adds a bunch of flowers to floral tributes left at the scene of the fatal stabbing of Conservative British lawmaker David Amess, at Belfairs Methodist Church in Leigh-on-Sea, in southeast England. — **AFP**

of the opposition, Labour leader Keir Starmer in a rare show of unity, along with the Speaker of the House of Commons Lindsay Hoyle and Home Secretary Priti Patel.

Members of the public also came to lay bouquets next to the police tape surrounding the crime scene.

One bouquet enclosed a handwritten note saying: "RIP Sir

David. You did not deserve this."

Britain's politicians were stunned by the highly public attack, which recalled the murder of a pro-EU lawmaker ahead of the Brexit referendum.

In June 2016, Labour MP Jo Cox was killed by a far-right extremist, prompting demands for action against what lawmakers said was "a rising tide" of public abuse and threats against elected representatives.

Home Secretary Patel on Friday ordered police across the country to review security arrangements for all 650 MPs.

At the same time the interior minister insisted the attack would not stop MPs from holding face-to-face meetings with residents in the areas they represent.

"We will carry on... We live in an open society, a democracy. We cannot be cowed by any individual," she told Sky News after the wreath-laying.

House of Commons Speaker Hoyle promised no "knee-jerk reactions" but told Sky News: "We will take further measures if we need to".

Tobias Ellwood, a Conservative MP who tried to save a stabbed police officer during a 2017 terror attack near the Houses of Parliament, on Twitter urged "a temporary pause in face to face meetings" until the security review is complete. — **AFP**

Nasa launches first space probe to study Jupiter's Trojan asteroids

WASHINGTON: Nasa launched a first-of-its kind mission on Saturday to study Jupiter's Trojan asteroids, two large clusters of space rocks that scientists believe are remnants of primordial material that formed the solar system's outer planets.

The space probe, dubbed Lucy and packed inside a special cargo capsule, lifted off on schedule from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida at 5:34 am EDT (0934 GMT), Nasa said. It was carried aloft by an Atlas V rocket from United Launch Alliance (UAL), a joint venture of Boeing Co and Lockheed Martin Corp.

Lucy's mission is a 12-year expedition to study a record number of asteroids. It will be the first to explore the Trojans, thousands of rocky objects orbiting the sun in two swarms — one ahead of the path of giant gas planet Jupiter and one behind it.

The largest known Trojan asteroids, named for the warriors

of Greek mythology, are believed to measure as much as 225 kilometres in diameter.

Scientists hope Lucy's close-up fly-by of seven Trojans will yield new clues to how the solar system's planets came to be formed some 4.5 billion years ago and what shaped their present configuration.

Believed to be rich in carbon compounds, the asteroids may even provide new insights into the origin of organic materials and life on Earth, Nasa said.

"The Trojan asteroids are leftovers from the early days of our solar system, effectively the fossils of planet formation," principal mission investigator Harold Levison of the Southwest Research Institute in Boulder, Colorado, was quoted by Nasa as saying.

No other single science mission has been designed to visit as many different objects independently orbiting the sun in the history of space exploration, Nasa said.



Nasa's Lucy spacecraft, atop a United Launch Alliance Atlas 5 rocket for a mission to study the Trojan asteroids in the outer solar system, launches from Pad-41 at Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. — **Reuters**

As well as the Trojans, Lucy will do a fly-by of an asteroid in the solar system's main asteroid belt, called DonaldJohanson in honour of the lead discoverer of the fossilised human ancestor known as Lucy, from which the Nasa mission takes its name. The Lucy fossil, unearthed in Ethiopia in 1974, was in turn named for the Beatles hit *Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds*.

Lucy the asteroid probe will make spaceflight history in another way. Following a route that circles back to Earth three times for gravitational assists, it will be the first spacecraft ever to return to Earth's vicinity from the outer solar system, according to Nasa.

The probe will use rocket thrusters to manoeuvre in space and two rounded solar arrays, each the width of a school bus, to recharge batteries that will power the instruments contained in the much smaller central body of the spacecraft. — **Reuters**

SHORT TAKES

MOSCOW

Russia tops 1,000 daily virus deaths for first time

Russia on Saturday recorded 1,000 deaths over 24 hours for the first time since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, with the country's jab drive at a standstill and few restrictions in place. An official government tally showed 1,002 deaths and 33,208 new infections, setting a high for both fatalities and cases for the third day in a row.

The surge comes with just 32 per cent of Russians fully inoculated, according to official statistics published for the first



time on Saturday.

A lack of tough restrictions has allowed the virus to spread unchecked, though a number of regions have re-introduced QR codes for access to public places.

LONDON

Biden to tour Europe for G20, climate summit

President Joe Biden will embark on a five-day tour of Europe at the end of this month to attend two important global summits and to meet with Pope Francis. According to a statement issued by the White House detailing the President's itinerary, Biden and First Lady Jill Biden will visit Vatican City and have an audience with the Pope at the Apostoli Palace on October 29.

They will discuss working together on efforts grounded in respect for fundamental human



dignity, including ending the Covid-19 pandemic, tackling the climate crisis and caring for the poor. Biden has met with the head of the Catholic church three times before. — **dpa**

SYDNEY

Thief flees after bungled Australian robbery

A thief in a tractor has led police on a destructive chase through suburban streets and onto train lines in Australia, after allegedly stealing motorbikes from a shopfront.

Queensland Police released dramatic footage of the moment a farm vehicle ploughed into a motorbike store's window on Friday morning in Ipswich, west of Brisbane.

According to police, the driver then got out of the cabin and attached two motorbikes



to a boom on the front of the vehicle before driving off. But as the tractor attempted to flee police vehicles, the boom and the two bikes were dropped onto the road. — **AFP**

Vibrant Afghan radio reduced to religious relic

Radio station Urooj once teemed with journalists producing news bulletins, but since the Taliban came to town, Ebrahim Parhar sits alone, broadcasting hours of religious sermons.

Parhar launched Urooj, which means “The Rising” in Pashto, in the western city of Farah six years ago, carefully selecting a diverse range of programmes for an audience long deprived of media.

“We had religious, political, social, and music programmes,” he said, adding that up until two months ago, the station broadcast different programmes for 19 hours a day.

But when the Taliban swept to power mid-August, vowing to restore sharia law, everything changed.

“Unfortunately, of all the programmes, only one is left, which is religious,” said the clean-shaven 35-year-old with short, dark hair and piercing blue eyes, pouring tea at his desk loaded with broadcasting equipment.

“We prepare a playlist in the morning and replay it during the day because there is no live programming.”

He has had to sack all of his 18 employees, eight of them women.

“We have dismissed them all,” he said, pointing out that “all the contracts and advertisements we had are cancelled now”.

“If the current situation persists, it is very likely that we will need to close this radio station.”

Marya Sultani, a former news anchor at the station, said the Taliban’s arrival had dashed her dream of becoming a famous journalist in Farah province.

“That wish came true, and I became a journalist, but now with the return of (the Taliban), everything has come to an end,” the 25-year-old, wearing a black shawl over her head, said.

She sat in front of a large microphone in the sound-proofed studio where she used to work, during a visit to see her former colleague.

After working for five years as a journalist, she is now “unemployed and sitting at home”, terrified that she might face reprisal attacks for having worked as a journalist.

“I am afraid that someone may harm me,” she said. The Taliban, notorious for their brutal and repressive rule of the 1990s, had said they would respect women’s rights in line with sharia law, but nearly two months in, women have been largely prevented from working. — AFP

“We prepare a playlist in the morning and replay it during the day because there is no live programming.”

EBRAHIM PARHAR



MARCH FOR A CAUSE

People gather around “Little Amal”, a 3.5 metre tall puppet of a young Syrian refugee girl, as part of its 8,000 km tour across Europe from Turkey to Britain to raise awareness for the plight of young refugees, during a walk at Trocadero square near the Eiffel tower in Paris on Saturday. — Reuters

Genius is only an attitude away



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

REGARDLESS OF ONE’S BEGINNINGS, DISADVANTAGES, AND DIMINISHED PROSPECTS, REAL AND GENUINE COMMITMENT, FOCUS, AND SHEER BLOODY-MINDEDNESS, AND HARD WORK WILL ACHIEVE IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

“The greatest geniuses have the shortest biographies,” articulated Ralph Waldo Emerson, saying that we rarely know or appreciate them until long after their time, because we don’t appreciate who and what they are... and maybe... what it takes to become one.

A genius is defined, dictionary like, as “an exceptional talent or skill, something above and beyond the norm.” It is derived from the Latin meaning of a “guardian deity or spirit,” and refers to outstanding “innate abilities.”

Physiologically, a genius has significantly greater amounts of white matter, which gets its colour from a substance called myelin, and occupies the subcortical regions of their brains. It contains bundles of nerve cells, otherwise known as axons, and fibers known as neurons, which is increase the connectivity, or flow of information between the different parts of the brain, through small gaps in the myelination, enabling faster and much more complex thought processes.

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle said, “No true genius has ever existed without some touch of madness,” while Mark Twain almost tragically noted that, “Thousands of geniuses die undiscovered... either by themselves... or others,” adding later that he believed all children were born geniuses, but were restrained by parents, society, or fate. Well, maybe secretly they do want to be

a little like Sheldon Cooper, the genius in “The Big Bang Theory?” I feel that he, or rather his character, epitomises what many of the younger generation believe a genius to be... articulate, witty, and sarcastic, while at the same time displaying a complete absence of consideration, tolerance, humility, or empathy. The problem is that this is a television show, not real, not even ‘reality,’ and in real life, such intolerance and thoughtlessness would not be tolerated.

Many of us see those who are remarkably gifted... in the way that we want to know everything that they do, but without all of the extravagances, the tinge of madness, the uncertainty, the neuroticism, the unease, the capriciousness, and turbulence that appears to be their hallmark. The reality is that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ description of a genius, but... one myth, that of their being born and not made, is being destroyed brick by brick today. It was famously signposted by first, Thomas Edison, “Genius is 1 per cent inspiration, and 99 per cent perspiration,” and later by Henry Ford, saying, “Genius is seldom recognised for what it is: a great capacity for hard work.”

Professor Michael Howe, of Exeter University writes that few are child prodigies, with inherent intellectual gifts, and none are a “race apart.” He said that, “Genuine creative achievements depend more on perseverance than on

prodigious childhood skills. We cannot all be geniuses but we can learn from them.” Howe believes it is their focus, and firm sense of direction that eventually make them special. In this way we can understand how the Bronte sister’s achieved literary immortality through study, like George Eliot, none of them being any more than passable in their youth.

Musical ‘geniuses’ like Beethoven, Mozart and Bach never wrote their symphonies while in diapers, but as a consequence of studies in the academies of their day. Beethoven’s talents were recognised at 13, but it took another 8 years of academic slavery during which it was said, “The regime was harsh, intensive, as he was often dragged from bed to the keyboard, and he was often reduced to tears.” Mozart, a workaholic, wrote 600 compositions in his short life, and Bach, it took him two weeks walking to get to school each year, and then two more weeks to get back home, for three years! None of them found their genius easily.

Today, the accolade is offered far too loosely and easily. The message however that should be delivered is that regardless of one’s beginnings, disadvantages, and diminished prospects, real and genuine commitment, focus, and sheer bloody-mindedness, and hard work will achieve in the face of adversity. Genius may well be the pot of gold, at the end of one’s academic rainbow.

No more pandemic have-nots. There is no time to waste.

MARK MALLOCH-BROWN, RAJ SHAH, DARREN WALKER

Covid-19 has bifurcated the world like almost nothing else. The wealthiest countries have more than enough vaccine doses with which to protect their people from the ravages of the virus, while the poorest countries do not. Those in the Global North also have the means to stave off economic calamity and social disruption through massive stimulus packages, while hundreds of millions in the Global South have been driven into extreme poverty. This inequitable divide leaves humanity far more vulnerable to the next stage of the pandemic, as well as to any other systemic crisis that may emerge.

As leaders of some of the world’s

largest philanthropies, there are two things we know for sure. First, history has taught us that transformational change almost always has been triggered by some deep crisis. Second, only by coming together can the world muster the bold, urgent action needed to reverse the great divergence between the haves and have-nots that we see today. Only through cooperation and coordination can we launch a transformative era of progress.

To that end, the Aliko Dangote Foundation, Archewell Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Chaudhary Foundation in Nepal, the Children’s Investment Fund Foundation, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation,

the Ford Foundation, Fundación Saldarriaga Concha, the Kagiso Trust, the MasterCard Foundation, the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, the Open Society Foundations, the OppGen Philanthropies, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation have joined forces to establish a global alliance of foundations. And we are inviting other philanthropies to join our network.

To encourage the necessary global action, our coalition will advocate for two primary objectives. First, the world must assume collective responsibility to achieve the WHO’s ambitious targets to vaccinate at least 40 per cent of the population in low-

and middle-income countries by the end of this year, and 70 per cent by September 2022. We call on government leaders and policymakers — including those attending this week’s World Bank and International Monetary Fund meetings in Washington, DC, and the G20 summit in Rome later this month — to provide the doses, financial resources, and delivery logistics needed to achieve these targets. Governments that have stockpiled hundreds of thousands of vaccine doses must immediately redistribute them to low-vaccination countries before they expire in the coming months. And looking beyond this immediate emergency, we must make critical investments to build long-term

pharmaceutical manufacturing capacities in poorer countries, so that we will be prepared for the next global public-health crisis.

Second, to spur global economic recovery, we urge the governments of high-income countries to reallocate at least \$100 billion in recycled special drawing rights (SDRs, the IMF’s reserve asset) for low- and middle-income countries in 2021. We also call on them to commit to a \$100 billion replenishment of the World Bank’s International Development Association fund to support the pandemic response and economic recovery in the world’s poorest countries.

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WITH THE GLOBAL NORTH STILL DRAGGING ITS FEET WHILE BILLIONS OF PEOPLE AROUND THE WORLD REMAIN VULNERABLE TO COVID-19

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OMAN TAKE ON PNG IN OPENING CLASH

HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Ahead of Oman’s crucial opening encounter against World Cup debutants Papua New Guinea (PNG), Oman’s Aqib Ilyas stated the squad was motivated to play in front of home crowds in the ICC T20 World Cup 2021, at the Oman Cricket Academy ground, Amerat, on Sunday.

Ilyas, who addressed the media in the absence of skipper Zeeshan Maqsood, was upbeat and excited about Oman’s prospects in the biennial T20 extravaganza.

“We are really motivated to do well in the tournament and it feels great to know that we will play in front of our home crowds. We are working very hard and Inshallah we will do well.”

The right-handed Sialkot-born batsman reflected upon Oman’s journey over the last decade to co-hosting the World Cup.

“For many of the Oman players, this will be the best thing to happen, for us to host the tournament and get to play on home soil. About 10 years back we were playing on sand and turf wickets. Over the years, the players started doing well and team started performing well and now we have the World Cup right here on home soil.”

This will be Oman’s second foray at the prestigious ICC event and they would most certainly look at creating a strong impression in front of the world.

Ilyas felt the Oman team gearing up for this edition of the tournament is very different from the one that played in India in 2016.

“There is a huge difference



We are really motivated to do well in the tournament and it feels great to know that we will play in front of our home crowds. We are working very hard and Inshallah we will do well
AQIB ILYAS
Oman batsman

in the team because most of the players are young and they have played well together and jelled well. The players are together since the last 4-5 years and have a good understanding. There is a lot of unity and we have got some professional staff guiding us. Our fitness has improved and over the years our coach Duleep Mendis has helped us become strong mentally. We have got good bowling coaches who have helped shape the bowlers



we have now. On the Associate level, our bar has been raised high.”

Ilyas felt Oman team’s biggest strength was their improvement as a squad in all departments of the game.

“There was a time when bowling

was the only strength of the Oman team. Now, even the batsmen are doing really well. Our fielding has also improved quite a bit, so we are doing well as a unit”, he added.

Oman had a tough examination ahead of the challenging World

Cup with two warm-up games against an established Sri Lanka outfit. Although, they lost both games, the team made an impact by pushing the Lankans in both matches and having them on the mat at various stages as well.

“It was the first time we played against any Test-playing nation and we never thought that we would play the way we did and test them. We could see the difference that experience makes and Sri Lanka showed us in these two matches. They (SL) were 4-5 down for 50 runs in the first match and we were in control, then they had a great partnership and took the game away from us. And when we batted, our top order failed to fire, but our lower order batsmen played some good knocks to take us close.”

Looking ahead to the PNG match, Ilyas stated they were not taking the opposition lightly.

“All games are important for us and every team has to be taken seriously. We have done well against them in the ODIs and in the past but in T20s, one can never say. We have to be on top of our

game to beat them.”

Ilyas also stated Oman currently did not have any injury concerns or fitness issues with regard to their players going into the tournament.

PNG SKIPPER WARY BUT FOCUSED

Meanwhile, Papua New Guinea (PNG) are on the cusp of the biggest moment in their cricketing history and skipper Assad Vala acknowledged the significance of the occasion.

“It’s our first ever World Cup match and we are really excited to play the game and put our best foot forward”, he added.

“First time we are at the World Cup, so the country is buzzing and behind us and we are looking forward to making them proud. The players are going to go there and give it their best and hopefully put some smiles on the faces of people back home.”

Vala felt PNG had got the feel of the venue and conditions having been here for more than two weeks now.

“We have acclimatised well to the conditions since we have been here since September 30th and played the ODIs. We have got used to the pitch and weather and got a feel of things. So, we are looking forward to the games ahead.”

The PNG skipper was wary of Oman playing in front of an expectant home crowd.

“They are a good side and well balanced. They will have the crowd backing them as well playing on home soil, so it’s going to be tough for us. However, we have to focus on ourselves and our game. We should stop worrying about things that we cannot control”, he added.

Oman strong enough to make it to Super 12: Ex-skipper

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Former Oman captain Sultan Ahmad feels the current Oman team is strong enough to qualify for the Super 12 of the T20 World Cup beginning on Sunday.

In an exclusive chat with *Observer*, Sultan, who steered Oman to a memorable World T20 debut, said the team is a mixture of experienced and young players.

Oman stunned Ireland by two wickets to post their first ever win in the India 2016 edition of the global tournament.

Oman’s qualification to the World Cup and the surprise win against giant-killers Ireland had put the country on the cricket map.

The Sultanate team has done commendably well



after making debut at the World Cup.

Sultan says that the current squad has lot more expectations on them compared to the team under him.

“Now since the team has come a long way after playing in their first World Cup. We had no expectations

on us but the players now face some expectations based on their past performances.”

“I am confident that the current squad is capable of achieving the target set by Oman Cricket.

The team is capable of handling the pressure with the help of Test great Duleep Mendis.”

ALL-ROUNDERS RULE
Sultan said Oman’s strong point is presence good all-rounders in the team.

“Oman team is full of all-rounders and this makes the team unpredictable to the opponents. The batting depth is also good and crucial for the Twenty20 matches.”

The former captain said Oman players good experience in T20 and home venue factor will definitely favour the Sultanate in the Group B matches. “All the players are well experienced with the format. I feel the home factor will push Oman to good performance in the crucial matches.”

Sultan said the Sultanate will be strong contenders in all the three matches in the group against PNG, Bangladesh and Scotland.

“I hope the players will bring out their best in the World Cup”, he concluded.



Bangladesh ready for Scottish test

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Group B favourites Bangladesh are ready to unleash their best performance in their opening match of T20 World Cup 2021 in Muscat against Scotland on Sunday. With a good blend of youth and experience, Bangladesh have all the ingredients to go deep into the tournament.

Captain Mohammad Mahmud Ullah recently became the country's most successful T20I captain after surpassing Mashrafe Mortaza in the first T20I against New Zealand.

The young Bangladeshi skipper said the team is poised to put in their best against Scotland.

"We are ready for the World Cup challenge. All players in the squad are pumped up to deliver their top-class performance," Mahmud Ullah said during the pre-match press conference in Muscat on Saturday.

He said Bangladesh are aware of Scotland team's fighting approach.

"We are aware of Scotland team's strength. So we don't want any hiccups in our performance. The players are fully fit and hopefully we will make a winning start to the tournament," he added.

Top batters include Shakib Al Hasan, Soumya Sarkar and Mushfiqur Rahim with Afif Hossain giving depth for the batting line-up.

Mohammad Naim and Liton Das are expected to give good start as the openers.

The Tigers will not be merely happy with qualifying for the Super 12 and will be aiming to make it to the knockout stage for the first time in the history of the T20 World Cup.



Bangladesh players during practice at Al Amerat Ground. – Anuroop Athiparambath

Mustafizur Rahman will be tasked with the responsibility to lead the bowling attack. Newcomer Nasum Ahmed has further strengthened the attack that also consists of Taskin Ahmed and Mohammad Saifuddin among others.

SCOTLAND SET FOR SOLID SHOW

Scotland skipper Kyle Coetzer said his team will put in all efforts against higher-ranked Bangladesh in their first match of the group.

"We are poised to deliver our best performance in the tough encounter against Bangladesh."

To a query on whether beating Oman and PNG recently in the WCL2 match at the World Cup venue would give them confidence for the Group B matches, Coetzer



Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer

said the experience would serve good for them.

"We had played some good matches here at the Al Amerat Stadium and some close matches as well against hosts Oman and

PNG. We were able to beat them in those games. We would play with the same spirit and I know these teams are capable of better performances."

Coetzer said Bangladesh are a strong side and Scotland will try to match them in all aspects.

On a query on handling the bowling of star Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, Coetzer said his side will take a professional approach in the game.

"Mustafizur is a top-class bowler. We have our own strategy to deal with all the Bangladesh bowlers in the match."

Scotland had enjoyed their first ever victory at an ICC World Cup, beating Hong Kong in their final match of T20 World Cup 2016.

Scotland earned their first win after appearing in six World Cups.

Their first T20 World Cup was in 2009, on the back of their participation in the 2015 Cricket World Cup.

Scotland have waited enough for their entry into the big stage and the skipper said the players are confident to go a level further.

"We have come up hard to secure our spot in this year's tournament. We want to make our place on the biggest stage."

"We have all-round skills as a team and lot of good individual players, but we believe the team spirit is our biggest strength," Coetzer concluded.

SQUADS

Bangladesh

Mahmud Ullah (captain), Mohammad Naim, Soumya Sarkar, Liton Das, Shakib Al

Hasan, Mushfiqur Rahim, Afif Hossain, Nurul Hasan, Mahedi Hasan, Nasum Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Shoriful Islam, Taskin Ahmed, Saifuddin, Shamim Hossain

Reserves: Rubel Hossain, Aminul Islam Biplob

Scotland

Kyle Coetzer (captain), Richard Berrington, Dylan Budge, Matthew Cross (wk), Josh Davey, Ally Evans, Chris Greaves, Michael Leask, Calum Macleod, George Munsey, Safyaan Sharif, Hamza Tahir, Craig Wallace, Mark Watt, Brad Wheel.

Reserves: Michael Jones, Chris Sole.

Bangladesh vs Scotland

Sun 17 October
18:00 (OMAN TIME)
OCA Ground, Al Amerat

India, England hot favourites as World Cup beckons



HARIDEV PUSHPARAJ
MUSCAT, OCT 16

India, England and the holders West Indies will be among the favourites to lift the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 as action shifts to Oman and UAE for the first time ever.

With a well-balanced outfit that covers most bases including the crucial spin department, India will be front-runners on the slow and low pitches of the UAE.

India will be in a tough group with a mouth-watering opening clash against arch-rivals Pakistan and a vastly improved New Zealand side but the inaugural World T20 champions are expected to make the semifinals quite comfortably.

A dream opening pair of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma along with classy batsmen such as Suryakumar Yadav in their ranks coupled with the explosive potential of Rishabh Pant, India's batting will worry the opposition.

Hardik Pandya's fitness will determine his role in the team but Shardul Thakur is there to address this concern. Mystery spinner Varun Chakravarty is an unknown entity to the outside world and could be the X-factor for the Indians.

However, his fitness will be critical in the days building up to the opening game against Pakistan.

MS Dhoni coming into the team as mentor will give a big push to India's think-tank with his astute cricketing brain that can help Ravi Shastri and Co and also bring in some good luck charm with Virat Kohli having never won an ICC title.

ENGLAND, WINDIES NO PUSHOVERS

England are a formidable limited overs side ever since they won the 2019 50-over World Cup and it's no different in T20Is as well.

With destructive batsmen all the way down to number 9 and very effective spinners like Adil Rasheed and Moeen Ali in their ranks, England can give the best teams a run for their money.

The experience that English players gain having played in the IPL is invaluable especially after the conclusion of the League in the UAE with Eoin Morgan captaining the Kolkata Knight Riders.

The six-hitters from the Caribbean are serious contenders too and can never be ruled out with their big-hitting prowess. The likes of Chris Gayle, Andre

Russell, Nicholas Pooran, Kieron Pollard etc can be a nightmare for any opponent once they get going and their six-hitting skills could be even more game-changing in low-scoring matches in the UAE.

UNPREDICTABLE PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN

The mercurial Pakistan team can never be written off although they are not at the peak of their powers at the moment. However, the flair of Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan coupled with the experience of Shoaib Malik and Sarfaraz Ahmed could do the trick for Pakistan if they play sensible and smart cricket.

Afghanistan could be the wildcards with some of the world's best spinners in their ranks with the likes of Rashid Khan, Mohammad Nabi and Mujeeb Ur Rahman.

And on the slow-paced, turning tracks in the UAE, if these spinners really get going the Afghans could be quite a handful on a given day.

Although, the big boys will be in the reckoning for the spoils of the ICC T20 World Cup 2021, the format is such that it could be any team's World Cup once we reach the knockouts.

INDIAN PADDLERS HOG LIMELIGHT AT WTT YOUTH CONTENDER MUSCAT

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Indian paddler Deepak Yashaswini Ghorpade stole the limelight as she crowned champion for two titles of U17 & U19 girls singles at 2021 WTT Youth Contender Muscat on Friday. The young Indian paddler managed to end both finals on a winning note against Uzbekistan's Markhabo Magdieva.

At U17 girls singles on Thursday, Deepak ended the final by 3-0. She repeated the victory once again with the same result during the concluding ceremony of the WTT event in Muscat on Friday at the indoor hall of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Champion Deepak expressed her joy on clinching both titles. "It is really great to win two titles in WTT Youth Contender in Muscat. This is my first winning of both titles in this season. Both final matches were very tough and I did not expect to win in both matches as the opponent was not an easy. I managed to play with full focus with balance performance in all the rounds. This assists me to snatch both trophies in U17 & U19 categories," she said.

Deepak concluded that she is looking forward for her forthcoming challenges. "I am gearing up to take part at the Slovakia and Hungary Open in the coming days. My goal is to continue snatching more titles and to compete at the world championship," she ended.



In semifinal clashes of U19 girls singles, Deepak defeated her team-mate Anargya Manjunath 3-0, while Markhabo Magdieva beat Indian's Lakshita Narang 3-1 in a tough encounter.

The Indian paddlers' domination were continued as Suhana snatched the title of U15 girls singles. The Indian champion beat her team-mate Hansini Rajan 3-1 in the final. However, Hansini Rajan bounced back strongly in U-13 girls singles as she won the title after beating Iranian's Alokani 3-1 in the concluding fixture.

HH Sayyid Fahar bin Fatik al Said, was the chief guest for the concluding ceremony in the presence of under-secretary of Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth and Abdullah bin Mohammed Bamakhalef, Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) chairman. Top dignitaries from the Ministry, Oman Olympic Committee (OOC) and WTT representatives attended the final ceremony of the event.

The chief guest congratulated the winners and delivered the



trophies to the top winners in all the categories.

Oman's girls paddlers including Al Hoor al Jassasi, Noor al Farsi and Retaj al Abri made their debut in the WTT event. Despite the loss and existing from the groups round in U11, U13 and U15, they gained the required technical experience and technical exposure.

The high profile event saw the participation of more than 100 players from 16 countries. The participants competed at different categories which witnessed in

the tournament including: U-11, U-13, U-15, U-17 and U-19.

SPREADING TT

The OTTA chief said the association is hosting international events and championships with an aim to boost the game in the Sultanate. "Spreading table tennis and supporting the national economy for organising these events are the top objectives from these high class events. Participation of more than 100 paddlers from both genders representing more than 15



I am gearing up to take part at the Slovakia and Hungary Open in the coming days. My goal is to continue snatching more titles and to compete at the world championship

DEEPAK
YASHASWINI
GHORPADE

Indian paddler

countries is a great chance for our young paddlers. This is the suitable environment for our domestic players to improve their standards by competing with top ranking paddlers and adopting them in these top events. The desired outcomes and benefits are a lot for the national players including gaining the match experience and having the right exposure in the whole event. We will appoint soon the new national head coach and this step will assist the national paddlers to improve better through having a well committed and experienced coach. Beside that, OTTA have many youth centres for U12 in different clubs and sports complexes. Our focus is to develop this category and build a strong national team in the near future.

Salah scores stunner, Firmino hits treble in Liverpool rout

WATFORD, United Kingdom: Mohamed Salah scored another brilliant individual goal and Roberto Firmino hit a hat-trick as Liverpool ruined Claudio Ranieri's first match as Watford manager with a 5-0 victory on Saturday.

Salah underlined why Liverpool are so desperate to get the Egypt forward to sign a new contract with his audacious second-half strike at Vicarage Road.

Dancing through the Watford defence, Salah's magical moment topped even his eye-catching goal against Manchester City before the international break.

Liverpool's habit of avoiding big contracts for players over 30 has fuelled fears the 29-year-old will leave when his present deal expires in 2023.

But with 10 goals in 10 games this season, Salah has proved his huge value to Liverpool, who will surely bow to his wish to be paid alongside the Premier League's highest earners.

For the first time in his career, Salah has scored in eight successive top-flight matches.

Salah's breathtaking goal stole the spotlight on a day when Firmino claimed his first Liverpool treble since 2018 in his first start for five league games.

It was also a memorable afternoon for Senegal forward Sadio Mane, who became only the third African player after Salah and Didier Drogba to reach a century of Premier League goals, a milestone encompassing his time at Southampton.

The Reds are the first English top-flight side to score three or



Liverpool's Mohamed Salah before he scores their fourth goal. - Reuters

more goals in seven consecutive away games in all competitions.

Liverpool, unbeaten in eight league matches this season, moved above Chelsea to the top of the table, although the Blues can reclaim pole position if they beat Brentford later on Saturday.

Ranieri could not have asked for a tougher start to his reign after he replaced the sacked Xisco Munoz during the international break. The Italian, back in the Premier

League after his title-winning spell with Leicester and stints at Chelsea and Fulham, will hope this dismal display was not a sign of things to come.

GLORIOUS SALAH

Having drawn their previous two league matches before the international break, Liverpool couldn't afford another slip and they tore into Watford from the start.

Liverpool held over 80 per cent of the possession in the first half, with Salah tormenting Danny Rose time and again down the right flank.

It was no surprise when Klopp's team took the lead in the ninth minute.

Salah nudged Rose aside with ease and unfurled a glorious pass with the outside of his boot that evaded the entire Watford defence as it arrowed towards Mane, who

applied the finishing touch with a first-time shot into the bottom corner.

It was almost too easy for Liverpool and Firmino was the next beneficiary of the visitors' supremacy in the 37th minute.

A superb move cut through the Watford defence as Mane's deft pass found James Milner's overlapping run and his cross was perfectly weighted for Firmino to tap in his fourth goal this season.

For the first time in his career, Salah has scored in eight successive top-flight matches. Salah's breathtaking goal stole the spotlight on a day when Firmino claimed his first Liverpool treble since 2018 in his first start for five league games

A deflected drive from Liverpool's Naby Keita hit the bar just before a half-time whistle that was greeted with boos from frustrated Watford fans.

Unable to muster a single shot in the first half, Watford's backs remained against the wall and Salah's curler was tipped away by Ben Foster.

Liverpool were showing no mercy and Firmino notched their third goal in the 52nd minute.

Salah was in an offside position when Andrew Robertson crossed, but Craig Cathcart's sliding intervention deflected the ball to Firmino, who finished from close range.

If that was a no-frills strike, Salah's 54th-minute goal will be remembered for years to come.

Collecting Firmino's pass in the Watford area, Salah swivelled away from three defenders with an audacious ball-roll, then left Cathcart on his backside before guiding a superb finish into the far corner. Firmino completed the demolition with a simple finish from Neco Williams' cross in the final seconds. — AFP



insurance coverage for flood damage will only be extended to those with Storm — Tempest — Flood (STF) cover, the Authority stated: “Insurance companies are obliged to provide cover for the perils and losses incurred by policyholders as means for tackling the impact of the expected perils to protect their properties as per each insurance policy.

The CMA emphasises that the standard motor vehicles insurance policy covers natural calamities in the comprehensive insurance as basic benefit and as optional benefit in third party insurance policies.”

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Bank Muscat posts 9 month net profit of RO 140.16 million

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the flagship financial institution in the Sultanate, announced its preliminary unaudited results for the nine months ended September 30, 2021. The bank posted a net profit of RO 140.16 million for the period compared to RO 113.21 million reported during the same period in 2020, an increase of 23.8 per cent, mainly due to lower impairment charges.

The key highlights of the results for the period are as follows:

- 1)Net Interest Income from Conventional Banking and Net Income from Islamic Financing stood at RO 252.48 million for the nine months period ended September 30, 2021 compared to RO 240.07 million for the same period in 2020, an increase of 5.2 per cent.
- 2)Non-interest income was RO 105.85 million for the nine months period ended September 30, 2021 as compared to RO 96.72 million for the same period in 2020, an increase of 9.4 per cent.
- 3)Operating expenses for the nine months period ended September 30, 2021 was RO 144.33 million as compared to RO 137.19 million for the same period in 2020, an increase of 5.2 per cent.
- 4)Net Impairment for credit and other losses for the nine months period in 2021 was RO 46.77 million as against RO 64.82 million for the same period in

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF PRELIMINARY UNAUDITED RESULTS			
Particulars (RO millions) For the period ended	30 Sep 2021	30 Sep 2020	Change (%)
Net interest income & Islamic financing income	252.48	240.07	5.2%
Other operating income	105.85	96.72	9.4%
Operating expenses	144.33	137.19	5.2%
Operating profit	214.00	199.60	7.2%
Net profit	140.16	113.21	23.8%
Particulars (RO millions) as at	30 Sep 2021	30 Sep 2020	Change (%)
Total Assets	12,819	12,711	0.8%
Net loans and Islamic financing	9,156	8,895	2.9%
- Conventional loans and advances	7,803	7,680	1.6%
- Islamic financing receivables	1,353	1,215	11.4%
Customer deposits and Islamic deposits	8,698	8,795	-1.1%
- Conventional customer deposits	7,550	7,765	-2.8%
- Islamic customer deposits	1,148	1,030	11.5%
Total Equity	2,102	1,995	5.4%

2020. The decrease is mainly attributed to the precautionary and collective provisions created by the bank during first half of 2020, due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic and the historic decline seen in global crude oil prices. The bank remains vigilant of the continuing stress in the macro-economic and business conditions and its potential impacts.

5)Net Loans and advances including Islamic financing receivables increased by 2.9 per cent to RO 9,156 million as against



RO 8,895 million as at September 30, 2020.

6)Customer deposits including Islamic Customer deposits decreased by 1.1 per cent to RO 8,698 million as against RO 8,795 million as at September 30, 2020.

The full results for the nine months ended September 30 along with the complete set of unaudited financial statements will be released following the approval of the Board of Directors of the Bank at its meeting scheduled later during October 2021.

Gulf Drilling gets international accreditation

MUSCAT: Gulf Drilling, the Oil and Gas Drilling arm of Mohammed al Barwani Group, has gained global accreditation from the International Association of Drilling Contractors (IADC), solidifying Gulf Drilling's position as a world-class drilling service provider.

Salim al Harthy, CEO of MBPS, which Gulf Drilling is a part of said: "this is a massive step forward showing that our method of training developing our people

at the rig meets top international standards. We aim to leverage this competency to continue providing the best possible drilling services on behalf of our clients.

"I am proud of the achievements the company and our people accomplish," he added. "After a period of rigorous assessment on our training, it is a pleasure to say that we train world-class people."

The accreditation was granted in recognition of Gulf Drilling's Global Competence Assurance



Salim al Harthy
Programme and includes 10 positions namely Assistant Driller,

Chief Electrician, Chief Mechanic, Driller, Electrician, Mechanic, Rig Manager, Senior Electrician, Senior Mechanic, and toolpusher.

The IADC Competence Assurance Programme offers structure, recognition, and accountability to a company's competence programme. It has been designed to verify that the company's programmes meet the accepted practices for developing and assessing knowledge, skill, and ability of employees.

2022 Chevrolet Captiva: Setting new benchmarks in 7-seater comfort

MUSCAT: Exceeding expectations in all spheres, the seven-seater Chevrolet Captiva offers a unique blend of the strength and space of a SUV and practicality of a family car. Other than its striking looks, the 2022 Captiva also comes with superior comfort and technology features that attest to the outstanding value of this popular automotive brand.

Starting from RO 7,495, inclusive of VAT, the Captiva represents exceptional value for money. With an easy EMI starting from RO 98, it is also one of the most affordable seven-seaters in its segment, delivering fuel efficiency of an impressive 13.4 km per litre. Additional highlights include sunroof, 17-inch aluminium wheels, rear view camera and LED daytime running lights (DRL) along with Apple Carplay with six speakers.

On the outside, the elegantly designed front fascia with sculpted hood and stylish headlights lend a sporty appeal to the SUV. This

is further accentuated by the presence of halogen headlamps, sleek LED daytime running lights and fog lights — features that also enhance illumination on the road and overall safety as well.

Stylish, spacious and smart, the Captiva can comfortably adjust to everyone and everything. Bearing in mind the convenience of its occupants, it has generous legroom and has taken into consideration the connectivity and convenience needs of all passengers. Details such as cup holders, USB charge ports and storage space for every row ensure comfort and ease. The Chevrolet infotainment system for entertainment and communication also supports connectivity through Bluetooth and USB.

Standard across all three trim levels — LS, LT and Premier — are a host of leading-edge amenities, including an eight-inch touchscreen monitor, rear view camera with four-position reversing sensors, multi-



function steering wheel and air conditioning ventilation controls in second row seats.

Performance is an outstanding characteristic of the 2022 Captiva. All three trim levels come equipped with a 1.5-litre

turbocharged 4-cylinder engine with a Continuous Variable Transmission (CVT). This impressive powertrain delivers 149 horsepower and 255 Nm of torque, while enabling acceleration from 0 to 100 m/h in

9.5 seconds.

Augmenting the Captiva's enduring appeal is the presence of a wide range of safety technologies and driver-assistance systems across all three trim levels.

The list includes airbags,

cruise control, electronic brake distribution, electronic parking brake, electronic stability control (ESC), front / rear park assist, hill start assist, rear vision camera, and traction control. Side impact protection and other smart technologies enhance the safety of the Captiva's occupants while ensuring a delightful motoring experience.

"The 2022 Chevrolet Captiva combines everything from expressive looks and well-designed practicality to superior comfort levels and safety. Topping it all, the affordable pricing makes it one of the most coveted SUVs in the market," said Sudhir M, CEO — OTE Group.

The 2022 Chevrolet Captiva is available in five attractive colours: Glaze Red Metallic, Earth Brown Metallic, Candy White, Aurora Silver Metallic and Starry Twinkle Black. Customers can check out the impressive line-up at any of the showrooms of OTE Group, the exclusive distributors of Chevrolet in Oman.

Kalyan Jewellers opens showroom at Lulu Souq

MUSCAT: Kalyan Jewellers, one of the most-trusted and leading jewellery companies, has launched its new showroom in Muscat located at the Lulu Souq on Ruwi High Street.

The brand-new showroom promises to emerge as a new and opulent jewellery shopping destination for shoppers in the city. The showroom was inaugurated virtually by the Chairman & Managing Director, T S Kalyanaraman along with the Executive Directors — Ramesh Kalyanaraman and Rajesh Kalyanaraman.



As part of the launch, the jewellery brand has announced mega offers, which includes up to 25 per cent cashback on making charges of gold jewellery. On diamond jewellery up to 20 per cent cashback and on precious stone/ uncut jewellery up to 20 per cent cashback will be applicable on stone charges.

Customers will be able to maximise value of their purchases by availing the benefits of these offers until November 30, 2021 across all showrooms in Oman.

For customers looking at shopping later in the year, gold rate protection can be availed by paying 10 per cent advance on their intended purchase value.

T S Kalyanaraman, Chairman & Managing Director, Kalyan Jewellers said, "We are extremely delighted to launch our new showroom in Oman. It is a part of our strategy to strengthen our retail footprint and also make the brand more accessible to our customers.

Our journey from a single showroom to becoming a global brand has been based on the core values of trust and transparency. Over the years, Kalyan Jewellers has been able to craft a distinct identity among consumers with our impeccable hyperlocal designs, assured quality,

transparent pricing and service-backed shopping experience.

With the launch of the new showroom, we want to continue with our endeavour of offering best-in-class buying experience, while ensuring the safety and health of our patrons and the community at large by providing a safe, hygienic and personalised shopping environment."

As part of Kalyan Jewellers' 'We Care' Covid-19 guidelines, the company has instituted the highest level of safety and precautionary measures across operational showrooms to safeguard the health and safety of both customers and staff alike.

These measures include 100 per cent vaccinated staff, mandatory use of hand sanitisers at entry points, providing masks and gloves to all staff members and customers, as well as regular deep cleaning and sanitization across the showrooms at multiple times throughout the day.

This includes disinfecting common areas such as counter tops and doors within the showroom. The company has also gone one step further in appointing a 'Safety Measure Officer' across showrooms to make certain that Covid-19 safety protocol guidelines are strictly followed.

Customers will also be able to avail the benefits of Kalyan's new 4-Level Assurance Certification on gold jewellery.



In brief

■ LONDON

CHAIR OF UK MARKETS
WATCHDOG TO STEP
DOWN EARLY

Charles Randell, chair of Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), said he would leave the watchdog next spring, a year short of his five-year term after helping markets to navigate Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic.

"As the FCA prepares to implement its new wholesale, retail and data strategies under an established new executive, now is the right time for a new Chair to carry on the close and continuous oversight of our transformation", Randell said in a statement.

Nikhil Rathi, the former finance ministry official who became chief executive of the FCA last October, is pushing through an internal shake-up following heavy criticism over the watchdog's handling of collapsed investment firm London Capital & Finance.

The finance ministry said it would start the process of recruiting a new chair.

— Reuters

New telecom towers must be aesthetically designed: TRA

CONRAD PRABHU

@conradprabhu

With the rollout of 5G telecom technology threatening to unleash a new wave of tower building in the Sultanate, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) is weighing regulation to ensure, among other things, that new towers are aesthetically appealing in their design, particularly when constructed in scenic and culturally significant areas.

The measure is part of a slate of guidelines set out in draft regulations on Communications Towers published recently by the Authority to elicit feedback from industry stakeholders as well as the general public before they are formally adopted into law.

To date, there are an estimated 3,200 3G, 4G and 5G mobile network sites distributed across the length and breadth of the country — a figure that is set to grow when a third mobile operator commences operations, likely before the end of this year.

The proliferation of telecom towers in recent years, the Authority noted, has necessitated the adoption of a framework that regulates the construction of new towers.

Besides mandating telecom licensees to obtain approval before constructing new towers,



the proposed regulations require that new installations should be designed in "accordance with the aesthetic standards and specifications of the area, in line with the elements of the environment surroundings as much as possible, such as using colour and architectural styles that minimise the visual impact on the public".

Additionally, hardware and other equipment installed on the towers should be suitably concealed, it noted.

The move, say experts, will help reduce the potential for what is described as 'visual pollution' or 'visual blight' — the

presence of towers — whether electrical, microwave, radio or other communications structures marring a scenic setting or historical structures or culturally sensitive locations.

Consequently, licensees will be required to adopt aesthetically appealing designs when installing towers in localities with some environmental or cultural significance.

Furthermore, to reduce the wanton construction of new towers, the draft regulations advocate the concept of shareable towers with the original licensee encouraged to lease space and capacity to other licensees on a

tenancy basis.

Accordingly, applicants for permission to set up new towers will have to prove that there are no other towers in a given area that they can piggyback on.

Similarly, licensees permitted to construct new towers must set aside enough space to accommodate the requirements of other licensees on a tenancy basis.

Significantly, telecom towers are barred from displaying any advertising materials without the approval of the Authority.

The deadline for submission of feedback on the proposed regulations is November 30, 2021.

Kerala IT Parks
to showcase
capabilities at
GITEX 2021BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 16

Kerala IT Parks, which promotes Information Technology, will be showcasing the competitive advantages it offers in the IT Infrastructure space both as a facilitator and as an enabler at GITEX Global 2021, to be held from October 17 to 21, at the Dubai International Convention Centre.

Under the theme 'Future Perfect', Kerala IT Parks CEO John M Thomas (pictured) will lead the 50-member delegation to highlight their strengths and how they can add value to enterprises in the region cost-effectively. Snehil Kumar Singh IAS, Director, Kerala IT Mission will join Kerala IT delegation at GITEX 2021.

The Kerala IT Parks offers IT built up space/land parcels in Special Economic Zones (SEZs) and in Domestic Tariff Areas (DTA) within its campuses.

MSX closes week marginally lower

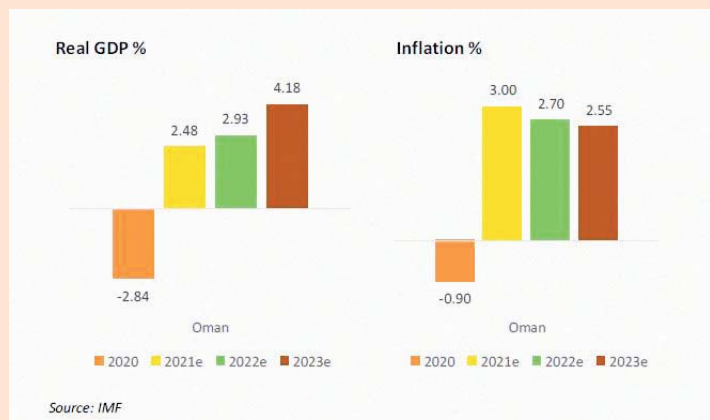
MUSCAT: The MSX30 Index ended the week lower by 0.14 per cent. All sub-indices ended lower except financial index which gained by 0.40 per cent. Services & Industrial Index closed lower by 0.88 per cent and 1.48 per cent, respectively. MSX Shariah Index closed lower by 0.02 per cent.

Galfar Engineering & Contracting Company has been awarded a new contract worth RO 21 million by the Tender Board for the Rehabilitation of the Southern Runway and Air Corridors of Muscat International Airport Project, the company said in a filing to the Muscat Stock Exchange.

The firm said that the estimated value of this project, which will be executed for the Civil Aviation Authority, is approximately RO 21 million. The execution period of the project is 16 months from the issuance of the work commencement order.

Galfar Engineering said this new project is expected to contribute to the company revenues and strengthen its presence in such vital infrastructure projects.

Sweets of Oman SAOG disclosed that a criminal case was lodged against its previous employees (The General Manager, Finance Manager, Assistant Finance Manager, Purchase Manager and Information Technology



Manager) and the criminal case is now with the Economic Crimes Section Department of Information Technology.

The Company suspended the above employees from work because the Board of Directors discovered misstatements in the financial statements and dismissed them.

The misstatement in the finance — as per the report of the auditors Price Waterhouse Coopers — occurred in the financial statements for the years 2017 — 2018–2019 — and until June 30, 2020 — the second quarter of the financial year ended on December 31, 2020. The company, with the approval of the government, appointed a specialised auditing company to verify any other frauds and the company shall receive the report in the near future.

As for the financial impact resulting from the above mentioned misstatements the company incurred huge loss

of amounts as shown in the financial statements which were disclosed previously in this regard. As such the business of the company is duly affected as a result of these financial losses incurred by the company.

The Sultanate's budget deficit dropped to RO 1.05 billion in the first eight months of 2021 from RO 1.96 billion in the same period of 2020, a reduction of more than RO 900 million, according to data released by the Ministry of Finance.

Oman recorded a 13.9 per cent increase in government revenues in the first eight months of 2021 as oil and gas prices during this period remained higher compared with the same period a year ago.

Total revenues rose to RO 6.330 billion during the January-August period against RO 5.554 billion recorded in the same period of 2020.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

Uber couriers win damages, boss jailed in Italy ruling

ROME: More than 40 Uber food delivery couriers won damages worth €10,000 (\$11,600) each in Italy on Friday after their former boss was convicted and sentenced to jail.

The CGIL trade union said the Milan court ruling marked "the

first conviction" in Italy for crimes related to workers' exploitation and labour outsourcing among Uber Eats' subcontractors.

Giuseppe Moltini, who used to run a company that hired riders on behalf of the delivery service giant, was

sentenced to three years and eight months.

He is unlikely to face prison, however, as in Italy jail terms of under four years usually do not lead to jail time and are not executed if they can still be appealed. — AFP

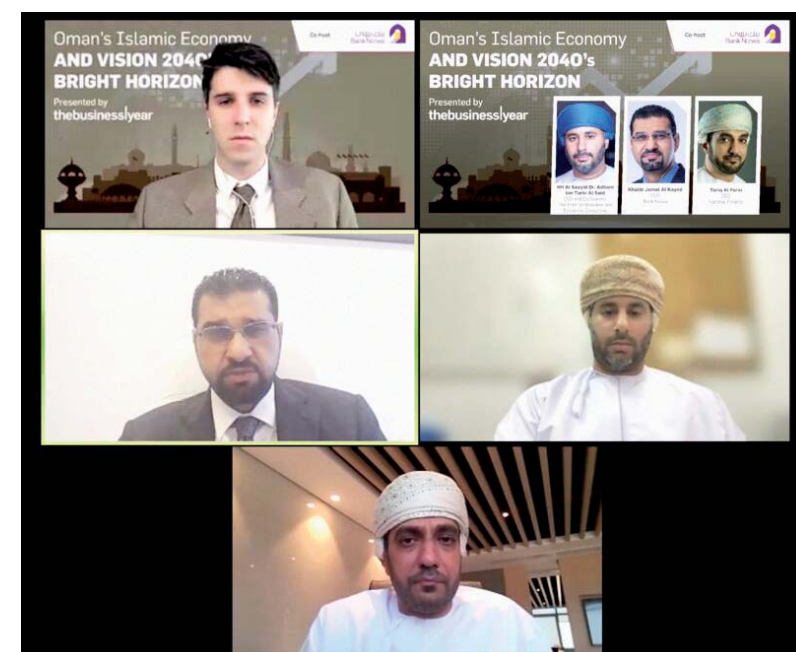
TBY hosts roundtable on
Islamic financeBUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 16

The Business Year (TBY), a global media group that has been providing investors, businesses, and governments with first-hand insights into the world's most dynamic markets for over a decade, hosted a digital roundtable on October 12 to debate the current state and future potential of Oman's Islamic banking sector.

The event was presented by the TBY team, including Benjamin MacShane, Associate Editor, and Andrea Tsiachtsiri, Country Director for Oman.

It also included HH Dr Adham al Said, CEO and Co-Founder of The Firm for Business and Economic Consulting LLC; Khaled al Kayed, CEO of Bank Nizwa and Tariq al Farsi, CEO of National Finance Co, who discussed the role that Islamic finance is having at a regional and international level.

Oman has the 15th largest Islamic banking sector globally. Despite the Covid-19 pandemic and the downturn in oil prices, Islamic banking sector growth



is likely to continue apace in 2021-2022, following its strong momentum in 2020, when it expanded by 10 per cent.

The roundtable underlined the main features of Islamic finance and the reasons behind its success. Since its arrival in Oman in 2012, the concept has created a whole new mindset, underlining social responsibility and risk sharing, Islamic principles, and sharia compliance.

The main infrastructure

challenges were also discussed, along with issues surrounding sustainable production and innovation, liquidity management, and the growing role of SMEs and start-ups.

The speakers discussed the role of the government and regulations, as well as the potential that Islamic finance has to help mitigate the economic strains and fiscal challenges of the country, providing the enabling factors to meet Vision 2040 objectives.

\$590m in ransomware payments reported to US as attacks surge

New data out last week showed \$590 million in ransomware-related payments were reported to US authorities in the first half of 2021 alone, setting a pace to beat totals for the whole previous decade as cyber-extortion booms.

The figure is also 42 per cent higher than the amount divulged by financial institutions for all of 2020, the US Treasury report said, and there are strong indicators the true cost could be in the billions.

“If current trends continue, (reports) filed in 2021 are projected to have a higher ransomware-related transaction value than... filed in the previous 10 years combined,” said Treasury’s Financial Crimes Enforcement Network.

The heists involve breaking into a company or institution’s network to encrypt its data, then demanding a ransom, typically paid via cryptocurrency in exchange for the digital key to unlock it.

Washington has sought to crack down on a sharp rise in attacks, including issuing its first sanctions against an online exchange where illicit operators have allegedly swapped cryptocurrency for cash.

Recent assaults on a major US oil pipeline, a meta-packing company and the Microsoft Exchange e-mail system drew attention to the vulnerability of US infrastructure to digital pirates who are extorting staggering sums.

Treasury said investigators found over 150 online wallets for cyptocurrency and by analysing them uncovered roughly \$5.2 billion in transactions potentially tied to ransomware payments.

Companies and institutions face intense pressure to pay up in order to get their data unlocked, but also to keep the attack from potentially angry clients and authorities who issue stern warnings not to give cash to criminals.

The report, based on the suspicious activity alerts that financial firms have to file, noted it was unclear if the jump represented increased awareness of the cybercrime. “This trend potentially reflects the increasing overall prevalence of ransomware-related incidents as well as improved detection and reporting,” Treasury said.

The victims of the attacks were not identified in the report, which noted some of the apparent ransoms were paid before January 2021.

The new data on the scale of payments related to hacks came after more than two dozen nations resolved to collectively fight ransomware during a Washington-led summit.

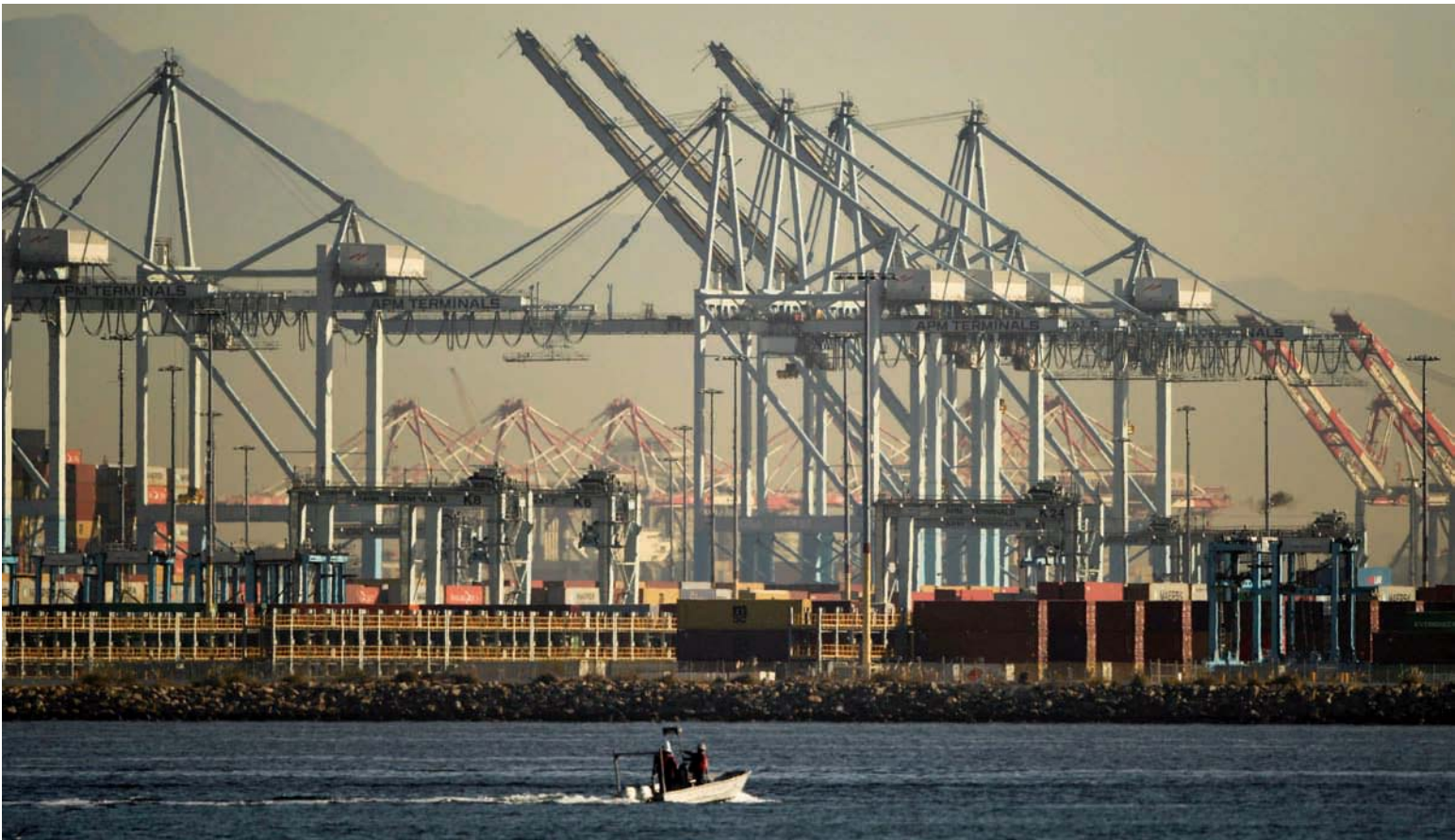
The United States gathered the countries — with the notable exception of Russia — to unify and boost efforts to fight a cybercrime that is transnational, on the rise and potentially devastating.

Stronger digital security and offline backups as well as collectively targeting the laundering of the attacks’ proceeds were identified as crucial steps in the fight. — AFP



The trend potentially reflects the increasing overall prevalence of ransomware-related incidents as well as improved detection and reporting

US TREASURY REPORT



EASING BOTTLENECKS

Cranes and stacks of cargo shipping containers stand at the Port of Los Angeles in San Pedro, California. The port, North America’s busiest container terminal, began 24-hour operations on October 14, after the White House intervened to help ease bottlenecks that are choking commerce and pushing up prices. — AFP

ME energy transition: Where next?



ELAN HABIB
Regional Director,
Middle East, ICIS

ALMOST ALL THE MIDDLE EAST COUNTRIES HAVE THEIR OWN STATE-SANCTIONED ENERGY TRANSITION PLANS, WHICH INCLUDE AMBITIOUS STEPS TO INCREASE RENEWABLES AND TO REDUCE FOSSIL FUEL DEPENDENCE

The energy transition has already begun. With environmental concerns escalating to a climate emergency, it is no longer a choice to play in the cleaner energy race.

However, the transition is complex, and a one-size-fits-all approach does not exist. In the Middle East, the challenge is acute and all sectors of the economy, from energy to chemicals and finance must prepare for change.

Across the Middle East, traditionally associated with oil as a primary fuel of choice in its power and industrial sectors, the transition to a cleaner energy mix presents a unique challenge.

While the mix is already changing, the region has lagged behind others in terms of the move to cleaner, renewable fuels.

Over the past few decades, Middle Eastern countries have transitioned from burning oil to gas, mainly driven by the financial incentive of selling higher-priced oil abroad and instead burning the cheaper gas domestically. Qatar, as a world leader in LNG exports, is an exception. Countries such as Bahrain, the UAE, Israel and Jordan are currently using gas as the dominant fuel of choice to generate electricity, with little to no oil in the power generation mix.

Kuwait has made strong progress in replacing oil generation with gas, while Saudi Arabia is taking more time.

Still, the move away from fossil fuels as a whole and towards cleaner fuel sources and renewables has been somewhat slow.

Renewable power generation represents an extremely small portion of the overall generation mix and outright renewables generation is around 2 per cent of what is generated in Europe.

However, there has been a shift towards greater investment in renewables projects in 2021 relative to oil- and gas-fired power generation.

Almost all the countries in the Middle East have their own state-sanctioned

energy transition plans, which include ambitious steps to increase renewables and to reduce fossil fuel dependence.

Jordan, the UAE and Oman have also increased the share of renewables in power generation over the past years, with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait trying to catch up. Away from power generation, Kuwait has been increasing its industrial gas use by an average of 9 per cent year on year over the past five years. Gas consumption from the UAE’s industrial sector is around 35 per cent of total gas demand, similar to its power sector.

Looking ahead, the return of Brent crude oil prices in 2021 to a more stable \$65 — 75/bbl range is a positive move for Middle East oil producers.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE will be prominent voices at the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Scotland in November, where discussions will focus on the next version of the International Climate Change Agreement.

These countries are positioning themselves at the centre of the energy transition, including the development of green hydrogen, but will need to maintain their positions in fossil fuels to fund cleaner fuel projects.

Iran and Iraq are less prominent in the energy transition space and will continue to focus on maximising revenue from oil production.

Qatar leads the region’s energy consumption per capita, followed by the UAE and Kuwait. In terms of carbon emissions, the role of oil in Saudi Arabia and Iran put them at the top of the Middle East list.

While Iran is the leading gas producer in the Middle East, Qatar is by far the leading gas exporter and is in close competition with Australia as the largest LNG producer in the world. Investment in Qatar’s domestic gas production and

LNG export infrastructure will continue through the 2020s and will shape the global market.

Qatar will expand its current 77.4mtpa of LNG capacity to almost 126mtpa by the late 2020s in two phases. The expansion is underpinned by new investment in Qatar’s vast North Field. The first expansion phase will consist of four 8mtpa LNG trains which will start up from 2025.

Qatar will continue to work closely with a range of major global LNG and gas companies in a similar manner to its existing LNG trains. Qatar’s primary LNG sales market is Asia, while Europe also plays an important role. In this respect, Qatar will need to pay close attention to European regulation on the emissions and shipping which will step in in the coming years.

Producers in the Middle East are also taking steps to explore the new but growing trend for carbon-neutral LNG cargoes. A carbon-neutral LNG cargo is a normal cargo of LNG supplied with the matching number of emissions reduction credits to offset its environmental impact. For example, a producer could sell a cargo of LNG alongside a number of credits earned by investing in forestry projects.

Oman LNG in June 2021 agreed to deliver a carbon-neutral cargo from its plant at Qalhat to Shell at a Middle Eastern country, in what would have been the first such deal in the region.

The world’s largest LNG supplier, Qatar, has not yet been heard to sell any carbon-neutral cargoes directly. However, new Qatari trading unit QP Trading in November 2020 signed a 10-year deal with Singapore’s Pavilion Energy, under which it would supply up to 1.8mtpa of LNG from 2023 along with a report on the emissions impact of the cargoes from their production, measured from well to discharge port.

The real size of Samsung



STEFANO VIRGILLI
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TODAY SAMSUNG IS EVERYWHERE. FROM WEARABLE PRODUCTS, TO MICROCHIPS

When we think of Samsung, the first thing that comes to mind is probably a mobile phone or a TV set. But the greatness of the Korean giant goes beyond the latest consumer products.

In 1938, at age 28, a young Korean gentleman by the name of Lee Byung-chul founded Samsung, citing the hanja word Samsung, meaning “three stars”.

Initially the business was trading with grocery stores and counted 40 employees. By introducing new products and service, in the 1950s the company was stretching across multiple industries, including insurance, securities and retail.

It was only in the late 1960s that Samsung ventured into electronics.

The first product released on the market — in 1970 — was a black-and-white 12’ TV set.

In 1983, Samsung released the first computer, two years ahead of the first Windows computer. From there they ventured in all sort of industries and technologies.

In the 1990s the started producing cars, until the merger with Renault in early 2000, created the Renault Samsung Motors company.

By keep introducing products globally, they became one of the most versatile companies in human history.

Today Samsung is everywhere. From wearable products, to microchips. Samsung is in fact one of the world’s largest microchips

manufactures. So much that Apple iPhone started by using Samsung produced chips. In 2011, Samsung became, and still is, the largest mobile phone manufacturer.

From 2006 onwards, they are also the largest TV manufacturers, and today control 98 per cent of the AMOLED displays market (the screen technology that does not require back lighting to project images).

Recently, Samsung has also ventured in the production of drones, while the company was pioneer in Virtual Reality technology, with the famous headset gear. The budget for Research & Development allocated by Samsung last year alone was about \$20 billion.

With nearly half a million employees, Samsung Group has more employees that Microsoft, Apple and Google combined.

In terms of revenues, Samsung as a group — with Samsung Electronics being just one of the over 80 entities — makes more than \$300 billion yearly. In proportion, the latest revenues statement of Apple was \$270, Google \$160 billion and Microsoft \$60 billion.

Besides the most well-known consumer products, Samsung is also heavily invested in constructions. Burj Khalifa in Dubai and the Petronas Towers in Malaysia were built by Samsung.

Koreans are quite accustomed to purchase financial services and

insurance products offered by Samsung.

Every year, Samsung donates \$100 million to the medical centres and research facilities that they founded.

When I visited Korea the last time — a few weeks before the pandemic stopped all my travel ambitions — I noticed how proud Koreans were of their beloved Samsung.

It reminded me of how my friend in the US tend to buy iPhone as mobile phone of preference. Both are tapping on the sense of belonging that the presence of an economic miracle represents for a country.

(The writer is a member of the International Press Association)

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features

An Omani Women's Day Special:

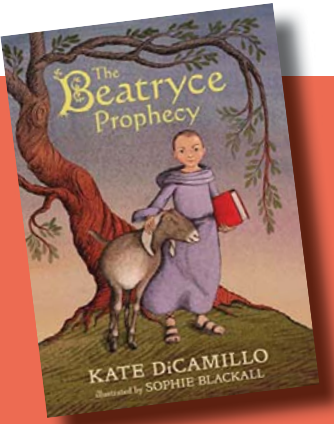
A woman's professional work is proof of herself

Back in the 1980s, when Taeeba bint Khaleef al Salti decided that she wanted to work in an office, it was a tough decision frowned upon by some personalities in her community. As the country celebrates Omani Women's Day, we looked at her 35-year-long career story and how she helped paved the way for women to have a space in an office environment in Sur... **P20**



CONSERVATION

READ



THE BEATRICE PROPHECY
BY KATE DICAMILLO
ILLUSTRATED BY SOPHIE BLACKALL

The prophecy of a girl who will unseat a king unfurls.

Extinction threatens fifth of European bird species, survey says

EXTINCTION THREATENS almost 20 per cent of European bird species, the German non-governmental conservation organisation NABU reported on Thursday on the basis of a survey by Bird Life International.

The survey put 110 of the 544 species for which data were gathered on Bird Life International's Red List, with a further 166 species showing decline. Most at risk are songbirds, such

as larks, shrikes and buntings, with the decline being attributed to loss of habitat and the use of agricultural chemicals. NABU noted that domestic species, such as snipes, swifts and quails had skipped a category and were now seen as endangered across Europe. Seabirds, including the velvet scoter, were now endangered as a result of fisheries and water pollution. The diversity of European bird life continued to be threatened by agriculture and building, exploitation of the sea, poor forestry practices, pol-

lution and illegal killing of certain species, NABU head Leif Miller said. Climate change was also affecting the habitats of numerous bird species. Some species are making a recovery. Kingfishers and red kites have been removed from the Red List, and a number of raptor species are benefiting from targeted conservation measures. The list took in data from 54 countries and regions, with thousands of experts and volunteers contributing to collecting the information. — **dpa**





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AROUND THE WORLD

TRAVEL TALES



The Middle East transforms into a premier entertainment destination

THE MIDDLE EAST is becoming the world's premier destination for entertainment and with the world's attention currently captivated by the Dubai Expo 2020, all eyes are on the United Arab Emirates.

Barely an hour from Dubai, Abu Dhabi is also creating a niche for itself as a hub for wholesome family entertainment and the bulk of this wholesome experience can be found in Yas Island.

In a recent survey sponsored by Yas, "GCC residents revealed that the number one thing they were looking for in a vacation was being able to spend time with their family, with 37 per cent sharing that they are seeking quality family time during their travels, with 47 per cent of GCC travellers citing family activities as a must-have when travelling abroad. Almost half of over 45-year-olds hoped to spend much deserved time with family members during a holiday."

The research, which surveyed almost 900 participants across the region — including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar as well as Kuwait — comes as regional border restrictions ease. Researchers also found that over one-third of GCC residents

are looking to escape into a world of relaxation when heading on a vacation. Holidaymakers based in Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and Saudi Arabia look for a relaxing vacation, with 47 per cent, 37 per cent, 33 per cent and 31 per cent of respondents respectively sharing that they prioritise rest and relaxation.

The survey also found that almost one-third of GCC respondents are hoping to 'have fun' when travelling on vacations. 68 per cent of respondents between the 18 and 34 age group listed fun as a top priority.

Suffice to say, Yas Island is the most happening place in Abu Dhabi thanks to the collection of thrilling adventures like Ferrari World Abu Dhabi, Yas Waterworld Abu Dhabi, and Warner Bros WorldTM Abu Dhabi, as well as the world's biggest indoor sky-diving flight chamber and region's tallest indoor climbing wall at CLYMBTM Abu Dhabi, Yas Island, holds all the ingredients to provide fun for all throughout their time.

A WEEK-LONG DESTINATION

The dizzying array of entertainment available in Abu Dhabi particularly in Yas Island will need



a full week of exploration.

Children will definitely love the numerous rides and fun adventures available at Warner Bros where they will have an opportunity to interact with some of Warner Bros heroes, from Batman and Catwoman to some of the entertaining villains from the franchise.

The Yas Waterworld also provides much-needed relief from the heat and after a day-long adventure in Warner Bros cavernous studios, a day out in the sun frolicking in man-made

beaches and some of the most spectacular slides not found anywhere else in the emirate.

Want to tour Italy? Inside the Ferrari World, families will be able to enjoy an automated ride down the Italian countryside passing through miniature versions of popular Italian attractions like the Colosseum, the leaning tower of Pisa among others.

With a range of safety and wellness guidelines firmly in place, it's no wonder why international celebrities and influencers consider the island as a must-visit. — Reuters

COLUMN



Rasha Al Raisi
rashabooks@yahoo.com

678 sheds light on the psychological effects of harassment

678 IS A MOVIE that is set in Egypt yet talks about an issue that affects women globally: sexual harassment.

The opening scene is of a hand making a decorative brass wire figurine of a man and a woman dancing together that finally gets hung in a car, setting the context of nature's duality before meeting the three main female characters.

Payza (played by Bushra) is a woman from the working class. Her husband works two jobs to make ends meet for their two children. Payza wears a hijab and spends her morning layering her clothes, in an attempt to protect herself from sexual harassment intents that she faces the minute she's on the street, whether it's verbal from passersby or physical when using public transport (in her case it's bus number 678).

The second story is of Saba (played by Nelly Kareem), a survivor who dedicates her time to educating women about their right to self-defence by whatever means they have in their hands as the law is unable to protect them. When she asks the attendees to write about their harassment experiences, almost all women refuse to acknowledge it even though they're attending her class which reflects the social stigma linked to it.

Saba's experience is shared through a flashback scene. After attending a football game with her husband and while being on the street celebrating with the masses, she's suddenly pushed away from him and encircled by a large group of men who assault her. The incident affects them both — especially the husband who couldn't save her — and leads to a bitter separation.

The third story of Nelly (played by Nahed El-Sebai) is based on the true story of Noha Rushdi, the first Egyptian woman to break the taboo and file a sexual harassment case against her attacker. Nelly was crossing the road when a pick-up driver grabbed her from the collar of her shirt, dragging her for a few seconds before dropping her to the ground.

Nelly managed to get up and chase him. Luckily, he was blocked by a car coming from the opposite direction which allowed her to catch and file a complaint against him. Although many hailed her for her bravery — she even had a TV interview where she shared her experience — yet she's pressured by her family and fiancé to drop the case considering the social stigma and defaming linked to it.

The three main characters' paths cross many times, especially when violent attacks on random harassers occur and the police are called to investigate led by officer Essam (Maged El-Kedwani).

The movie not only sheds light on the psychological effects of harassment on victims and their families but also the stereotypical misogynistic view of the issue: women cause it to themselves by not being decent or religious enough, which the director refutes by displaying experiences from different social classes who were harassed despite being both.

When released in 2010, the movie was attacked by many — including the Association of Human Rights and Social Justice — claiming that it encourages women to injure their harassers in self-defence instead of reporting the incidents to the police. Moreover, one attorney called for a total ban as it defamed Egypt. Yet the film won prizes in many international film festivals including Dubai Film Festival (Best Actor and Actress) and Chicago International Film Festival (Best Film and Actor). 678 is Mohammed Diab's first feature film — also written by him — that sends a clear message: women should feel safe in their surroundings and protected by law and society. Highly recommended. Available on Netflix.

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and the author of *The World According to Bahja*. rashabooks@yahoo.com



A woman's professional work is proof of herself

BY MAZOUN AL GHAILANI

In an era where there were not a lot of work opportunities for Omani women, Taeeba bint Khaleef al Salti is one of those who broke the glass ceiling and created a niche for herself and has paved the way for women in her workplace.

In a career that spanned 35 years, she has produced more than 200,000 documents and letters becoming one of the most prolific documents handlers and producers for the Secretariat Department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Sur.

"I've always believed that women are just as capable as any man. What we know today as the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion used to be the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. There were not a lot of job opportunities for women back then. I had this vision that women should one day occupy high positions in any profession and I have to work hard to usher in a new way of thinking for career women in the society", Taeeba said.

She started her career as a typist of letters and documents for the Secretariat Department of the ministry on March 20, 1985, a month after the bureau was opened in Sur.

At that time, she was only 17 years old. She has studied typography methods using the old typewriting machine and that was her ticket to landing the opening which was announced at that time.

Back in the 1980s, Taeeba said that other than teaching jobs, there were not a lot of opportunities for young women like her.

"There was a pushback when it comes to women working in offices. You won't

see a lot of working women. My family played a great role in encouraging and supporting me especially my father. There are days when I wanted to give up because of frustration. I usually hear depressing comments just because I was motivated to have a job in an office", Taeeba shared.

"I went to my father one day explaining the difficulty I was facing at work especially the snide remarks I often hear. At that time, most fathers will not allow their daughter to work in offices where it's mostly men around. I drew strength from my father's advice because even though my father was uneducated, he told me not to listen to what other people say but instead, continue doing a good job and not lose my motivation", she shared.

"Society sometimes can set very stringent rules that are not helpful. As long as we are doing what's right, we should also push back", she said.

For her difficult beginnings, Taeeba would prove to be a great asset to the department. As she was deeply motivated to improve, she has taken numerous courses to improve her skills, particularly in typing. She moved and worked in nearly all departments of the ministry and has witnessed the numerous administrative changes that took place over the years. She was the only woman working at the said office from 1985 to 1993 until another hardworking female, Bushra al Ghailani joined the team. Aisha al Nuaimi would soon make them the trifecta female power in the department.

"In the early to late 80s, we were using this manual machine where if you make a mistake, you have to re-do the whole document from scratch. I developed my own style of writing, drafting, formatting

and reviewing letters and documents. When we moved on to the computer era, it has become easier for us to do our job. We were also able to establish that women can do the job really well", she shared.

In her 35-year career, she was promoted from 'typist' to Writer of Posts and Documents until she retired as Acting Head of the Postal and Documents Department.

"I stopped studying when I was 13 due to some issues. But I strived hard to gain my secondary preparatory certificate until I completed my education. I used to go to work in the morning and after work, join a literacy school. Those hard days will eventually pave the way for me to complete high school. The ministry also provided me with an opportunity to complete my university education but due to family circumstances, it was proved to be difficult to juggle so many responsibilities", she said.

In her stint at the Ministry, she was able to help train the new employees and imparted her knowledge to the complexities of letter and document-making. She also proudly shared that their impeccable performance has caused their department to receive accolades and be noticed for an exemplary job. She retired on December 31, 2020, leaving behind an amazing legacy of hard work and dedication and ultimately paving the way for empowered females to have a space in the workforce.

On the occasion of Omani Women's Day, Taeeba said, "My advice to all women is that your work is a proof of yourself. With our capabilities, we can be great partners to any man and can contribute to nation-building. To make this societal contribution, it is important to depend on yourself and look

after your needs."

"I congratulate women on all their days. The Omani Women's Day is an acknowledgement of what women can do not just in their day to day life and how they manage their families but most importantly in their role as great contributors to building a society. I urge all women to continue in their pursuit of becoming the best in their various fields and to become an amazing force that will help the country rise as one of the best in the world", she said.

You can follow the writer on Instagram: [@mazoun_alghailani](https://www.instagram.com/mazoun_alghailani)

