

P11

DJOKOVIC TO GET VISA FOR 2023 AUSTRALIAN OPEN



P13

DUQM REFINERY TO COME ONLINE AT END OF 2023



P20

CHRIS BOTTI'S PERFORMANCE SHOWS WHAT IT HAS TO TAKE TO BE A GRAMMY WINNER



MUSCAT

HM THANKED BY KING OF SPAIN

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from King Felipe VI of the Kingdom of Spain in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable on his country's National Day. In his cable, King Felipe VI expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments. He also wished His Majesty continuous health and wellbeing and the Omani people further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM THANKED BY ZAMBIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has received a cable of thanks from President Hakainde Hichilema of the Republic of Zambia, in reply to His Majesty's greetings cable on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, President Hichilema expressed his sincere appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan's heartfelt sentiments. — ONA



His Majesty to preside over National Day military parade



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, will preside on Friday over the military parade, to be staged at Al Nasr Ground in the Governorate of Dhofar on the occasion of the 52nd Glorious National Day.

Symbolic units representing the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the Royal Air Force of Oman (RAFO), the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), the Sultan's Special Force (SSF), the Royal Oman Police (ROP), the Royal Court Affairs (RCA) and the joint military musical band will take part in the military parade.

The parade will be attended alongside His Majesty the Sultan by members of the Royal Family, ministers, chairmen of the State Council and Majlis Ash'shura, advisers, commanders of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), military and security units, heads of the Diplomatic Corps of the Arab and foreign countries accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, under-secretaries, retired military commanders, judges, members of the Public Prosecution Department, ambassadors at the Foreign Ministry, walis, shaikhs and dignitaries of the Governorate of Dhofar.

It will be also attended by the military attaches of the Arab and foreign embassies in the Sultanate of Oman, senior military officers, senior state officials, senior retired officers, commissioned and non-commissioned officers at SAF, RGO, military and security units and citizens of the Governorate of Dhofar. — ONA

93% rise in number of visitors

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
[@afrahbalushia](#)

Data released by ForwardKeys showed that Oman registered a 93-per cent increase in the number of international visitors to tourist destinations, since the start of September 2022 until now, compared to the corresponding period last year. The majority of tourists are from European and Middle Eastern countries, while the number of visitors from regional markets grew by more than 156 per cent, according to the latest data on airline ticket booking, notably for the months of November and December 2022.

Germany constitutes the largest market segment of tourists visiting Oman over the fourth quarter of 2022, constituting a rise of more than 140 per cent, with each tourist staying for 8 nights on average. TURN TO P3

Wise Leadership Prosperous Renaissance

Guided by His Majesty's visionary leadership, we remain committed to contribute to the growth and prosperity of Oman.

Congratulations to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** and the people of Oman on the occasion of the 52nd National Day.







[#52NationalDay](#)





شركة تنمية نفط عُمان
Petroleum Development Oman

WARM FELICITATIONS TO
HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK
AND THE PEOPLE OF OMAN ON THE OCCASION OF
THE 52nd NATIONAL DAY OF THE RENAISSANCE





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WEDNESDAY | NOVEMBER 16 | 2022

3

POPULATION RISES TO 4.89 MILLION

SAMUEL KUTTY

@samuelkuttyvp

The total population in the Sultanate of Oman reached 4,890,110 against 4,527,446 by the end of December 2021, mainly driven by the increase in the number of expatriates.

According to the population clock at National Centre for Statistics and Information, the percentage of Omanis fell to 58.47 to reach 2,859,217 on November 14.

At the end of 2021, the number of Omanis stood at 2,804,117, representing 62 per cent of the total population, against 1,723,329 expatriates representing 38 per cent, a decrease of 1.25 per cent.

The number of expatriates reached 2,030,893, forming the remaining 41.63 per cent.

The new figures from the state-owned statistics agency come amidst the annual World Population Prospect report, coinciding with World Population Day, noting that the global population is growing at its slowest rate since 1950, having fallen to less than one per cent in 2020.

Significantly, the world's population reached 8 billion people on Tuesday, according to UN estimates. The latest projections suggest that the global population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030, 9.7 billion in 2050 and 10.4 billion in 2100.

At the same time, the population of Oman grew from less than half a million in 1950 to



more than four million in 2015 and is expected to reach seven million by 2055.

According to a report in Middle East Fertility Society Journal, Oman has been experiencing a period of youth bulge over the years, and it is expected to continue for at least the next 20 years.

In 2021, the categories of youth and children below 29 years of age represented the biggest sector of the population forming two-thirds of the Omani population, while children aged less than five years represented 14 per cent of the total Omani population.

“To reap the benefits of the emerged demographic dividend, necessary steps need to be taken in a timely manner to develop human resources,” says the report “Demographic transition in Sultanate of Oman: Emerging demographic dividend and challenges” by M Mazharul Islam.

According to the scholarly

report, understanding the demographic challenges must be a priority for the government of Oman and formulate policies to harvest the benefits of the demographic windows.

After 1970, the annual growth rate of the population in Oman accelerated due to increased immigration of the working-age population which has increased from less than 1 per cent in 1970 to 44 per cent in 2015.

The report points out that the fertility rate has declined from 8.6 births per woman in 1988 to 3.3 births per woman in 2008, a decline of 5.3 births per woman or a 62-per cent decline within a short period of 20 years.

Under-five mortality also declined from 359 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1950 to nine deaths per 1,000 live births in 2015.

In 2020, the death rate in Oman did not change in comparison to the previous year. The death rate remained at 2.42 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. The crude death rate is the annual number of deaths divided by the total population expressed per 1,000 people.

The population density amounted to 14.6 persons per square kilometre by the end of December 2021.

Muscat Governorate has the highest density of population, with 327 persons, with five persons for each square kilometre, while Al Wusta Governorate has the lowest population density, with 0.6 persons for each square kilometre.

■ ENVOYS PRESENT COPIES OF CREDENTIALS



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, received credentials copy of Ingrid Amer, Ambassador of the Republic of Estonia appointed to the Sultanate of Oman, in Muscat on Tuesday. Sayyid Badr wished the ambassador success in carrying out her duties. He also wished the relations between Oman and Estonia further development and growth. Sayyid Badr also received a copy of credentials of Shaikat Ali Soudhan, Ambassador of the Republic of Mauritius appointed to the Sultanate of Oman. The Foreign Minister wished the ambassador success in carrying out his duties. He also wished the bilateral relations between Oman and Mauritius further progress and prosperity. – ONA

■ AMBASSADORS OF UK, BRAZIL BID FAREWELL



MUSCAT: Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister received Ligia Maria Scherer, Ambassador of Brazil to the Sultanate of Oman, who bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty, in Muscat on Tuesday. Sayyid Badr expressed his appreciation to the ambassador for the efforts she exerted in enhancing relations between the two countries. He also wished her success in her future endeavours. Sayyid Badr also received, Bill Murray, Ambassador of the United Kingdom to the Sultanate of Oman, who bid farewell at the end of his tour of duty. The Foreign Minister expressed his appreciation to the ambassador for the efforts he exerted in bolstering the relations between the two countries. He also wished the ambassador success in his future endeavours.

93% rise in number of visitors

FROM PAGE1

The number of visitors to Oman from GCC states is expected to increase by 196 per cent until the end of the year. Visitors from the UAE constitute the largest segment, with an increase of 162 per cent in the number of tourists.

Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, Director-General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said that the latest data shared by ForwardKeys affirms the significance of facilities like air transport in attracting travellers. Another factor of tourist attraction is the diversity of tourist destinations and activities that make Oman an ideal place for many tourists and groups from regional and international markets, Al Ghassani added.

“The World Cup is the most important sporting event ever hosted in the region, and that is why the Sultanate of Oman launched a special programme to celebrate this exceptional occasion, based on the fact that Muscat is one of the cities approved to host World Cup fans, as the programme aims to provide an integrated experience for fans who choose Muscat for their residence during the tournament,” said Azzam bin Qassim al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Italian language centre to open in Muscat

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish the first official Italian language Centre (Società Dante Alighieri) in Oman was signed by Società Dante Alighieri (La Dante's), Italy's official institution for teaching Italian language, and Global Education Services (GES Quality Education).

Speaking to the Observer, Federica Favi, Ambassador of Italy to the Sultanate of Oman, said that this marks a turning point in the bilateral cultural relations with Oman, making Italian language closer for the Omani public and a further tool for economic diversification.

“Learning Italian will open new opportunities to young Omanis in many fields to learn more about our country, our education and our technology, and to get certified professional skills that can be spent in growing sectors like tourism or engineering,” she said.

“We have a focus on developing and retaining Omani skills through educational opportunities and recognise the long-term advantages that introducing the Italian Language Centre will bring. La Dante is the ideal partner to promote the Italian language and an appreciation of its culture,” said Shaikh Julanda

bin Salim al Hashmi, Vice-President of Global Education Services.

“Promoting Italian culture and language abroad is our main mission. We deliver Italian courses both in presence and by our e-learning digital platform Dante.global according to our high-level quality teaching approach. Oman is a key country in our vision and cooperation with GES is strategic in accomplishing our goals,” Alessandro Masi, Secretary-General of Società Dante Alighieri, told the Observer.

Located in Al Mouj Muscat Development Project, the first official Italian language centre in Oman comes under the auspices of the Embassy of Italy and the Omani-Italian Friendship Association and the Oman Centre is the second in the region and first in the country.

Salma al Hashmi, Board Member of the Omani-Italian Friendship Association, commented, “This is another significant step in enhancing cultural relations between our nations. With GES Quality Education and La Dante, Omanis will enjoy access to high quality teaching and certification of Italian in Muscat.

La Dante was established in Italy in 1889 with a network in more than 80 countries around the world.”

DIRECTORS REPORT For 3 rd Quarter (Jan-Sep) Results – Year 2022		INTERIM CONDENSED CONSOLIDATED AND SEPARATE STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022			
Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors, it is my pleasure to present the Company's unaudited consolidated results for the nine-month period ended on 30 th Sep 2022.		Parent Company (Unaudited)	Group (Unaudited)	Parent Company (Audited)	Group (Audited)
Our key results are annexed below:		30 September 2022	30 September 2022	31 December 2021	31 December 2021
Key Results:		RO	RO	RO	RO
ASSETS					
Non-current assets					
Plant Property and equipment		2,808,603	2,808,603	3,079,095	3,079,095
Right-of-use assets		1,064,443	1,064,443	203,402	203,402
Finance lease receivables		-	-	297,958	-
Fixed deposit		5,600,800	5,600,000	1,100,000	1,100,000
Investment in subsidiaries		15,750	-	515,750	-
Deferred tax asset		919,429	919,429	719,429	719,429
		10,488,225	10,392,475	5,315,634	5,101,926
Current assets					
Inventories		2,276,737	2,276,737	1,013,196	1,013,196
Lease receivables		-	-	16,149	-
Trade and other receivables		3,840,958	3,052,674	1,392,349	1,403,081
Amounts due from related parties		-	-	2,405	-
Financial assets at FVTPL		107,049	107,049	113,302	113,302
Other financial assets at amortised cost		-	-	-	-
Cash and bank balances		428,331	430,043	206,409	208,121
Assets included in disposal group classified as held-for-sale		-	-	-	-
		5,853,075	5,866,503	2,743,810	3,270,704
Turnover and summary of results:		16,261,200	16,258,978	8,659,444	10,372,630
The unaudited results of the third quarter represent the consolidation of Oman Fisheries Co. SAOG (Parent), and Oman Fisheries Co. Sharjah (FZE).					
Your company has achieved a consolidated turnover of RO 11.161 million from operations as of 30 th Sep 2022 compared to the previous years turnover of RO 7.890 million from operations for the same period last year. The group made a net loss of RO 76.477 compared to the net loss of RO 1,539,442.					
Two noteworthy transactions should be highlighted at this point for clarification					
a. The Company achieved a gain of 967K on the sale of Al-Ameen that was shown as held for sale in 2021 financials.					
b. The lease receivable from Al-Ameen with respect to Halban land was transferred to Al Ameen in Q3 & this has resulted in a write-off to the extent of OMR 266K related to a land sublease ROU booked in 2019 as per IFRS 16 requirements.					
Following are the key operational highlights for the third quarter:					
1. Oman Fisheries Company renewed the usufruct agreements with government authorities for the next thirty years					
2. Commercial fishing operations with Atlantic Dawn with a quota of 30,000 MT/year have started & the company has procured 1.215 MT of fish under this agreement.					
3. The company signed a purchase agreement of fish with Al Wusta and 1200 MT were purchased and sold during the month of Sep-2022.					
4. Oman Fisheries procured a total of 18,548 MT from artisanal fishermen and other sources as compared with 15,070 MT for the same period from last year.					
5. Export sales represented 82.94% of the total sales with local sales representing 17.06% of the total sales					
6. The company achieved a gross margin of 15% driven by the continuous efforts of the management to penetrate higher value markets, rigorous stock, and inventory management and diligent revenue planning and management.					
7. No fish stock provision has been booked during the period which showed a strong process implemented by the management to control the stock movements.					
8. The Company is steadfast in implementing the new ERP and the implementation is expected to be completed in Q4.					
The selling and distribution expenses were driven higher principally due to container & freight charges associated with the global supply chain glut.					
Debtors and cash collection cycle has been consistent in relation compared to the volume of sales both in the domestic and export market.					
Acknowledgement					
On behalf of the Board of Directors and Management of the Company, I wish to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik and his Government for the continuous efforts towards the development of the fisheries sector and food security.					
Further, we are extending our thanks to, government bodies, suppliers, service providers, banks, customers, consultants, and employees of the Company for their continuous efforts and we are wishing them all the success for the remaining period of the year.					
Chairman					
Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who request them, either in Arabic or English as requested within 7 days of receipt of the request.					
OMAN FISHERIES					



ROOTS OF GREEN OMAN

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN produced around 374,000 tonnes of dates by the end of 2021, marking an increase of 2.2 per cent over 2020 when the net recorded production was 366,383 tonnes. According to signsdirect.com, wild ancestor species of the date palm were discovered in remote and isolated mountainous locations in the Sultanate of Oman.

There are about 300 cultivated varieties of dates in the country. This traditional crop is now benefiting from modern technology. For example, Wakan Tech has introduced Artificial intelligence (AI) and specially designed drones with tanks and nozzles to optimise liquid pollen to each palm tree.

There is another tree that was on the top of the list centuries ago. Frankincense tree, one of the most ancient trees, can be seen in Wadi Dawkah in Dhofar. In 1998, the frankincense tree was categorised as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List. This year, the Environment Society of Oman was awarded a special grant by the British Embassy in Muscat to support two conservation projects; Population Assessment of Frankincense in Oman, and Fishing Net Collection and Recycling on Masirah Island.

A field team consisting of ESO, Wageningen University and Research, Fair Source Botanicals LLC and Mendel University in Brno conducted a three-month survey of the frankincense tree.

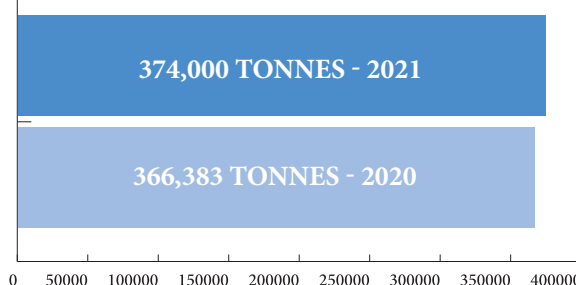
According to Suaad al Harthi, Executive Director of ESO, the survey enabled the team to map the distribution of frankincense trees in Dhofar and saw the establishment of permanent study sites to evaluate the long-term population ecology.

The focus is also on assessing the various threats the tree faces and engaging "with local stakeholders to build local capacity to survey and protect the trees in the future."

Now there is another unique tree to Dhofar, and that is the baobab tree seen in the sites such as

NOW THERE IS ANOTHER UNIQUE TREE TO DHOFAR, AND THAT IS THE BAOBAB TREE SEEN IN THE SITES SUCH AS WADI HANNA, EAST OF SALALAH, DHALKOUT. THEY ARE MYSTERIOUS IN THEIR OWN WAY AS THEY ARE MAINLY FOUND IN THE AFRICAN CONTINENT

OMAN PRODUCED DATES



THE GOVERNMENT IS SPEARHEADING A DRIVE TO PLANT 10 MILLION TREES ACROSS THE NATION TO PRESERVE WILD PLANTS, COMBAT DESERTIFICATION AND PARTICIPATE IN INCREASING THE GREEN AREA

Wadi Hanna, east of Salalah, Dhalkout. They are mysterious in their own way as they are mainly found in the African continent. Today the sites are popular with tourists and measures are taken to preserve them - a drive that has seen protection for many more endogenous species by the Environment Authority of Oman.

But one of the first initiatives that were taken to protect trees was for the mangroves, which resulted in creating the Qurum Nature Reserve by virtue of

a Royal Decree in 1975. Today it not only supports marine life but is a haven for migratory birds. Yet another fascinating reality is that coconut trees thrive naturally only in Salalah compared to the whole of the GCC countries, making it a special agricultural produce of Oman. Not to forget are the wild olives over the Jabal Al Akhdhar and the potential of growing olive trees up there.

According to the Environment Authority, there are 44,398 planted trees, and the available trees are 49,830. There are 16 nurseries supporting the initiative. Many individuals have also joined the drive by collecting seeds and providing saplings of native trees of the Sultanate of Oman.

"The idea of this initiative came as a continuation of the efforts to raise awareness and educate the community to preserve wild plants, combat desertification and participate in increasing the green area in the Sultanate of Oman," said a source in the Environment Authority on the national initiative to plant 10 million trees.

It was launched on January 8, 2020, in coordination with Petroleum Development Oman and in partnership with various sectors such as government, private sectors and civil society. Desertification is a challenge many countries are trying to tackle as it leads to land degradation and loss of plant wealth, eventually impacting a country's biodiversity.

This year on Omani Tree Day, the initiative took further momentum as the day was celebrated by planting and distributing hundreds of native tree saplings and seeds. Many saplings were planted in various regions of Oman, and even the schools participated in the campaign.

The year has also seen an agreement signed between the Environment Authority and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning to increase tree planting and greenery around the residential neighbourhoods. Yet another location the initiative is reaching out to is the industrial zones.

Today planting a tree is an option and an opportunity each individual can explore in the country.



COUNCIL CHAIRMAN RECEIVES SPEAKER OF HUNGARY



Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council received Dr Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary, in Muscat on Tuesday. They exchanged views on several matters of mutual interest. They also lauded the relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Hungary. Al Khalili expressed his keenness to contribute to enhancing relations in various fields and expanding the horizons of joint cooperation. On his turn, the Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary wished Oman and its people further progress and prosperity. The meeting was attended by several members of the State Council, the Secretary-General and Ambassador of Hungary to the Sultanate of Oman. – ONA

Oman Air launches flight to Phuket

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Oman Air, the national carrier, launched its flight to Phuket, Thailand, on Tuesday. The first flight was celebrated with a ceremony at its First and Business Class check-in counter at Muscat International Airport. The airline has introduced four direct flights a week to the popular resort island, which boasts many of Thailand's most famous and beautiful locations. Guests can enjoy their holiday from the moment they fly with Oman Air's award-winning on-board amenities, including in-flight entertainment, quality meal service and comfort touches, all designed to make every journey more comfortable, refreshing and seamless.

Abdoudy Nasser, Chief Commercial Officer of Oman Air, said, "As part of our network expansion programme, our new flights will address the huge demand for passenger travel between Muscat and Phuket, especially during the peak winter season. With nature, culture and plenty of activities, Phuket is an ideal family destination and, just five hours away from Muscat, it offers a great option for a getaway. Meanwhile, we continue to stay attuned to our guests' needs,



connect them to destinations they want to go and elevate their travel experience."

Captain Nasser al Salmi, COO of Oman Air, explained how popular the destination is for tourists from Oman as well as travellers from Europe. He said currently there are 47 to 49 destinations and will see further expansion in destinations post pandemic.

The inaugural flight was fully booked with passengers from Oman and transit passengers connecting via Muscat to Phuket.

The Phuket Governor and other dignitaries along with Oman Air Country Manager and team were present at the reception held at

the Phuket Airport to receive the passengers. The passengers were also welcomed with the traditional Thai hospitality and the added flavour was the monsoon shower that is the norm of the season during the evenings.

Oman Air's Muscat-Phuket flights will operate on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The Tuesday flight from Muscat departed at 09:40 and arrived in Phuket at 19:00.

The Thursday flight from Muscat will depart at 22:50 and arrive in Phuket on Sunday at 08:00. The first flight on Saturday will depart Muscat at 09:40 and arrive in Phuket at 18:50, while the second flight will depart at 22:50

and arrive on Sunday at 08:00.

While Omani nationals do not need visa, other expatriates coming from Oman will have to apply for visa.

Captain Al Salmi said they will look into whether the number of flights in a week should be increased.

Omani students win top prizes in Kuwait competition



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Sultanate of Oman won first place in the secondary stage category in the Shaikha Fadia Al Saad Al Sabah Competition in Kuwait. The project of Maria al Jabri and Qabas al Ghafri from Sawda Um Al Mumineen School for Basic Education in Al Dhahirah Governorate won the prize for their study on using rice water as liquid fertiliser for the growth of lemons. The project was supervised by Fakhriya al Balushi.

The Sultanate also won first place in the middle stage category for the project "Strengthening the Greenhouse System" by Amna al Jahafi and Shahd al Jahafi from the Al Jaza School for Basic Education in the Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. It was supervised by Maheera al Jahafi.

Expressing her joy of winning first place, Qabas al Ghafri, said, "It is a great honour for me to represent the Sultanate of Oman in this competition and in which I won first place in

the Arab world. Through my participation in this competition, I increased my self-confidence, got beautiful and unforgettable memories, learned how to write scientific research accurately and gained many useful information."

Maria al Jabri said, "I feel joy and pride that we were able to achieve this great well-deserved accomplishment, especially with the increase in competition this year due to the accession of Arab countries in this edition. Through this experience, I became acquainted with the methodology of scientific research and how to conduct scientific experiments."

Shahd al Jahafi said, "I feel proud of this achievement. Participation in the competition, we gained many experiences, especially since we were ambassadors of our country." Amna al Jahafi said, "This competition gave me a lot of experience and information about how to work with the Steam method, in addition to how to search for problems and find several solutions to them and work within a team."



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

Notice and Invitation to Attend the Extra Ordinary General Meeting & Ordinary General Meeting

The Board of Directors of SOHAR POWER SAOG (the "Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Extra Ordinary General Meeting & Ordinary General Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday at 03:00 PM on 30/11/2022, via the electronic platform to hold Extra Ordinary General Meeting & Ordinary General Meeting general meetings which can be assessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om). If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Extra Ordinary General Meeting & Ordinary General Meeting shall be held on Friday at 03:00 PM on 2/12/2022, via the electronic platform which can be assessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) to discuss the following agenda:

Extra Ordinary General Meeting Agendas:

1. To amend the Company's articles of association (as annexure 1)

Ordinary General Meeting Agendas:

1. To consider and approve the Company granting the following supplemental security in connection with the extension of the final maturity date under the Company's project finance facilities agreement dated 21 November 2004 (as amended):
 - a) A Second Supplemental English Charge and Assignment in relation to the Charge and Assignment dated 21 November 2004 as supplemented by the Supplemental English Charge and Assignment dated 20 July 2022; and
 - b) A Second Supplemental Security Deed in relation to the Security Deed dated 21 November 2004 as supplemented by a Supplemental Security Deed dated 20 July 2022.
2. To authorise the Board of Directors to take all actions they consider necessary in connection with creating such supplemental security (including appointing signatories to sign all documents to be entered into by the Company in respect of the supplemental security), subject to the approval of the Authority for Public Services Regulation under Article 106 of the Sector Law.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

1. Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCDC.
2. Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For further information please contact on Telephone No 99219419 or email: salah.farsi@soharpower.com

SULTANATE OF OMAN

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ANNOUNCEMENT

THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ROYAL HOSPITAL INVITE SPECIALIZED COMPANIES TO SUBMIT BIDS

AUCTION NO.	DESCRIPTION	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF DOCUMENT	CLOSING TIME/ DAY/DATE	ELIGIBILITY	AUCTION FEE (NON- REFUNDABLE)	OFFICE WHERE AUCTION ARE TO BE DEPOSITED (RH)
1/2022	SHOP FOR RENT (FOODSTUFF) AT ROYAL HOSPITAL	28/11/2022	BEFORE 10 AM ON TUE 13/12/2022	SPECIALIZED COMPANIES REGISTERED WITH TENDER BOARD	25 RIALS	OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE- ROYAL HOSPITAL

Notes:-

- Auction Document can be Purchased from The Office of The Director of Finance at Royal Hospital between **8.00 am** and **12.00 pm** on working days till date of **28/November/2022**, on payment of Auction fee mentioned above.
- Auction should be submitted with a temporary insurance in the form of a Bank Guarantee issued by a Local bank for an amount not less than **(500 RO.)** addressed to the Ministry of Finance and it will be refunded if the bid is not awarded and valid for (90) days from the date of submission of offers.
- Auction(s) Submitted without Bank Guarantee will not be considered.
- Auction should be submitted in plain, sealed envelope with wax, on which the number and name of the auction should be written on the outside on the envelope.
- Requested to Deposit their Auction Documents at the Office of Director of Finance Directorate of The Royal Hospital (RH), **Before 10.00am** on Tuesday, **13/December/2022**, and bids submitted after this date shall not be considered, whatever the reasons for the delay.
- Copy of **Commercial Registration and Membership Certificates** are to be Submitted for the collection of Auction Documents.
- The Directorate General of Royal Hospital is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offer.



Rich nations target \$20 bn to wean Indonesia off coal

NUSA DUA, Indonesia: Rich nations pledged on Tuesday to raise at least \$20 billion to help wean Indonesia off coal and reach carbon neutrality by 2050, a decade earlier than planned, the White House said.

The United States, Japan, Canada and six European countries signed the accord with Jakarta on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Bali to ensure a “just power sector transition” away from Indonesia’s coal-dependent economy, they said in a statement released by the White House.

Under the deal, Indonesia, home to the world’s third-largest rainforest, pledges to be carbon-neutral by 2050, — 10 years earlier than previously planned — and to almost double its renewable energy generation by 2030.

Indonesian President Joko Widodo hailed the deal, which follows a similar agreement for South Africa last year, as a model that could be replicated in other countries to meet the world’s climate goals.

“Indonesia is committed to using our energy transition to achieve a green economy and drive sustainable development,” he said, pledging the deal would help “accelerate this transition”.



Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his wife Iriana Widodo review the honour guard at the welcoming dinner during the G20 Summit in Badung on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Tuesday. — AFP

Sponsors of the agreement said Jakarta had committed to an ambitious shift to clean energy in return for \$10 billion in public

sector finance and \$10 billion in private funding over three to five years. The financing included “grants,

concessional loans, market-rate loans, guarantees and private investments” for the country, which has one of the largest coal

reserves in the world.

US President Joe Biden said the deal showed “countries can dramatically cut emissions

and increase renewable energy while... creating quality jobs and protecting livelihoods and communities.”

Indonesia has at times questioned climate deals, including a 2021 agreement to end deforestation by 2030 it signed, warning it could hinder the country’s economic development. But despite the new incentives, experts cautioned that a lot of work remained for Indonesia to meet the demands of the partnership.

“It’s a work in progress. But Indonesia has gotten to enough comfort level with the scale of finance that they want to go ahead with it. There will be a lot of follow up work,” said Friederike Roder, senior director for EU and G20 at NGO Global Citizen.

But he warned: “There is concern that the finance is not adequate for the total transformation that is needed”.

Indonesian officials welcomed the pact despite the worries.

The deal shows “we can create a more sustainable world for our grandchildren, our citizens, and the future generation,” Indonesia’s coordinating minister of maritime and investment affairs Luhut Binsar Pandjaitan told a press conference. — Reuters

South Korea urges bigger China role on North Korea tensions

SEOUL: South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol called on Tuesday for China to play a “more active, constructive role” in reining in North Korea’s nuclear and missile provocations, his office said, after talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The two leaders held their first face-to-face meeting, lasting 25 minutes, on the sidelines of the Group of 20 conference in Bali amid flaring tension over North Korean weapons tests.

Pyongyang has tested a record number of missiles this year, including a possible failed intercontinental ballistic missile, and fired hundreds of artillery shells into the sea more recently as South Korea and the United States staged a series of joint military drills.

Yoon expressed concern that the isolated country has escalated tension with an unprecedented pace of nuclear and missile provocations, his office said in a statement. “I hope China will play a more active, constructive role as a member of the UN Security Council and a neighbour,” Yoon



South Korea’s President Yoon Suk-yeol arrives for the G20 leaders’ summit in Nusa Dua, on the Indonesian resort island of Bali on Tuesday. — AFP

was quoted as telling Xi.

Xi, in response, called for better inter-Korean relations, saying he was willing to support Yoon’s aid-for-denuclearisation offer if the North accepts it, Yoon’s office said. Yoon has proposed an “audacious” economic plan if North Korea commits to denuclearisation.

But Pyongyang criticised the offer as “nonsense” and said Yoon

should “shut his mouth.”

On the economy, Yoon and Xi agreed to speed up negotiations on the second phase of a bilateral free-trade agreement, according to Yoon’s office and Chinese state media.

Beijing’s state media also reported that Xi displayed hopes for greater cooperation with South Korea on areas including high-tech manufacturing. — AFP

North Korea sees more use of cell phones, WiFi networks

SEOUL: Up to 7 million North Koreans use cell phones daily, and WiFi networks have sharply expanded in recent years as the mobile devices increasingly became a key tool for market activity in the isolated country, US researchers said on Tuesday.

Martyn Williams and Natalia Slavney of the Washington-based Stimson Center’s 38 North programme say their latest study on digital communications in North Korea, which included an analysis of satellite imagery and a survey of about 40 defectors who fled the North between 2017 and 2021, shows a stable rise in cellular subscribers.

Since 3G network services began in 2008, the number of users has risen to 6.5 million to 7 million, more than a quarter of North Korea’s 25 million population, the researchers said.

“More than 90 per cent of the people who participated in the survey reported using the phone at least daily, and most of the calls

Since 3G network services began in 2008, the number of users has risen to 6.5 million to 7 million, more than a quarter of North Korea’s 25 million population, the researchers said

were made to family members and traders,” Slavney told a briefing.

They showed an estimated coverage map of North Korea’s cellular network by identifying base stations, accompanying antennas and solar panels from satellite images, which Williams said suggested the service is available not only in cities but also “deep into the rural areas.”

“The cellular coverage is still expanding, sometimes we’re finding base stations where if you look at the same area two years ago, the antenna was not there,” he said.

The country’s antiquated 3G network and limits on foreign investment in upgrades because of sanctions over its weapons programmes has prompted the emergence of faster WiFi networks around the country, Williams said.

The WiFi networks do not offer any Internet access but provide connections to domestic services, especially scientific databases for the research community, he added.

Poor infrastructure means there are few landlines, the researchers said, so mobile phones fill gaps and serve as a critical tool for participating in a private market economy, which has become a key source of income for many.

The private sector has overtaken state-led agents to become North Korea’s biggest economic actor in recent years, with its rationing system crumbling and leader Kim Jong Un allowing markets abhorred by his father. — Reuters

SHORT TAKES

BEIJING

China’s Xi returns to global stage at G20

China’s Xi Jinping was the leader everyone wanted to meet at this week’s G20 summit, where he took centre stage in a carefully choreographed appearance after three years of self-imposed pandemic isolation.

President Xi strode into Tuesday’s G20 summit the morning after a three-hour meeting with his US counterpart Joe Biden in which they promised to dial down the rhetoric and work to close the yawning gap between the two powers.



With smiles and handshakes — as well as promises of fresh talks on climate change and trade — Xi appeared keen to paint himself as a magnanimous diplomat.

NUSA DUA

Cambodian PM positive for Covid

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said on Tuesday he had tested positive for Covid-19, after hosting more than a dozen world leaders including US President Joe Biden at a summit in Phnom Penh.

Asia’s longest-ruling leader said in a Facebook post that he got the positive result on arrival in Indonesia for a G20 summit, but was not experiencing any symptoms.

Hun Sen had mask-less encounters with leaders from



eight Southeast Asian countries as well as the United States, China, Japan, Australia and Canada at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit, which wrapped up on Sunday.

NEW DELHI

India’s Modi meets Biden at G20 summit

India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed global and regional developments in a meeting with US President Joe Biden on Tuesday at the G20 summit in Indonesia, India’s foreign ministry said.

Modi and Biden “expressed satisfaction” about close cooperation between India and the United States in new groupings such as the Quad, which includes Australia and Japan, and the I2U2, which includes Israel and the United



Arab Emirates. “They reviewed the continuing deepening of the India-US strategic partnership,” the foreign ministry said.

Modi has also met British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.



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In brief

■ ARIEL



PALESTINIAN SHOT DEAD BY ISRAELI FORCES

A Palestinian killed three Israelis in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, stabbing two men to death and knifing several others, then killing another with a stolen car before being shot dead himself, officials said.

The deadly rampage came hours before Israel swears in its new parliament, with far-right lawmakers poised to be members of the cabinet vowing a crackdown on violence.

The Israeli army reported a “stabbing attack” near the Ariel Industrial Zone in the northern West Bank.

The attacker then headed to “a nearby gas station and stabbed additional civilians,” the army said, stole a car and fled.

■ WASHINGTON



TRUMP TO LAUNCH NEW WHITE HOUSE BID ON WEDNESDAY

Donald Trump is set to launch a fresh White House bid on Tuesday, hoping to box out potential Republican rivals and return his false claims of election fraud to the center of US politics. Trump’s announcement, scheduled for 02:00 GMT on Wednesday at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, follows a disappointing showing in last week’s midterm congressional elections that many Republicans blame on him. The unusually early launch may well be aimed at fending off potential challengers for the party’s nomination in 2024, including rising star Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, 44, and Mike Pence, 63.

■ ANKARA



TURKEY TO PURSUE TARGETS IN SYRIA, SAYS OFFICIALS

Turkey plans to pursue targets in northern Syria after it completes a cross-border operation against outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) militants in Iraq, a senior official said on Tuesday, after a deadly weekend bomb in Istanbul.

Threats posed by Kurdish militants or IS on Turkey are unacceptable, the official said, adding that Ankara will clear threats along its southern border “one way or another.”

“Syria is a national security problem for Turkey. There is work being done on this already,” the official said, declining to be named as they were not authorised to speak.

Climate justice gets harder as world population passes 8 billion

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt: The world population surged past 8 billion people on Tuesday, the United Nations said, warning that more hardship is in store for regions already facing resource scarcity due to climate change.

Whether its food or water, batteries or gasoline, there will be less to go around as the global population adds another 2.4 billion people by the 2080s, according to UN projections.

“Every single person needs fuel, wood, water, and a place to call home,” said Stephanie Feldstein, population and sustainability director with the Centre for Biological Diversity.

Resource pressure will be especially daunting in African nations, where populations are expected to boom, experts say. These are also among the countries most vulnerable to climate impacts, and most in need of climate finance.

In sub-Saharan Africa, where some 738 million people already live without adequate food supplies, the population is projected to jump by 95 per cent by mid-century, according to the Institute for Economics and Peace. The think tank warned in an October report that much of sub-Saharan Africa will be unsustainable by mid-century.

Globally, the 8 billion population milestone represents 1 billion people added to the planet in just the last 11 years.

Reaching 8 billion people is “a sign of human success, but it’s also a great risk for our future,” said John Wilmoth, director of the UN’s population division.

Middle-income countries, mostly in Asia, accounted for most of that growth, gaining some



A new born named Elias is held after his birth at Charite hospital, in Berlin, as the world’s population reached 8 billion today, according to a United Nations report. — Reuters

700 million people since 2011. India added about 180 million people, and is set to surpass China as the world’s most populous nation next year. However, births have been steadily declining in the United States, Europe and Japan. China, too, has struggled with the legacy of its One Child Policy programme and last year urged families to have a second and even third child as it also limited access to non-medical abortions.

Even while the global population reaches ever-new highs, demographers note that the growth rate has fallen steadily to less than 1 per cent per year. This should keep the world from reaching 9 billion people until 2037. The UN projects population will peak at around 10.4 billion people in the 2080s and remain at that level until 2100.

“A big part of this story is

that this era of rapid population growth that the world has known for centuries is coming to an end,” Wilmoth said.

Most of the 2.4 billion people to be added before the global population peaks will be born in sub-Saharan Africa, marking a shift away from China and India.

“African cities will, on average, grow,” said Deborah Balk, a demographic researcher at the City University of New York. This will leave millions more urban dwellers exposed to climate threats such as rising seas.

Across the world, “the coastal zone is disproportionately urban,” she said. “About one in 10 people live in the low-lying coastal zone.”

The coastal Nigerian city of Lagos, for example, is projected to become the world’s largest city by century’s end.

Rapid population growth

combined with climate change is likely to cause mass migration and conflict in coming decades, experts said. And having more people on the planet puts more pressure on nature, as people compete with wildlife for water, food and space. But how much they consume is equally important, suggesting policymakers can make a big difference by mandating a shift in consumption patterns.

Carbon emissions of the richest 1 per cent, or about 63 million people, were more than double the emissions of the poorest half of humanity between 1990 and 2015, according to a 2020 analysis by the Stockholm Environment Institute and non-profit Oxfam International. Humanity’s impact on the natural world “has more to do with how we behave than how many we are,” Wilmoth said.

— Reuters

Ethiopia PM vows to execute ‘promise’ of peace deal

ADDIS ABABA: Ethiopia’s Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed vowed on Tuesday to fulfil commitments made in a landmark peace deal with Tigrayan rebels and make “our promise a reality”, nearly two weeks after the agreement was signed.

The deal inked in South Africa on November 2 called for the disarming of the Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) and the restoration of aid to Tigray, which has been in the grip of a severe humanitarian crisis since the war broke out two years ago.

On Saturday, the warring sides agreed to facilitate immediate humanitarian access to “all in need” in Tigray and neighbouring regions in northern Ethiopia, following talks in Kenya’s capital Nairobi to discuss implementation of the peace deal.

Responding to questions from lawmakers in Ethiopia’s capital Addis Ababa, Abiy said: “We have discussed and signed (the agreement), what is expected from us next is executing the promise we made dutifully.” — AFP



Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed addresses a Parliament session in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on Tuesday. — AFP

Meat on the menu, not the agenda, at COP27

SHARM EL SHEIKH, Egypt: On any morning at the COP27 climate conference, you can expect a gauntlet of anti-meat protesters wearing cow costumes, holding banners decrying the carbon footprint of livestock, and chanting slogans like “Let’s be vegan, let’s be free.”

Activist groups and corporate start-ups have descended on the two-week climate summit in Egypt to heap pressure on the hundreds of global policy makers there over the world’s love affair with meat and its role in warming.

Their demands range from lowering meat consumption to policies as seemingly outlandish as transitioning to cell-based meat grown in steel vats, which could eliminate the need for feed crops, ranch land and slaughterhouses.

Cows, sheep and other livestock are responsible for about 20 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to a peer-reviewed assessment led by researchers at the University of Illinois and published last year.

And researchers fear the impact may be greater, after recent efforts to measure emissions at individual US farms - by, say, flying a methane-detecting plane over them - showed them churning out much more than estimated.

“We seem to be wildly off.



People queue at food stands with vegan options at the COP27 climate summit in Red Sea resort at Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, on Tuesday. — Reuters

Virtually every time these... measurements are conducted they disagree with (official data),” said Matthew Hayek, a researcher at New York University. Realising they can no longer ignore the role of food production in warming, negotiators from nearly 200 countries at COP27 are holding discussions focused on it for the first time in the UN summit’s

nearly three-decade history. Yet reducing meat and dairy output is not yet on the agenda for governments, many of which give billions of dollars to livestock farmers in subsidies. Instead, they are advancing policies to reduce the emissions that livestock make, including with feed additives that reduce the gas livestock emit, and cutting or capturing the methane

wafting off manure heaps. Activists aren’t buying it. “This can never be the way to net zero,” said Max Weiss, a campaigner at the Plant Based Treaty, a global activist group promoting a meat-free diet. “We have to move away from animal production.”

Climate scientists are also skeptical that industry-preferred measures will go far enough.

Andy Reisinger, a farm emissions specialist who is a vice-chair of the UN’s IPCC climate panel, said feed additives would promote the type of intensive farming driving emissions. “It would result in more intensive livestock production that would require larger areas of land to produce the animal feed, putting pressure on forest land,” Reisinger said. — Reuters

The marshmallow test



Azza Sulaiman Al Ismaili

The writer is the former Minister of Technology and Communications

Self-discipline is a big factor in life’s successes, especially in business. The focus and commitment to see things through, working when there are more fun things to do, or just staying on the page of complicated accounts to get it finished, instead of scanning social media. If you read the stories and habits of famously successful people, there is often a theme of getting up early to work out, study or just get a head start before others hit the office. There are strict routines, and an obsession with personal efficiencies and avoiding distraction.

I read a lot of business biographies, and take this example to also value my early morning work time before the phone starts

to ring. The self-control and concentration are things I try to emulate. In our modern life of instant communication, there are always plenty of distractions. Messages from friends, Instagram feeds, and the wonderful ability to access any and every information and entertainment through the devices in our pockets and purses. The benefits are immeasurable, but self-control is perhaps harder than ever.

Around fifty years ago, Professor Walter Mischel at Stanford University began a series of marshmallow experiments. In this study, children were offered a marshmallow, and left alone for fifteen minutes to make a decision: if they did not eat the marshmallow

WE USUALLY HAVE A GOOD IDEA OF WHAT IS RIGHT FOR US IN THE LONG TERM AND WHAT IS GOING TO BRING US SUCCESS. BUT, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS TEMPTED BY SHORT-TERM PLEASURE, SOMETIMES AT THE EXPENSE OF LONGER-TERM REWARD

during the fifteen minutes alone with it, they would get a second marshmallow. If they ate it, there would be no second marshmallow. The results were mixed of course. Some children could not resist eating the marshmallow. Others waited for the bigger reward.

Twenty years later, the children from the experiments showed

some interesting differences in life outcomes. The children who had been able to control their impulses became more competent adolescents, according to their parents. Later one, they had better scores at school, and higher incomes.

We all face our ‘marshmallow’ choices every day. People make plans for the future, career ambitions, savings targets and resolutions on their personal behaviour. We usually have a good idea of what is right for us in the long term and what is going to bring us success. But, people are always tempted by short-term pleasure, sometimes at the expense of longer-term reward.

With our routines and our work and social groups, we can help each

other: if we commit with others to stick to a plan, we are more likely to do so. Some psychologists also argue that we have a limited capacity for self-control – a bank of it that can run out if we have to use it too much. It is better to find ways to avoid the temptations in the first place, and not test our self-control to the limit.

All of us have dreams and ambitions, and building our self-control is important to staying on track for those big success. Sharing a disciplined routine with a team helps a lot. On other days, we just have to avoid that situation, leave the phone out of sight for an hour or two, or find any other way to keep distractions and temptations out of our path to success!

Final preparations underway for Nasa’s Moon rocket launch

LUCIE AUBOURG

After two failed attempts this summer, NASA was busy on Monday completing final preparations for the launch of its new mega Moon rocket, now scheduled for early on Wednesday from Florida.

The Artemis 1 mission, a test flight without astronauts, represents the first step in the US space agency’s plan to build a lasting presence on the Moon, and taking lessons from there to prepare for a future voyage to Mars.

Named after the sister of Apollo in Greek mythology, the new space programme comes 50 years after humans last set foot on lunar soil.

The first launch of the Space Launch System rocket, the most powerful ever designed by NASA, is set for Wednesday at 1:04 am local time (0604 GMT), with a possible launch window of two hours.

Countdown has already begun at the storied Kennedy Space Center, where the orange and white behemoth awaits its maiden flight.

The takeoff is scheduled less than a week after the passage of Hurricane Nicole, which the rocket endured outside on its launch pad.

For now, officials are evaluating the risk associated with hurricane damage to a thin strip of caulk-like material called RTV, which encircles the Orion crew capsule atop the rocket, and makes it more aerodynamic.

Teams are looking at whether the RTV could shake loose during launch and pose problems.

Two fallback dates are possible if needed, on November 19 and 25.

But Mike Sarafin, in charge of the Artemis 1 mission, was optimistic on Sunday evening. “I feel good headed into this attempt,” he said.

The weather promises to be mild, with a 90 per cent chance of favourable conditions during the launch window.

At the end of September, the rocket had to be wheeled back to its assembly building to be sheltered from another hurricane, Ian, postponing the mission by several weeks.

Before these weather setbacks, two launch attempts had to be cancelled for technical reasons.

The first failure was related to a faulty sensor, and the second to a fuel leak when filling the rocket’s tanks. It runs on ultra-cold, ultra-volatile liquid oxygen and hydrogen.

NASA has since replaced a seal and modified its procedures to avoid thermal shock as much as possible, and succeeded in a tank filling test in late September. These filling operations are now due to begin on Tuesday afternoon, under the orders of Charlie Blackwell-Thompson, NASA’s first female launch director. — AFP

Musk’s Twitter train wreck has global implications

LYDIA POLGREEN

With the benefit of ample hindsight, it has come to feel inevitable that Twitter would turn into a cesspool of abuse and misinformation and that the powerful — governments, politicians, corporations, celebrities — would find ways to control and manipulate it to their own benefit.

But as I’ve watched the platform descend into chaos over the past couple of weeks, I’ve been thinking a lot about how being on Twitter felt back in May 2009, when I arrived in India as a correspondent for The New York Times. I had signed up for an account about six months earlier, but it wasn’t until I landed in Delhi that I truly understood the platform’s potential.

Twitter was an intoxicating window into my fascinating new assignment. Long suppressed groups found their voices and social media-driven revolutions began to unfold. Movements against corruption gained steam and brought real change. Outrage over a horrific gang rape in Delhi built a movement to fight an epidemic of sexual violence.

Soon enough, other kinds of underrepresented voices also started to appear on — and then dominate — the platform. As women, Muslims and people from lower castes spoke out, the inevitable backlash came. Supporters of the conservative opposition party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and their rallies felt that they had long been ignored by the mainstream press. Now they had the chance to grab the mic.

And grab it they did. By 2014, when the BJP first won national elections, driven in no small part by its innovative use of social media to tap into middle-class discontent with the status quo, Indian Twitter was well on its way to becoming one of the world’s most vitriolic online spaces, filled with ad hominem attacks and incitements to violence. And having used social media so adroitly to win power, the new government realised that controlling platforms like Twitter would be crucial to suppressing dissent.

Into this stew steps Elon Musk.

In buying Twitter, Musk has



MUSK IS EITHER EXCEPTIONALLY NAÏVE OR WILLFULLY IGNORANT ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOVERNMENT POWER AND FREE SPEECH, ESPECIALLY IN FRAGILE DEMOCRACIES. THAT SHOULD WORRY ANYONE WHO CARES ABOUT THE FUTURE OF FREE EXPRESSION ON THE INTERNET FOR BILLIONS OF PEOPLE.

garbed himself as a free-speech warrior. He had been deeply critical of the company’s content moderation decisions, the most controversial of which was blocking Donald Trump from the platform after the Jan. 6 attack on the Capitol.

Viewed from the United States, these skirmishes over the unaccountable power of tech platforms seem like a central battleground of free speech. But the real threat in much of the world is not the policies of social media companies, but of governments.

Nowhere is that clearer than in India, where before Musk’s acquisition

Twitter had been fighting a legal battle to protect its users from government censorship. The real question now is if Musk’s commitment to “free speech” extends beyond conservatives in America and to the billions of people in the Global South who rely on the internet for open communication.

Last month, Freedom House released its annual report on freedom on the internet. Allie Funk, one of the researchers who wrote the report, told me that while much of the focus has been on countries like China, which overtly restricts access to huge swaths of the internet, the real war over the future of internet freedom is being waged in what she called “swing states,” big, fragile democracies like India.

The winning side will not be decided in Silicon Valley or Beijing, the two poles around which debate over free expression on the internet have largely orbited. It will be the actions of governments in capitals like Abuja, Jakarta, Ankara, Brasília and New Delhi. Across the world, countries are putting in place frameworks that on their face seem designed to combat online abuse and misinformation but are largely used to stifle dissent or enable abuse of the enemies of those in power. — The New York Times.

We’re now eight billion!

We’re now officially eight billion human beings in the world! This means one billion people have been added to the global population in just 12 years!

Mainly, Asian countries account for a major part of the growth with nearly 700 million people being added since 2011. The two most populous regions currently are Eastern and South-Eastern Asia with 2.3 billion people and Central and Southern Asia with 2.1 billion.

Although the new number is too big to imagine, according to the United Nations, it is a milestone in human development and an occasion to celebrate as the growth is caused in part by declining levels of mortality thanks to increased levels of life expectancy resulting from the advances in modern medicine and reductions in global poverty.

Globally, life expectancy reached 72.8 years in 2019, an increase of almost nine years since 1990. Further fall in mortality is projected to result in average longevity of around 77.2 years globally.

The latest projections by the United Nations suggest that the world’s population could grow to around 8.5 billion in 2030 and 9.7 billion in 2050. It is projected to reach a peak of around 10.4 billion people during the 2080s and to remain at that level until 2100.

However, these demographic changes come at a time when the entire world is struggling to address pressing global issues like climate change, food security, aging populations, and environmental destruction.

Despite its praise, the UN pointed out that the number will put enormous pressure on Earth’s resources and will need to find more sustainable ways of living.

According to António Guterres, UN Secretary-General “it is a reminder of our shared responsibility to care for our planet and reflect



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

ALTHOUGH THE NEW NUMBER IS TOO BIG TO IMAGINE, ACCORDING TO THE UN, IT IS A MILESTONE IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND AN OCCASION TO CELEBRATE AS THE GROWTH IS CAUSED IN PART BY DECLINING LEVELS OF MORTALITY

on where we still fall short of our commitments to one another”.

The fact is that billions of people continue to struggle with inequalities, famine, and internal conflicts in many other countries and wars in the Middle East and Ukraine.

Equally important is that the human population is dependent on the Earth’s ecosystems to survive. But the relationship between man and nature has been thrown out of balance. Having more people on Earth puts more pressure on nature, as people compete with wildlife for water, food, and space.

Rapid population growth combined with climate change is also likely to cause mass migration and conflict in the coming decades. There will be less to go around as the global population grows!

According to a report by the United Nations Population Fund, the first year in which more people lived in urban than rural areas was 2007, and by 2050 about 68 per cent of the world population will be living in cities.

These rising trends will have far-reaching implications as they will affect economic development, employment, income distribution, poverty, and social protections. They also impact efforts to ensure universal access to health care, education, housing, sanitation, water, food, and energy.

To address the needs of individuals more sustainably, policymakers need to understand how many people are living on the planet, where they are, how old they are, and how many people will come after them.

Of course, it is not simply the number of people that determines the impact of the planet. It is how much we consume and how much waste we produce. As experts point out, rapid population growth will make eradicating poverty, combating hunger and malnutrition, and increasing the coverage of health and education systems more difficult!

GOLDEN CANARY DIAMOND



A representative from Sotheby’s Hong Kong holds up the Golden Canary diamond in Hong Kong on Tuesday. The Golden Canary diamond (303.10 Carats) is expected to fetch at least \$15 million at Sotheby’s New York this December. – AFP

Ukraine’s sparse wheat plantings sow further trouble for global food security

PAVEL POLITYUK AND MAYTAAL ANGEL

War, rain and economic hardship have depressed Ukraine’s wheat plantings, depriving the nation of vital export earnings in 2023 and heralding another year of tight global supplies and potentially high prices for basic foodstuffs.

Ukraine is one of the world’s top wheat exporters with key buyers including Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Indonesia, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and a further drop in production will leave many scrambling to find alternative supplies.

The race to secure grain is likely to drive up global prices, even hitting importers who don’t buy directly from Ukraine.

Ukraine harvested around 19 million tonnes of wheat this year, down more than 40 per cent from the previous season’s record of 33 million tonnes and a further sharp drop in production looks inevitable in 2023, analysts said.

In a further blow to production prospects, cash-strapped farmers in Ukraine are also reducing use of vital crop inputs such as fertilisers. Less

UKRAINE IS EXPECTED TO SEE SIMILAR SHIFTS IN THE UPCOMING SPRING PLANTING SEASON, WITH CORN THE MAIN GRAIN CROP SOWN AND SUNFLOWERS THE MAIN OILSEED

fertiliser means lower yields for the farmers that do plant.

“Farmers prefer to see what happens next year so did very little planting in the fall. People just want to wait and see what happens, sit on the money, maybe they don’t have money, there are different reasons,” Kees Huizinga, a Dutch national who runs a 15,000 hectare dairy and crop farm in central Ukraine.

The drop in production will affect some of the world’s poorest countries. Ukraine exports some wheat to Turkey where it may be processed into flour and shipped to Africa, particularly sub-Saharan Africa, and also into soft wheat-based pasta which is popular among consumers in developing countries owing to more affordable prices compared to the pasta made from durum.

The Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS), which was set up by G20 members to strengthen global food security, has warned another poor crop in Ukraine would mean global stocks would not recover for at least another year, ensuring prices remain high and markets volatile. The food crisis also coincides with

continued economic fallout from the Covid-19 pandemic, climate shocks and high energy prices.

“I fear that higher food prices are here to stay not only because of the problems in Ukraine. All other producers are facing high fertiliser, fuel, labour and transportation costs,” analyst Georgi Slavov of broker Marex Solutions said.

In contrast, prices the farmers receive in Ukraine remain very low due to the difficulty and high cost of moving crops across the war-torn country to export hubs.

“Everyone is saving money and planting with minimum costs (including less fertiliser use),

which leads to a very significant drop in yield next year,” Dmitry Skorniyakov, chief executive of Ukraine farm company HarvEast said.

Alexander Karavaytsev, a senior economist at the International Grains Council, said lower fertiliser application could also have an adverse impact on the quality of the crop.

“It is understood that soils in Ukraine have some buffer owing to investment by farmers in previous years, and Chernozems (black soils) are the world’s most fertile soils,” he said.

“Still, quality can be affected by persistent reduced fertiliser

application rates.”

A sharp drop in production is also likely to mean Ukraine’s wheat export revenues fall far below the roughly \$4 billion in the 2021/22 season, according to Reuters calculations.

Farmers had sown 3.6 million hectares of winter wheat, as of Nov. 7, down 41 per cent from 6.09 million at the same stage a year ago, government data shows.

Ukraine sowed around 6.1 million hectares of winter wheat for the 2022 harvest, but a large area has been occupied by Russian forces since they attacked Ukraine in February and only 4.6 million hectares were harvested.

“It’s a triple effect of weather, economic and technical factors (such as the inability to access fields),” said Sebastien Poncelet, analyst at Agritel, a French crop consultancy which has a Ukrainian office, referring to the drop in planted area. In contrast to wheat, rapeseed plantings have held up well.

“Rapeseed got sown. It’s down a bit but reasonable. We think about 1 million hectares were sown compared with 1.15-1.3 million usually,” Poncelet said.

— Reuters



A combine harvests wheat in a field near the village of Zghurivka, in Kyiv region, Ukraine. – Reuters file photo



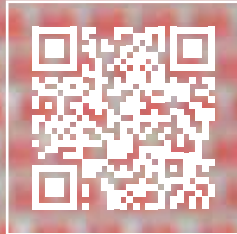
DAYS TO GO



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Germany look to seize opportunity

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, NOV 15

Four-time World Cup champions Germany are to test their squad's bench strength in a key international friendly against hosts Oman in Muscat on Wednesday.

Coach Hansi Flick, who have won in nine games out of 15 after taking charge, was also part of World Cup winning squad of 2014. Flick was the assistant coach of Joachim Loew by then.

Talking at the pre-match press conference at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex, the German coach sounded confident of a solid performance in the World Cup.

In reply to a query, Flick said surprise inclusion of 2014 final hero Mario Goetze was a deserved one after the player's great form in the domestic league.

"Goetze is a fantastic player. I can still see the flare in him after his goal in the World Cup final against Argentina. He is a value addition to the squad."

"We have a balanced squad. Though we lost some top players due to injury, talent is abundant in this squad. I have confidence in the players and we are ready for the World Cup challenge, the 57-year-old affirmed.

The German coach is likely to give a chance to Goetze in the match against Oman to give a warning to the other Group E teams Spain, Japan and Costa Rica.

Goetze, employed as a 'super substitute' by Loew, makes the comeback to the national squad after five years.

On the organisers Qatar, Flick said the tournament is expected to



be big success.

"Qatar as the organisers of the 2022 World Cup has done a great job. With brilliant facilities and stadiums it is expected to be a successful World Cup."

Germany forward Niclas Fullkrug of Werder Bremen, said they expect a good competition against Oman.

"We don't have any idea of Oman football, but know that

Oman is a competitive team. We expect a strong match tomorrow," Fullkrug said.

"We will focus on our own build-up to the World Cup. It will be good match experience for Germany team just before the World Cup."

Fullkrug earned a call up to the squad after scoring 10 goals in 14 Bundesliga games for the promoted Werder Bremen.

Germany defender Christian Gunter of SC Freiburg said they believe the team is capable of an impressive run in Qatar.

"We are confident of good performance in the World Cup. The players are capable of delivering another world title," he claimed.

Also expected to show up in Muscat will be teen sensation Youssoufa Moukoko who will

make his senior international debut.

The 17-year-old forward of Borussia Dortmund has been impressive with six goals and making 22 appearances for the club.

Captain Manuel Neuer and Jamal Musiala, who had a productive Bundesliga season until now, are also expected to brush off their credentials against Oman ahead of the World Cup challenge.

Star forward Thomas Muller, Leroy Sane and Ilkay Gundogan among other stalwarts make the squad a formidable one for the football showdown.

Germany World Cup 2022 squad

GOALKEEPERS
Manuel Neuer (Bayern Munich), Kevin Trapp (Eintracht Frankfurt), Marc-Andre ter Stegen (Barcelona)

DEFENDERS
Thilo Kehrer (West Ham), Niklas Sule (Borussia Dortmund), Lukas Klostermann (RB Leipzig), Christian Gunter (SC Freiburg), Armel Bella-Kotchap (Southampton), David Raum (RB Leipzig), Antonio Rudiger (Real Madrid), Nico Schlotterbeck (Borussia Dortmund), Matthias Ginter (Freiburg)

MIDFIELDERS
Joshua Kimmich (Bayern Munich), Mario Gotze (Eintracht Frankfurt), Jonas Hofmann (Borussia Monchengladbach), Julian Brandt (Borussia Dortmund), Leon Goretzka (Bayern Munich), Ilkay Gundogan (Manchester City), Kai Havertz (Chelsea), Jamal Musiala (Bayern Munich)

FORWARDS
Leroy Sane (Bayern Munich), Thomas Muller (Bayern Munich), Serge Gnabry (Bayern Munich), Karim Adeyemi (Borussia Dortmund), Niclas Fullkrug (Werder Bremen), Youssoufa Moukoko (Borussia Dortmund).

Ivankovic calls on Oman players to put in their best

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

Oman national football team will take on Germany team on Wednesday in an international friendly match ahead of the 2022 Fifa World Cup in Qatar just five days away. The match will kick off at 9:00 pm at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex. This match will be the final warm-up game for the team ahead of the World Cup.

Red Warriors players will have a great chance to play against the four times World Cup champions. On February 18, 1998, Oman had played against Germany team and the match ended at 2-0 win for the latter. Today's friendly will be the second clash between both teams after 24 years.

Oman head coach Branko Ivankovic welcomed the Germany delegation and wished them a pleasant stay in Muscat. "We are expecting a wonderful sporting event as the national team will play against the well-known German team. The German squad is full of top players



who are representing top European league clubs. It is a golden opportunity for domestic players to play such highly anticipated match. My message to the players is to gain the desired experience and enjoy playing the match," Croatian coach added.

Responding to an inquiry on Oman's style in today's game, Branko said, "Of course, all the players will work hard to register a positive score as possible. It is an excellent experience for the national player to meet and play closely in the pitch against top ranking players. This game is

taking place in the right time as everyone in Oman is celebrating the National Day."

Branko concluded his remarks in the press meet saying that Germany is always a strong candidate to win the World Cup.

Oman's midfielder Harib al Saadi said that these strong matches are awaiting fixtures for any player in the region. "We are looking for these kind of matches since long time. I believe this match will give the chance for all the players to gain the required experience and to have the right exposure. Germany team is taking part in almost all the World Cup editions which means a great chance for our players. Our best wishes for Germany in the World Cup," he ended.

The German players have been training on Tuesday at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in presence of huge crowd of media representatives. Germany will begin their campaign in Qatar with a match against Japan on November 23. Then, they will face off Spain on November 27 in a strong clash before ending their group matches on December 1 against Costa Rica.

OHL CHAMPIONS AHLI SIDAB HEADLINE SECOND GROUP

SEEB, AL NASR DRAWN IN SAME GROUP

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Oman Hockey Association held the HM Cup 2022 draw for 52nd edition of the hockey championship on Tuesday under the auspices of Sayyid Louay bin Ghalib al Said, in presence of Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma, OHA Chairman. Eight clubs will take part in this edition namely Sohar, Ahli Sidab, Al Nasr, Seeb, Bausher, Salalah, Saham and Nizwa.

OHA Chairman Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma said hockey has a rich tradition in Oman.

"Hockey is one of the sports that has received high attention since the beginning of the Blessed Renaissance until today. Hockey is considered the oldest sports in the Sultanate of Oman since the 19th century, so that the precious cup was the first Omani sports championship bearing the name of His Majesty the Sultan's Cup in 1971. The Oman Hockey Association is making efforts to make hockey a sport that has a wide presence in the country by holding local championships and events, supporting and empowering clubs, as well as strengthening relations with regional, continental and international federations, and seeking to organise international events."

"The Oman Hockey Association is preparing to host the Hockey5s World Cup in January 2024. This important international sporting event will put the Sultanate of Oman on the map of international sporting events in general, and hockey tournaments in particular. We have launched out women's hockey team during the past period," Dr Juma said.



In the HM's Cup 2022, the teams were divided into two groups.

Defending champions Sohar Club are placed in the first group, while Oman Hockey League champions Ahli Sidab heads the second group.

The first group included Sohar, Seeb, Al Nasr, Bausher and the second group includes Ahli Sidab, Nizwa, Salalah and Saham.



The teams will play in a one-round league system, so that the first and second groups will qualify for the semifinal round, after which the third and fourth play for the bronze medal, while the first and second play for the championship cup and win the silver and gold medals.

The edition in 2002 was won by Ahli Sidab Club after its victory in the final match over Bausher.

HM CUP CHAMPIONS OVER THE YEARS

As for the first club that won the honour of winning the championship title, it was Oman Club in 1971. and also won the championship in 1972, 1973, 1974, 1975, Al Ahly Club in 1976, 1977, 1978, Al Nahda Club 1979, Police Team 1980, 1981, Al Nahda Club 1982, 1983, 1984, Muttrah Club 1985, Sidab Club 1986 and Muttrah Club 1987. Oman Club 1988, Muttrah Club 1989, Seeb Club 1990, Sidab Club 1991, 1992, 1993 and 1994, Seeb Club 1995, Sidab Club 1996 and 1997, Seeb Club 1998, Sidab Club 1999, Al Bustan Club 2000 and 2001, Seeb Club 2002, Sidab Club 2003, Seeb Club 2004, Muscat Club 2005, Ahli Sidab Club 2006, 2007, Al Bustan Club Al Nasr 2008, Oman Club 2009 and 2010, Al Nasr Club 2011 and 2012, Ahly Sidab Club 2013 and 2014, Al Nasr Club 2015, Al Nasr Club 2016, Al Seeb 2017, Ahli Sidab Club in 2018, Al Nasr Club in 2019, Al Nasr Club in 2020, then Sohar Club in 2021.

Oman begin Desert Cup campaign in style

MUSCAT: Hosts Oman got off to a flyer in the Desert Cup T20 Series at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat on Monday night as they trounced Saudi Arabia by nine wickets.

The opening match between the GCC nations turned out to be a lop-sided contest and Oman chief coach Duleep Mendis would be happy with his boys' all-round performance, in particular, the team's pace duo of Bilal Khan and the lanky Kaleemullah.

Opting to bat first after winning the toss, Saudi Arabia never could recover from the early blows as they were reduced to 22 for four in the sixth over. Both the Oman pacers shared five wickets between them with Bilal taking 3/20. Kaleemullah returned with figures of 2/14. Saudi Arabia batters could muster

only 86/8. Haseeb Ghafoor was the top-scorer with an unbeaten 34.

In reply, Oman were off to a flying start as openers Kashyap Kumar Prajapati and Jatinder Singh shared a 73-run stand in just nine overs to almost secure the match. Prajapati was the only batter to be dismissed. He scored 32 off 28 deliveries and had four hits to the fence. Jatinder went on to hammer an unbeaten 50 off 28 balls to take Oman home in the 11th over. His knock included seven boundaries and a maximum.

Oman take on Bahrain in their next match on Tuesday night.

The four-team series involve Canada and will be played in a double round-robin format followed by a 3rd place playoff and a final.



Djokovic to get visa for 2023 Australian Open

SYDNEY: Former world number one Novak Djokovic will be granted a visa to play in the 2023 Australian Open, local media reports said on Tuesday, despite his deportation from the country ahead of this year's tournament in January.

The Australian government had decided to grant the unvaccinated Serb a visa for the Grand Slam contest, overturning a three-year ban after his ejection from the country, said national broadcaster ABC and other domestic media.

Australia's immigration ministry and Tennis Australia were asked by AFP to comment on the reports.

This year's championship was overshadowed by nine-time Australian Open champion Djokovic being put on a plane on the eve of the contest after a high-stakes legal battle over his visa status.

Djokovic's three-year ban can be overturned at the discretion of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's centre-left government, which is different to the conservative coalition in power when he was kicked out. Over the past month there have been hints that the Australian government might have a change of heart.

"Nothing official yet," Djokovic told reporters after winning his



Serbia's Novak Djokovic returns to Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas during their first round-robin match at the ATP Finals tournament in Turin. —AFP

opening match at the ATP Finals in Turin on Monday night.

"We are waiting. They are communicating with the government of Australia. That's all I can tell you for now,"

LOVE TO COME BACK

Last month, Australian Open chief Craig Tiley said he had spent time with Djokovic recently and the Serbian wanted to return for the first major of the year in

January in Melbourne.

"What we're saying at this point is that Novak and the federal government need to work out the situation. And then we'll follow any instruction after that," Tiley

told *The Age* newspaper at the tournament's official launch.

"I did spend some time with Novak at the Laver Cup. We spoke generally. He said that he'd obviously love to come back to

Australia but he knows it's going to be an ultimate decision for the federal government.

"He's accepted that position. It's a private matter between them."

Opposition politician Karen Andrews, who was home affairs minister when Djokovic was deported, argued that he should not be given special treatment.

"It would be a slap in the face for those people in Australia who did the right thing, got vaccinated, did everything they needed to do, if all of a sudden Novak Djokovic is allowed back into the country simply because he is a high-ranking tennis player with many millions of dollars," she told ABC radio last month.

Djokovic arrived in Melbourne in January for the first Grand Slam of the year claiming he had obtained a medical exemption to enter the country without being vaccinated as he had recently recovered from Covid-19.

But Australian border officials said he did not meet requirements to be exempted from strict vaccination rules, his visa was cancelled and a protracted legal appeal failed.

Australia has since lifted its requirement for visitors to show proof of vaccination against Covid.

— AFP



Warm felicitations to
**His Majesty
Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**
and the people of Oman on the
occasion of the 52nd National Day
of the Renaissance



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Studies highlight Najd’s potential to attract agribusinesses

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Najd area of Dhofar Governorate has the potential to evolve into Oman’s predominant agriculture and farming hub provided its development is part of a carefully considered long-term strategy, according to studies done on behalf of various regulatory and stakeholder entities in the governorate.

Contributing to these observations have been the Directorate General of Housing and Urban Planning in the Governorate of Dhofar; Dhofar Municipality; Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources; Dhofar Integrated Services Company; Najd Agricultural Development Office; Petroleum Development Oman; and the Department of Mining in Dhofar.

Any strategy, experts involved in these studies have stressed, should take into account the need for, among other things, cultivation of only strategically imported crops, and efficient control and use of the region’s limited water resources.

A development strategy, they have further stressed, should result in significant economic benefits in the form of farm employment, farm processing and value adding activities, related supply chain and cold chain logistics, contribution to food security, and potential

exports as well.

The government has already made extensive investments in the development of commercial agriculture in the Najd region. Numerous experiments have shown that Najd has a suitable environment for agricultural crops such as root crops, including garlic, onions and potatoes, some citrus fruits (agave and lemon), as well as frankincense.

The area can also host year-round vegetables in greenhouses and field crops outside the summer months (May-July). Any initiative to expand agriculture in the area should incorporate the updated development strategy aimed at attracting local and international agribusiness companies that can set up commercial plantations.

Such large-scale commercial farming projects, it is pointed

out, can be undertaken as a partnership between the public and private sectors, including the Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj) for example.

Furthermore, by designating the area as a Special Economic Zone, emphasis can be placed on the feasibility and commercial viability of crops cultivate in the area, water use, climatic conditions, market prices and import competitiveness – factors that also contribute to food security.

The studies and recommendations also call for assessing the potential for forage production, farm meat and dairy production and even livestock production.

Additionally, the observations underline the need for more reliable procedures for assessing

the availability of groundwater to enable long-term planning. The belt of traditional farms in Salalah has important cultural and traditional value besides the production of fruits and

vegetables that are difficult to grow in other parts of the country. Emphasis must be placed on multi-tiered farms and relatively high value crops, new technologies to increase production, effective

crop management and efficient use of water.

To help augment the incomes of farmers, it is also proposed that corridors be created to attracted tourists to the area.

ديام Haya

الشركة العمالية لخدمات المياه والصرف الصحي ش.م.ع.م
Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company SAOC
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Announcement

Dear Valued Customers,

The Company is working on updating customers’ data to ensure that bills are issued according to the specified tariff. Therefore, we kindly request you to update your data through the company’s website **www.owwsc.nama.om**

Data update is available till 30, November 2022.

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Duqm Refinery to come online at end of 2023

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The Duqm Refinery project, the largest project in the field of refineries and petrochemicals, will start its commercial operation by the end of next year, Shafi al Ajmi, the CEO of Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI) told Kuwaiti news agency KUNA on Monday.

The project, occupying 900 hectares, is being constructed in the Special Economic Zone of Duqm (SEZD) and is a 50-50 joint venture between state-owned Oman’s OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International.

The main construction of the site, which was budgeted at \$6 billion, started in 2016, with 95 per cent of the works completed, the CEO of KPI said. The refinery was meant to come online in Q3 of 2020 but works were delayed due to the pandemic. The construction phase comprises three major packages being implemented by different consortiums and contractors.

In addition to the main components of the complex, the construction phase also includes storage and export facilities for liquid and bulk petroleum products at Port of Duqm, crude oil storage facilities at Ras Markaz and a 80-kilometre crude oil pipeline line from Ras Markaz to the refinery.

When operational, Duqm refinery will enhance the country’s refining capacity by refining 230,000 barrels of crude oil products per day, which will serve demand growth in the region and globally, as well as add to the SEZ’s investment appeal.

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Duqm Power Company S.P.C.

Tender Announcement

Introduction

Duqm Power Company SPC (herein the “Employer” or “DPC”) inviting proposals from qualified and experienced local contractors to undertake the **EPC of Waste Disposal Building (WDB) in Duqm Integrated Power and Water Plant, Duqm**. The Employer invites Bidders to submit their proposals as described below.

Tender Number	Tender Title	Tender Description	Tender Fees	Clarification Closing Date	Bid Submission Date
DPC-DPW-00-000 -LE-TND-0034	EPC of Waste Disposal Building (WDB) in DIPWP	EPC of Waste Disposal Building (appx size 25m x 12M) in DIPWP. Brief scope as follow: 1. Detail Design of WDB and interface tie ins 2. Procurement of necessary materials 3. Construction and Handover of Facility	50 OMR (Non refundable)	6-Dec-2022	11-Dec-2022

Request for proposal

The RFP will be made available in electronic form only from 9:00 AM, 16th November 2022 Oman time. Site visit for qualified bidders will be arranged 4th week of November 2022.

Contractor Minimum Qualifications

- Contractor must be local Omani (preferably from Al Wusta Region).
- Contractor must have necessary experience and resources for completion of similar projects.
- Contractor shall be financially sound.

Interested Contractors shall contact DPC via email to tender@marafiq.om with the subject heading “**EPC of Waste Disposal Building in DIPWP**” to submit necessary prequalification information, and receive further instructions related to collection of RFP Package.

P.O. Box 80 P.C. 102
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
www.marafiq.om

MHD-ITICS sponsors map of Oman painting

MUSCAT: In preparation for Oman’s 52nd National Day, the Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions cluster of Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD-ITICS) has supported an event that brought together 27 artists from across the country to paint a three-metre by two-metre map of the Sultanate of Oman.

The event, held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd al Said, the Secretary-General of the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, experienced a morning of unity, inspiration and empowerment of Oman’s art community.

Hosted by Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish, Chairperson, MHD-ITICS, at Al Bustan – A Ritz Carlton Hotel, on November 15, the event witnessed the presence of some of the highly-esteemed guests including excellencies, leading business



personnel and attendees from all over the country.

Ideated by Maryam Bani Orabah, the event under the theme ‘Building Oman, Together’ showcased a montage portraying the journey of the painting,

featuring picturesque landscapes and testimonials from the artists. This was followed by the unveiling of the Map of Oman by HH Sayyid Kamil.

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Haider Darwish then delivered

a keynote speech. To add to the exuberance of the morning, Oman’s well-renowned singer and songwriter, Haitham Rafi delivered a performance par excellence.

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin

Haider Darwish said, “Art is a platform for people to express their feelings, emotions and thoughts in ways that are not always possible in words or actions.

“Therefore, in celebrating the 52nd National Day, there is no better way to demonstrate our sense of belonging and patriotism than the display of a work of brilliance, curated by extremely talented Omani artists, representing their wilayats gathered to pay tribute to our beloved nation.”

“MHD-ITICS will continue to support and bring forth local talents. The gifted artists in our midst reflect artisanal values. Their artistic practice reflects traditions whose influence continues to flow through our contemporary culture. With the right level of support and encouragement, these artists are the creative stimuli that fertilise the seeds and enable a truly vibrant cultural hub to grow,” she added.

OAB launches instant easy payment plan



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) is proud to launch its Instant Easy Payment Plan for all OAB credit card customers. Thanks to this plan, customers will be able to buy their favourite items and pay through 12 monthly equal instalments with 0 per cent interest rate and no further documents required.

The new OAB Instant Easy Payment Plan gives customers the opportunity to defer their payments when purchasing items from OAB partnered merchant stores such as MI Store, Home Centre and Carrefour. OAB credit card holders can request their Instant Easy Payment Plan directly at the checkout counter, and enjoy 12 monthly instalments at 0 per cent interest for any items of minimum RO 100.

It is a simple process: after asking for the OAB Instant Easy Payment Plan at checkout, customers will swipe their OAB credit card and receive an SMS link which will re-direct them to the Instant Easy Payment Plan homepage.

After agreeing to the terms and conditions, their purchase will be converted instantly into a 0-per cent Instant Easy Payment Plan.

Rashad al Shaikh, Head of the Retail Banking Division at OAB, stated, “We are pleased to launch the Instant Easy Payment Plan which gives all OAB credit card holders the opportunity to instantly benefit from a payment option at 0 per cent interest. This product is a great addition to the range of offers and rewarding services that are available to all our valued customers. “By launching the Instant Easy Payment Plan, OAB also reiterates its commitment to financial inclusion by supporting all segments of society in building their lives without compromising their budget.

“This new plan will give our credit card customers both convenience and flexibility in their daily lives.”

BankDhofar: Strategic partner of Muntada Al Mar’a



MUSCAT: In translation of its position as one of the leading financial institutions in the Sultanate, BankDhofar was the Strategic Partner of Muntada Al Mar’a.

The event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyida Dr Mona bint Fahd al Said, and saw the attendance of

prominent women from various sectors.

The forum this year focused on various topics through the panel discussion sessions, including Omani women’s contribution to the national economy, entrepreneurship among women, the role of Omani women in various sectors among other topics. Hind Abdul Malik al Sabbagh, AGM and Head of Priority Banking at BankDhofar, was one of the keynote speakers at the event.

She shed light on Omani women at the banking sector and how they successfully become leaders in this sector.

Additionally, Dr Fatin bint Said al Zadjali, Head of Learning and Development at BankDhofar, shared her thoughts on how innovative Omani women crucially contribute in driving the national economy through the panel discussion titled ‘Enhancing Omani women’s contribution to the national economy through leadership and innovation’.

BankDhofar is proud of the Omani competencies, including Omani female, within the senior and middle management team and the operational level, both at the departments and the branch network. Omani women at BankDhofar are provided with equal opportunities to enhance their skills and capabilities through various training programmes.

AGAE opens state-of-art showroom for automotive brand Changan

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC (AGAE) announced the inauguration of a flagship showroom for the premium automotive brand Changan at Al Mawaleh in Muscat. The state-of-art showroom will cater to the rising demand for premium Changan models and the luxurious UNI series.

Changan Mawaleh Showroom Key Highlights: Spread over an area of 1,300 square metres, the facility has the capacity to display 20+ cars.

Designed in accordance with global standards, the showroom’s façade holds a glass fascia with an inside height 6.3 metres and front elevation of nine metres which provides excellent visibility to customer. The showroom location has easy access to customers residing in Muscat and is only 2.4 km from Burj Al Sahwa roundabout.

The showroom has ample sitting place for customers to discuss and look at the display cars. The large showroom area also provides customers with sufficient place to look at the entire model range of Changan and UNI models, seven different model variants in Changan



and three models in UNI range needs such a large state of the art showroom to meet customer choices.

The state-of-the-art showroom also has exclusive new car delivery area, customer lounge, wheelchair access, ample car parking and comes with prayer room facilities.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, “We have always believed in strengthening our relationship with our customers and are elated to expand our network and come closer to all of them.

“We have a great partnership with Changan brand and are very happy to extend this further with the inauguration of our

new facility. We look forward to welcoming new buyers to the Changan family and establishing a fruitful, long-term relationship.”

He also added that Bahwan group showroom standards are very well maintained for buying convenience like test-drive to satisfy customer on quality of drive, easy financing and also offers low instalments through banks and finance companies, insurance and registration to support the customers to buy their favourite Changan and UNI models.

The premium automotive brand Changan has received overwhelming response among Oman customers.

Bank Muscat participates in Omani Dates Festival

MUSCAT: In line with its strong commitment to promoting food security and the micro and small business sector, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, participated in the eighth edition of the Omani Dates Festival, which was recently held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The festival, which was inaugurated by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, aimed to promote and support encourage Omani farmers and businesses focusing on dates-related products. A number of farmers as

well as owners of date-processing units from across the Sultanate of Oman participated in the week-long event.

Festival visitors also had the opportunity to interact with the bank’s Retail Enterprises team (Najahi) at the event, which provided information on various financial and non-financial services and support available for micro and small businesses in the Sultanate.

Bank Muscat is always at the forefront in supporting various activities and events, which promote sustainable development in Oman. For example, the Omani Dates Festival provided officials at the bank with a good chance to



meet and listen to feedback from many Omani entrepreneurs from across the country.

It was also a good opportunity

business, thereby playing a crucial role in economic diversification as envisioned in Oman Vision 2040.

Bank Muscat’s Najahi has been playing a major role in supporting the sector since its launch in 2014. Over the years, Najahi has been growing from strength to strength in expanding its suite of products and services, and has won much praise from customers for the excellent financial support through collateral-free financing and non-financial support it extends.

The bank’s Najahi strategy is closely aligned with the overall developmental goals of economic diversification, job creation and increasing GDP.

The Najahi products suite includes the value-added Najahi Current Account, POS Terminals, Credit and Debit cards, Internet Banking and Collateral-free Financing.

It is a matter of great pride for the bank that Najahi has been well praised by its customers for the various services and facilities provided since its inception as it has enabled many to develop and expand their projects and grow in size to realise their entrepreneurial dreams. For more information about Najahi, please visit the nearest branch, call 24790000 or visit <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/najahi/Pages/default.aspx>.



Rise in cybercrime remains a concern globally



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

The combination of escalating geopolitical tensions, the looming economic downturn and the push to digitalise business processes is creating, according to cybersecurity experts, a “perfect storm” for hackers.

NCC (Software Escrow firm) chief executive Mike Maddison said the digitisation agenda on the back of the global pandemic has created new opportunities for hackers in opening up new ways to infiltrate and take advantage of companies.

The push to digitalise business processes comes as the Russia-Ukraine war and worsening relations with China have also led to an uptick in cyberattacks from state-backed hacking groups.

The looming global recession also threatens to create stronger incentives for cybercriminals, as computer savvy individuals increasingly turn towards crime.

Elad Leon, a cyber security expert at Israeli firm CYE, said there has been an increase in cyberattacks since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

He said the uptick in cyberattacks is also a result of increasing levels of cyber proficiency among people and the wide spread proliferation of highly-effective hacking tools.

Leon said North Korean hackers have played a particularly prolific role in launching cyberattacks against major players in the global financial sector. He said Russian and Chinese hackers have tended to focus more on infrastructure companies and firms with key assets of military significance.

Maddison noted that there is often a significant lack of distinction between state-backed hackers and independent cybercriminals that are either hired by governments or simply launch attacks against enemies of their home states on their own volition.

Leon noted that hostile states are willing to turn a blind eye to those hacking their geopolitical rivals.

Ryan Kalember,

executive vice president of cybersecurity firm Proofpoint, said, “opportunistic cybercriminals” are taking advantage of political and economic volatility, as he noted there has been an uptick in attacks on the back of the war in Ukraine.

For the UK, it is becoming increasingly essential to protect against fraud and cybercrime if it is to ensure it's the “safest place to do business in the world”, the head of the City of London police has warned.

The chair of the capital's police authority board, James Thompson, said ensuring businesses and customers are protected is “vital” to Britain's economic growth.

The comments were made at the launch of the police-led Cyber Resilience Centre for London which aim to lessen businesses' vulnerability to cybercrime.

“Reducing the vulnerability in our business community will ultimately protect us all,” Thompson said.

The launch comes after City law firm Edmonds Marshall McMahon (EMM) launched its own pro-bono cybercrime helpline, to offer advice on launching private prosecutions against hackers. Private prosecutions let victims of fraud and cybercrime circumvent the justice system by launching prosecutions privately as law enforcement agencies struggle with scarce resources.

The launch of EMM's cyber helpline follows the publication of findings by the House of Commons justice committee showing fraud now accounts for 40 per cent of all crime – even as just two per cent of police funding is dedicated to tackling the problem.

“The state is effectively not functioning in this area,” EMM partner Ashley Fairbrother said.

He explained that private prosecutions are often the only way victims are able to recover stolen assets.

In one case a 70-year-old man who lost £300,000 worth of his life-savings was able to recover the bulk of his stolen cash via a private prosecution.

According to figures from the United Kingdom's office for national statistics, just 7,609 defendants were prosecuted for fraud or forgery in the year ending in September 2021, despite there being an estimated 4.6 million fraud cases over the same period.

Fairbrother warned the lack of state prosecutions was encouraging the increase in cybercrime. Fraudsters know that very little action is taken by state enforcement but private prosecutions act as a deterrent.

Omantel Group revenue nears RO 2 billion for 9M 2022

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 15

Majority Omani government-owned telecom services provider Omantel recorded revenues totalling RO 1.981 billion across the group for the nine months ended September 30, 2022, up from RO 1.802 billion for the corresponding period of 2021.

The lion's share came from Omantel subsidiary Zain Group with a contribution of RO 1.565 billion, the publicly traded telecom company said in its 9M report for fiscal 2022. Revenues from Omantel's domestic operations totalled RO 423.4 million this year, up from RO 396.9 million for the corresponding period of 2021.

Contributing to this increase was the growth in transit voice revenue, which rose by RO 21.1 million YoY, the company said. Net profit after tax for the group climbed 16.1 per cent to RO 195.1 million, up from RO 168.1 million in 2021.

After adjusting for minority interest, the net profit for the period was RO 49.8 million compared to RO 48.9 Mn in 2021, the Chairman stated in his report.



Total operating expenses incurred by the group rose 9.8 per cent to RO 1.655 billion, up from RO 1.507 billion for the corresponding period of 2021.

On the domestic front, net profit dipped to RO 53.7 million compared to RO 54.7 million in the previous period. “Domestic net profit levels were sustained at similar level YoY on account of increase in Postpaid Mobile revenue (11.1 per cent) and Fixed Broad band revenue (1.7 per

cent), cost optimisation measures, reduction in impairment provision against receivables (contributed by healthy collections) and depreciation inspite of a significant increase in competition in Fixed and Mobile retail markets,” the telecom operator stated.

Omantel's combined domestic subscriber base as of September 2022 (including mobile and fixed businesses) climbed to 3.207 million (excluding Mobile

Resellers) compared to 3.189 million last year.

With mobile resellers, the figure reached 3.728 million this year, compared to 3.736 million a year earlier. Omantel's mobile market share (including Mobile Resellers) was pegged 47.5 per cent with a revenue share of 58.1 per cent.

The Fixed Telephone (post & pre-paid) market share was 71 per cent with a revenue market share of 82.2 per cent.

Oman LNG and ITHCA Group sign MoU on cloud service infrastructure

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 15

Oman LNG and ITHCA Group signed a pivotal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the provision of Oracle's ERP Cloud services infrastructure for Oman LNG.

The MoU covers different aspects of the strategic partnership between Oman LNG and ITHCA Group, where it lays the foundations of establishing a cloud-based system in Oman LNG for its future needs and requirements.

This will ultimately help to transform the company's current Enterprise Management Planning (ERP) systems and infrastructure to ITHCA's cloud concepts, which helps to enhance the information systems and ownership in the company and generate optimisation, while ensuring compliance with Oman's data sovereignty requirements.

The MoU ceremony was signed by Hamed al Numani—CEO of Oman LNG, and Eng Said bin Abdullah al Manthari, Group CEO, ITHCA. Commenting on this signing, Hamed al Numani, CEO of Oman LNG, commented: “Oman LNG continues to lead in its digital transformation journey.

Having a cloud based presence is important for any business, and partnering with ITHCA is an integral cornerstone for our digital transformation journey as it eases access to new innovation, promotes knowledge sharing, as well as supports local SME's



ITHCA'S INVESTMENT AND COLLABORATION WITH ORACLE HELPS IN POSITIONING THE SULTANATE OF OMAN AS A LEADING GLOBAL NAME IN THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY TRENDS AND ORACLE SERVICES.

to continue developing cloud solutions around Oracle. This agreement is a milestone in itself, and we look forward to continuing the success of our journey.”

Eng Said al Manthari, CEO of ITHCA Group, added: “This agreement is a strategic step to both organisations, where it complements the mutual commitment towards digitalisation.

ITHCA's investment and collaboration with Oracle helps in positioning the Sultanate of Oman as a leading global name in the latest technology trends and Oracle services. Going further, this helps to deploy modern technology,

paving the way towards further development and enhancements of the local skills in Information Technology.”

Oman LNG aims to enlarge the local digital ecosystem through strategic partnerships such as this collaboration with ITHCA.

Through its offerings, ITHCA has been able to gain the Ministry of Transport, Communication, and Information Technology's (MoTCIT) accreditation on providing Cloud Infrastructure, Cloud Platform and Cloud Software services to Oman Investment Authority's different organisations and entities.

ITHCA group aims to lead the cloud services industry with the partnership of the leading hyperscale cloud computing services “Oracle” through enhancing the current infrastructure by introducing the first hyperscale cloud technology in Oman and providing different layers of adds-on services according to each organisation requirements.

CMA restructures 23 online services

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 15

The Capital Market Authority restructured 23 online services rendered to the public in the insurance and capital market sectors through reducing the average period required to render the service from 11 to 5 working days at 45 per cent streamlining for ten services in the capital market sector and streamlining thirteen services in the insurance sector from five working days to one and half working days at 30 per cent streamlining.

The move came after the CMA's restructuring team conducted study and analysis of the services rendered to various segments of the community for streamlining. The team concluded that twenty-three services in the capital market and insurance sectors need streamlining.

CMA focused on the services related to the companies operating in the field of securities and their activities such as audit firms, internal audit firms, law firms, approving prospectuses, establishment of public companies, crowdfunding platforms and special purpose companies.

In the insurance sector, the restructured services include insurance agents, brokers, third party administrators, health insurance revenue cycle administrators and the activity of valuation of cancelled vehicles as a result of an accident.

Restructuring is in line with Oman Vision 2040 for the purpose of analysing and restructuring work processes in the institutions to reduce the time required for achieving the work through streamlining.

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Chris Botti's performance at ROHM shows what it takes to be a Grammy winner

Christ Botti is critically acclaimed, especially for his 2004 CD titled "When I Fall in Love" making him the largest-selling American Instrumental artist. His recent performance at the Royal Opera House Muscat not just impressed fans from Oman but even those who flew from halfway around the world... **P20**

Adele returns to Las Vegas for delayed concerts

MUSIC STAR ADELE begins her Las Vegas residence on Friday, 10 months after she cancelled the shows at the last minute citing Covid-19 delays. The British singer-songwriter faced online backlash in January for the announcement's short notice as some fans were already travelling to Nevada for the concerts, called "Weekends with

Adele". US actor Dominic Crisonino was at a New York airport when he heard the news but travelled to Las Vegas anyway. He ended up speaking to the "Hello" singer via FaceTime. Now he is going back this weekend to finally watch Adele finally perform at Caesars' Palace hotel. "I was honestly over it within a couple of hours

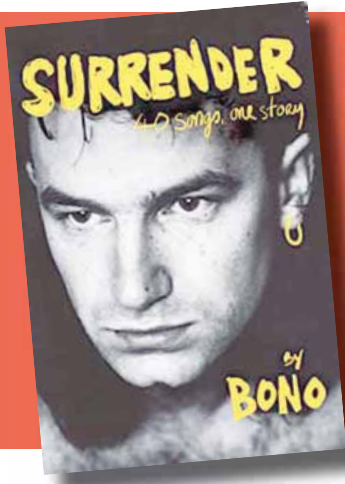
because I always think the most of every situation and so I was just finding the positive and things happen," he said. "Now it's that redemption of finally having the opportunity to go and see her so we're very much looking forward to actually being in that space and hearing her voice and seeing this concert that we've waited for." — **AFP**



READ

SURRENDER BY BONO

The lead singer of the Irish rock band U2 offers details of his life, career and activism.



TRUFFLE MAGIC

A 700 grams Alba white truffle to be auctioned is displayed at the Castle of Grinzane Cavour, northern Italy, during the 23rd Alba White Truffle World auction. — **AFP**



CULTURE

Two young women dancers share a light moment during the Ingoma Dance Festival organised by Ubunye Bama Hostela at the Glebelands Hostel in Umlazi township, north of Durban. The festival is aimed fostering unity and peace among three politically divided hostels which historically houses Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and rival African National Congress (ANC) supporters. The Ingoma Dance is considered one of the most purist forms of traditional Zulu dance. — **AFP**





Desert rally a rare tranquil escape in chaotic Libya

Some 30 quad bikes, motor-cycles and four-wheel drives are rallying in Libya's desert — a welcome but rare taste of normality for a nation lashed by the shifting sands of conflict.

At the launch in 2013, organisers of the Al-Hamada rally had envisioned an annual event, yet this year's episode is only the

from the politics and divisions" that perennially buffet it, organiser Khaled Drera said.

Libya "wants to progress towards the stability that it deserves", said Drera, who is also a tour guide and an expert on the country's desert landscapes.

The rally's name stems from

capital Tripoli in the country's west, and the other appointed by the parliament, based in the east.

Clashes between the two camps have repeatedly shaken Libya this year, and notably the capital. A confrontation in late August left at least 30 people dead.



the vast territory at the heart of Libya's portion of the Sahara, a stretch of tranquillity in a nation repeatedly engulfed by chaos since the fall of Moamer Kadhafi in 2011.

For months now, two rival governments have been vying for power — one based in the



— 'Didn't chicken out' - After departing on Thursday from Zintan, a mountainous small town around 170 kilometres (105 miles) southwest of Tripoli, the competitors have been driving a course that covers more than 400 kilometres of largely flat and stony ground.

The event finishes on Sunday in Ghadames, a Unesco world heritage site, dubbed the "desert pearl", near the border with Algeria and Tunisia.

Touting photos of the bikes and four-wheel drives against a backdrop of palm trees and brilliant golden sand, the organisers hope to attract attention from beyond Libya's frontiers.

Already, thanks to the presence of the Tunisian team, this year's rally is an international event, with organisers hoping to extend the competitor base in future.

Tunisian Chaima Ben Ammou — the first woman to compete — said her passion for motor-bikes came from her father, who still accompanies her to both national and international fixtures.

"I've made a lot of sacrifices to get here, but I have the support of my family," said the 29-year-old, who has won a motocross championship in Tunisia and has put her law studies on hold to pursue her passion.

She said she did not hesitate in "responding to the invitation of our Libyan brothers", ditching her motorbike in favour of a Japanese four-wheel drive, even

though she has no experience competing in that category.

Wearing a black helmet and with her hair pulled back, she said she knew she was blazing a trail for other women. "Despite the difficulties, I didn't chicken out," she said, from the wheel of her car. — AFP

LOCAL SCENE

Best-selling author of book on jewel-empire owners The Cartiers to visit Muscat



BEST-SELLING AUTHOR Francesca Cartier Brickell is visiting Muscat on November 19, 2022, as part of her GCC Book tour for her book 'The Cartiers: The Untold Story of the Family behind the Jewellery Empire.'

Cartier Brickell will meet with her fans from 6 pm onwards and her appearance in Muscat will be followed by an intimate French-themed dinner setting at Sultanah restaurant in Shangri-La Al Husn, Muscat.

During the book-reading event, visitors will have the opportunity to interact with the author during a pre-dinner gathering on the terrace, inclusive of a visual presentation of the book followed by an individual complimentary book and signing by Francesca Cartier.

The elaborative 5-course menu featured at Sultanah and curated by

In 2009, four generations of the Cartier family gathered in the south of France to celebrate patriarch Jean-Jacques Cartier's ninetieth birthday. As the family enjoyed a casual breakfast together, Jean-Jacques announced that he'd been saving a vintage grape drink for the occasion. His granddaughter, Francesca Cartier Brickell, offered to fetch it for him and headed down into the cellar—where she made a discovery that transformed her understanding of her family.

Instead of a beverage, what Francesca found was a battered trunk dotted with faded travel stickers from all over the world. Inside were hundreds and hundreds of letters, correspondence saved by generations of the Cartier family. Some missives opened up a bygone era of glamour, with clients that included



Chef Grigorios stages delicious premium ingredients paired perfectly with hand-picked French beverages. From tuna tartar as a starter followed by a delicious scallop niçoise, a lobster bisque with crystal Kaviar to the Black Angus Chateaubriand served with grilled asparagus, potato allumette and ending with a Passion Fruit Crème Brûlée topped with coconut crumble and savoury mango sorbet. A selection of zero-proof beverages blending locally sourced ingredients and flavours will also be on featured.

Book fans will enjoy the dinner while listening to the author share her story and how she was inspired to write about her family's long-standing legacy after discovering a trunk of family letters in her grandfather's cellar and going on her quest to find out more about The Cartier's empire and sharing it with the world. The book tells the story of the family behind Cartier and the three brothers who turned their grandfather's humble Parisian jewellery store into a global luxury icon.

ABOUT THE BOOK

The book is a compelling family story of 3 Cartier brothers, whose motto was "Never copy, only create" and who turned their grandfather's modest Parisian shop into an international jewellery empire thanks to their unique and complementary talents: It tells of Louis Cartier, the visionary designer who created the first men's wristwatch to help an aviator friend tell the time without taking his hands from the controls of his flying machine, and Pierre Cartier, the master dealmaker who bought the New York headquarters on Fifth Avenue for a double-stranded natural pearl necklace. And Jacques Cartier, the globe-trotting gemstone expert whose travels to India gave Cartier access to the world's best rubies, emeralds, and sapphires, inspiring the celebrated Tutti-Frutti jewellery.

King Edward II, Grand Duchess Vladimir of Russia, Coco Chanel, the Duchess of Windsor, Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly and Queen Elizabeth. There were birth announcements and telegrams, love letters and homesick letters and airmail envelopes thick with pages detailing business pitfalls and successes, outlining strategies and offering advice. It was correspondence that the family had believed had been lost forever, and it launched Francesca on a decade-long quest to put together the missing pieces of her family's history. Francesca left her job in the city to research her family's history, travelling all over the world and discovering long-lost pieces of the puzzle along the way.

Francesca tracked down family archives as far afield as St. Louis and Tokyo, deciphered ancient gravestones in Paris; trekked through sapphire mines in Sri Lanka and delved into the natural pearl trade with gem dealers in the Persian Gulf. The result is THE CARTIERS: The Untold Story of the Family Behind the Jewellery Empire, a captivating history full of never-before-revealed details about the family behind the global jewellery dynasty.

BIOGRAPHY OF THE SPEAKER: Francesca Cartier Brickell (@creat-ingcartier) is a graduate in English literature from Oxford University, and a direct descendant of the Cartier family. Her great-great-grandfather founded Cartier in 1847. Her late grandfather Jean-Jacques Cartier was the last of the family to manage and own a branch of the world-famous firm. Francesca is a sought-after international lecturer on Cartier's illustrious history, and her best-selling book 'The Cartiers,' published in multiple languages, has been described as The New York Times as "A human story, one even the unadorned will read with pleasure."



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Showing off songs and sequins, Museum of Broadway opens in New York



RIGHT ON TIMES Square in the heart of New York's theatre district, a new Museum of Broadway is designed to take fans behind the curtain of some of its biggest musicals. Rooms in the museum on 45th Street, which opens on Tuesday, use music, videos, glittering costumes and walk-through sets to tell the history of how the theatre district came to be. It also covers groundbreaking shows from "West



Side Story" to "Cats," with details on who does what behind the scenes. "Broadway's been around, you know, since the 1700s. And so we just are really wanting to bring that to life," said co-founder Julie Boardman.



The heart of Broadway Theatre was located downtown in Union Square in the 1850s and arrived in Times Square in the early 1900s. A show is considered "Broadway" when performed in about 40 theatres with 500 or more seats in the Broadway District in Midtown Manhattan. "It's a very uniquely American art form that's developed here. And so, you know, it should be here, and it should be in Times Square," Boardman said. — Reuters

DISCOVERY

Earliest proof of cooking shows our ancestors liked well-done fish



EARLY HUMAN ancestors living 780,000 years ago liked their fish well-done, Israeli researchers revealed on Monday, in what they said was the earliest evidence of fire being used to cook. Exactly when our ancestors started cooking has been a matter of controversy among archaeologists because it is difficult to prove that an ancient fire-place was used to prepare food, and not just for warmth. But the birth of the culinary arts marks an important turning point in human history, because by making food easier to chew and digest it is believed to have greatly contributed to our eventual expansion across the world. Previously, the first "definitive evidence" of cooking was by Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens 170,000 years ago, according to a new study published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution. The study, which pushes that date back by more than 600,000 years, is the result of 16 years of work by its first author Irit Zohar, an archaeologist at Tel Aviv University's Steinhardt Museum of Natural History. During that time she has catalogued thousands of fish remains found at a site

called Geshar Benot Ya'aqov in northern Israel. The site near the banks of the Jordan River was once home to a lake, where a treasure trove of ancient fish fossils helped the team of researchers investigate exactly when the first cooks started getting inventive in the kitchen. "It was like facing a puzzle, with more and more information until we could make a story about human evolution," Zohar said. - 'DESIRE TO COOK'? - The first clue came in an area that contained "nearly no fish bones" but lots of teeth, she said. This could point towards cooking because fish bones soften and disintegrate at temperatures under 500 degrees Celsius (930 Fahrenheit) — but their teeth remain. In the same area, a colleague of Zohar's found burnt flints and other evidence that it had previously been used as a fireplace. And most of the teeth belonged to just two particularly large species of carp, suggesting they had been selected for their "succulent" meat, the study said. Some of the carp were over two metres (6.5 feet) long. The "decisive" proof came by studying the teeth's enamel, Zohar said.

The researchers used a technique called X-ray powder diffraction at the Natural History Museum in London to find out how heating changes the structure of the crystals which make up enamel. Comparing the results with other fish fossils, they found that the teeth from the key area of the lake were subjected to a temperature of between 200-500 degrees Celsius (400-930 Fahrenheit). That is just the right range for well-cooked fish. Whether our forerunners baked, grilled, poached or sauted their fish remains unknown, though the study suggested they may have used some kind of earth oven. Fire is thought to have first been mastered by Homo erectus some 1.7 million years ago. But "because you can control fire for warming, that does not mean you control it for cooking — they could have eaten the fish next to the fire," Zohar said. Then the human ancestors might have thrown the bones in the fire, said Anais Marrast, an archaeozoologist at France's National Museum of Natural History not involved in the study. "The whole question about exposure to fire is whether it is about getting rid of remains or a desire to cook," she said. — AFP

RECIPE

Chocolate Peanut Butter Pie



THIS SPIN ON an icebox pie, with its chocolaty press-in graham cracker crust and airy no-bake peanut butter filling, comes with a sheen of fudgy glaze. A splash of coffee accentuates the dark side of the bittersweet chocolate, and salted peanuts scattered on top add crunch. As fun as a candy bar and as creamy as a cheesecake, this layered dessert looks and feels special but is simple enough for anyone to pull together. And it's even easier to serve: The whole thing can be refrigerated for up to 3 days. Yield: One 9-inch pie Total time: 2 hours Ingredients: **FOR THE CRUST:** 1 cup/110 grammes graham cracker crumbs (from about 7 crackers) 1/3 cup/30 grammes Dutch-processed (dark) unsweetened cocoa powder 1/4 cup/30 grammes confectioners' sugar 1/4 teaspoon fine salt 5 tablespoons/70 grammes unsalted butter, melted and cooled Nonstick cooking spray **FOR THE PEANUT BUTTER FILLING:** 1 1/4 cups/300 grammes heavy cream 1 cup/270 grammes creamy peanut butter (see Tip) 6 ounces/170 grammes cream cheese, softened 3/4 cup/90 grammes confectioners' sugar 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract 1/4 teaspoon fine sea or table salt For the Chocolate Glaze: 6 tablespoons/85 grammes heavy cream 4 ounces/113 grammes bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped 2 tablespoons hot brewed coffee or hot water 2 teaspoons light corn syrup 1/4 cup/40 grammes roasted, salted peanuts **PREPARATION:** 1. Make the crust: Position a

rack in the centre of the oven and heat the oven to 350 degrees. Mix the crumbs, cocoa powder, confectioners' sugar and salt in a medium bowl until well combined. Drizzle the butter over and mix with a fork or your fingers until the mixture is evenly moistened. 2. Coat a standard 9-inch pie plate with nonstick cooking spray. Spread the crumb mixture in an even layer across the bottom. Press the crumbs firmly into the bottom and up the sides to form a crust. Bake until it feels dry to the touch and smells toasty, 10 to 12 minutes. Cool completely on a wire rack. 3. Make the filling: Whisk the cream with a stand or hand mixer (or by hand, which will take quite some time and energy) until stiff peaks form. Beat the peanut butter, cream cheese, confectioners' sugar, vanilla and salt (with an electric mixer or by hand) until well blended and smooth. Gently stir the whipped cream into the peanut butter mixture until fully incorporated. It's OK if the cream deflates. 4. Spread the peanut butter filling in an even layer over the cooled pie crust. Freeze until firm, about 30 minutes. 5. Make the glaze: Bring the cream to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat. Turn off the heat and add the chocolate. Let sit for 30 seconds, then stir slowly until the chocolate melts. Add the coffee and corn syrup, and stir until smooth. 6. Take the pie out of the freezer. Slowly pour the chocolate glaze all over the top of the pie. Tilt the pie plate if needed to evenly coat the top. Scatter the peanuts on top. Let stand until the top sets, about 15 minutes. Slice and serve, or refrigerate for up to three days before slicing. Tip: Be sure to use standard peanut butter that includes sweeteners, fats and salt. Natural peanut butter, with only peanuts and salt, won't work in this recipe. — NYT

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Chris Botti's performance at ROHM shows what it takes to be a Grammy winner

By Rumpa Mitra
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This weekend, the Royal Opera House Muscat saw a performer that flew from halfway around the world to showcase what it takes to be a Grammy Award winner. Christ Botti is critically acclaimed,

especially for his 2004 CD titled "When I Fall in Love" making him the largest-selling American Instrumental artist.

Fans at ROHM were not just from Muscat. In fact, a young man named Peter took a 10-hour flight from France to Muscat to witness Botti's performance. In the same manner, Bahraini-attende Ali also didn't want to miss the show despite their busy schedule, he came all

the way to witness a performer whose success has crossed over to audiences usually reserved for pop music.

Botti has collected several accolades in his career so far. He has multiple Gold and Platinum albums and has performed with legends such as Sting, Barbra Streisand, Tony Bennett, Yo-Yo Ma, Frank Sinatra, Paul Simon, and Andrea Bocelli.

Hitting the road for as many as 300 days per year, the trumpeter has also performed with many of the finest symphonies and at some of the world's most prestigious venues from Carnegie Hall and the Hollywood Bowl to the Sydney Opera House and the Real Teatro di San Carlo in Italy. Most recently, his latest album "Impressions" won the Grammy for Best Pro Instrumental Album. Performing worldwide and selling more than four million albums, he has found a form of creative expression that begins in Jazz and expands beyond the limits of any single genre.

Chris along with his entire team which included Sy Smith (main vocal), Rafael Moras (vocal), Lee Pearson (Drums), Reggie Hamilton (Bass), Ben Butler (Piano), Sandy Cameron (Violin), last but not least Andy Snitzer (Saxophone) let Muscat and other foreign music lovers witness his unparalleled crystalline and poetic sounds.

For the entire duration of the performance, Chris was a revelation and a true

talent. He wanders through every piece with ease being the master that he is. There were moments during the performance when the audience was transported into a fantasy land made entirely of positivity and warmth. His coming to Oman is a tremendous demonstration that we need to see more of this kind of performance.

A DYNAMIC COLLABORATION

While Chris is a powerhouse as a performer, one of the people performing with him will also definitely take a pie of the spotlight.

The beautiful sound coming out from crooner Sy Smith was so mesmerising it elevated Botti's talent even more.

Catching up with Smith via email, she shared, "I've been touring with Chris Botti since 2007 (with some breaks in between). Chris is wonderful to work with, as he is so in touch with creating a story with his show as opposed to simply creating a set list of songs."

She revealed, "Chris curates his show to create a beautiful arc and I love being a part of that. Generally, we do not rehearse much at all, so the moments that the audiences see on

stage have evolved organically and not through hours of band practice. Being with him I have learned a lot and must admit, I use this technique when I create my own shows."

Working closely with Botti, Smith has many positive words for his favourite instrumentalist.

"His horn playing is masterful and I love that my voice and his trumpet rather live in the same register," she said.

Smith is popular as an "Underground soul" performer and has gathered a legion of fans on her own for her edgy progressive mix of funk, and neo-soul.

Being a first-timer in Muscat, she said she was wholeheartedly impressed with the country.

PLAYING THE FAVOURITES

Chris performed "When I Fall in Love" from his recent album along with his other favourites "Someone To Watch Over Me", "You Don't Know What Love Is", "I've Got You Under My Skin" and more.

Sy Smith, who is currently creating buzz for her new song "Feeling Good" which she performed along with saxophone artist Andy Snitzer and of course, Chris on the Trumpet left the audience speechless and with goosebumps. The rhythm and the flow of the song just grabbed the attention of each one present.

This answers why music lovers flew to Muscat for this soaring musical concert.

