

US values Oman's efforts in Yemen

The United States of America valued the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in backing peace process in Yemen. In a telephonic press briefing during which ONA took part, Tim Lenderking, US Special Envoy for Yemen, said the US is in constant communication and consultation with the Omani government in a bid to support security and stability of Yemen. **DETAILS ON P5**



Oman, Jordan agree to boost investments

HIS MAJESTY AND JORDAN KING HOLD BILATERAL TALKS



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdullah II of the Kingdom of Jordan, held a bilateral meeting at Al Alam Palace on Wednesday. During the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan and King Abdullah II discussed the two countries’ relations that are deep-rooted in history. – ONA

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, have reiterated their keenness on strengthening joint investment in different spheres.

They voiced their support for developing economic diversification, private sector partnership and commercial exchange between the two countries. This was stated in a joint communique issued here on Wednesday between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

“In consolidation of bilateral relations and fraternal ties between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and their wise leaderships and, in response to a generous invitation from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite

Kingdom of Jordan, made an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman on October 4 and 5, accompanied by Queen Rania Al Abdullah and Prince Al Hussein Ibn Abdullah II.

“The two leaders held in-depth talks in amical spirit, asserting their keenness to continue developing bilateral cooperation in all fields. The aim is to serve the two countries’ joint interests in a manner that reflects their deep-rooted fraternal relations, besides augmenting communication and exchanging visits between personnel of the departments concerned to explore further opportunities for cooperation.

“In their quest to bolster ties of friendship and cooperation, the two monarchs welcomed the signing of memoranda of understanding, agreements and executive programmes in different fields, including

HIS MAJESTY WELCOMES
INVITATION TO VISIT
JORDAN

KEENNESS TO DEVELOP
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IN ALL FIELDS

SIGNING OF MEMORANDA
OF UNDERSTANDING
WELCOMED

COMMITMENT TO
PRINCIPLES AND GOALS OF
UN CHARTERS

NEED FOR A FAIR AND
FINAL SETTLEMENT OF
PALESTINIAN ISSUE

industry, mining, labour, competition protection, prohibition of monopoly, archiving, higher education, scholarly research, innovation, consumer protection, tourism and insurance.

“The two sides also underscored the significance of joint investment across various sectors. They reiterated the significance of expanding economic relations by organising relevant programmes and activities, intensifying the exchange of trade delegations, cementing communication and partnership at the level of the private sectors and making optimum use of the role of the Joint Committee.

“The two sides discussed a number of regional and international issues and underlined the need to shore up the march of cooperation and integration among Arab countries. They focused on their two countries’ coordination with global organisations-during regional and international events-in a manner that better serves their common interests and contributes to enhancing joint Arab Action and supporting pillars of peace and stability in the region and the world at large. They reaffirmed the constructive role of the two countries in this respect.

“The two sides expressed their commitment to principles and goals of the United Nations charters and the International Law. In this context, they laid emphasis on the genuineness of the Palestinian cause and the need to reach a fair and final settlement to the issue in a manner that meets all legitimate rights of the Palestinian people — based on the Two-State Solution,

TURN TO P3

US CITIZEN
LAUDS
OMAN’S
EFFORTS



MUSCAT: US citizen Mohammed Baqer Namazi has expressed deep thanks and gratitude for the commendable efforts exerted by the Sultanate of Oman, under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, to secure his safe return home.

Speaking to Oman News Agency (ONA), Namazi said that the gesture reflects the major role played by Oman

and its humanitarian endeavours in this regard over the past decades.

Namazi added that the countries of the region have perceived the significant diplomatic approach undertaken by the Government of the Sultanate of Oman. He expressed his delight and happiness of his family which, he said, he would be joining after years of absence.

— ONA



HM, KING OF JORDAN HOLD BILATERAL MEETING



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held a bilateral meeting at Al Alam Palace on Wednesday.

During the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan and King Abdullah II discussed the two countries' relations that are deep-rooted in history, as well as the progress being made in enhancing cooperation and realising common interests of the Omani and Jordanian peoples.

The meeting was attended by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of Jordan.

— ONA

■ HM CONFERS OMAN CIVIL ORDER FIRST CLASS ON KING ABDULLAH



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik confers Oman Civil Order First Class on King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan on Tuesday at Al Alam Palace on the occasion of the Jordanian Monarch's visit to Oman.



Jordanian King leaves Oman after 2-day visit



MUSCAT: King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Queen Rania Al Abdullah and their accompanying delegation, left Muscat on Tuesday after an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

They were seen off at the Royal Airport by HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan.

HH Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs; Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister

of the Diwan of Royal Court; Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office; Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidy, Minister of Interior; Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister (Head of the Mission of Honour); Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education (Escort of the Queen); Shaikh Hilal bin Marhoon al Ma'amari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan; Amjad al Qahaiwi, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman; members of the Jordanian Embassy

in Muscat; and members of the mission of honour were present at the airport to see off the guest.

During the visit, the Jordanian monarch was accompanied by an official delegation comprised Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince of Jordan; Dr Bisher al Khasawneh, Prime Minister; Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jaafar Hassan, Director of the King's Office, Amjad al Qahaiwi, Ambassador of Jordan to Oman, and several officials. — ONA



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‘Museum highlights Oman’s heritage’



MUSCAT: King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Queen Rania Al Abdullah, and Prince Al Hussein Ibn Abdullah II, Crown Prince, visited the National Museum on Wednesday.

This took place as part of the official visit of the Jordanian Monarch to the Sultanate of Oman.

King Abdullah II was greeted upon his arrival at the museum by Jamal al Moosawi, Secretary-General of the National Museum.

The King and his accompanying delegation toured the museum and its galleries, which highlight the cultural heritage of the Sultanate of Oman, since the beginning of civilisation in Oman to the present day. Those galleries include the Land and People Gallery, the Timeline Gallery, the Prehistoric Gallery and Oman and the World Gallery.

The guests were briefed on a number of Jordanian artefacts displayed in the upper arcade of the museum, including 12 Islamic coins dating from the period (70-913 AH/ 689-1507 CE), gifted by the late King Al Hussein bin Talal of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

The guests visited the corner dedicated to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said in the Renaissance Gallery where the original letter No (1) of the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said addressed to members of the Royal Family Council through the Defence Council is displayed, as well as Royal collections, most notably a piece of an architectural mural from inside the holy Al Aqsa Mosque, presented to the late Sultan Qaboos bin Said by King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

The Jordanian King signed the visitor's book saying: "We are pleased to express our great admiration of the National Museum, which represents the cultural heritage of the Sultanate of Oman. The museum highlights in an innovative way the heritage treasures of the Sultanate of Oman and its civilisations. We extend our deepest gratitude to this astounding cultural edifice and we pray to the Almighty Allah to grant the Sultanate of Oman, its leadership and people progress and prosperity."

— ONA

Oman, Jordan agree to boost investments

FROM PAGE 1

which provides for the establishment of a sovereign, independent Palestinian State, on June 4, 1967 lines, with East Jerusalem as its capital-and on charters of international legitimacy and the Arab Peace Initiative.

"His Majesty Sultan Haitham underscored the Hashemite Custody of Islamic and Christian Sanctities in Al Quds (Jerusalem) and its significant role in protecting those sanctities, their identity and their historical and legal status."

At the conclusion of the visit, His Majesty King Abdullah II expressed his appreciation and thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Omani government and people for the warm reception and hospitality. He wished the Sultanate of Oman further progress and prosperity under its wise leadership. He also invited His Majesty the Sultan to visit the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan — an invitation that His Majesty the Sultan welcomed with pleasure." — ONA



King Abdullah praises House of Musical Arts

MUSCAT: King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan visited the House of Musical Arts at the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) on Wednesday. The Jordanian Monarch went on tour of the edifice and listened to a briefing about its facilities. He took note of the Nature Gallery, the Science Gallery, the Musical Performance Gallery and galleries designated for showcasing musical instruments, outlining their roles, history of evolution, and the services they render to the House of Musical Arts.

The King watched a short documentary about the impact of music in unifying nations. During the tour, King Abdullah II also observed the edifice's architectural luxuriance that marks its designs, which portray how Oman's cultural and architectural heritage blends with global architectural culture.

To mark the Jordanian Monarch's visit



to the ROHM, two steel bands put in a musical show, to the accompaniment of the Royal Guard of Oman's band. At the conclusion of the visit, King Abdullah II of Jordan signed the Senior State Visitors Book, expressing delight and admiration at ROHM, which he described as a distinguished podium for exchanging

cultural and artistic heritage among nations. He wrote down the following words: "Culture and Art always played a major role in spreading awareness, depicting human sense and extending bridges of love and peace among nations. This edifice incarnates the progress and prosperity of the Sultanate of Oman."





Fahd receives Jordanian Prime Minister



PHOTOS BY MOHAMED AL RASHDI

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received Dr Bisher al Khasawneh, Prime Minister of Jordan, in Muscat on Wednesday. The meeting came within the framework of the official visit of King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman.

HH Sayyid Fahd welcomed

the Jordanian Prime Minister and wished the relations between both countries further development and growth. They expressed their keenness on exploring prospects of cooperation in various fields. They also reviewed several regional and international matters and touched on the efforts exerted to spread peace and stability in the region. HH Sayyid Fahd underscored the importance of the Jordanian

The meeting explored prospects of cooperation in various fields. They also reviewed several regional and international matters and touched on the efforts exerted to spread peace and stability in the region

monarch's visit to Oman and the positive impact it will have in serving mutual interests.

On his turn, the Jordanian Prime Minister reiterated the positive impact of the King's visit to Oman in terms of exchanging views on various matters of common interest. He also lauded Oman's supportive stance in regional issues and its balanced relations with the whole world.

Oman, Al Khasawneh

added, is a trusted country that is respected by all. Al Khasawneh also applauded the development made in Oman which covers various fields. The meeting was attended from the Omani side by Shaikh Al Fadhil bin Mohammed al Harthy, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers; Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy; Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry

and Investment Promotion; Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority (OIA); and Shaikh Hilal bin Marhoun al Maamri, Ambassador of Oman to Jordan.

It was attended from the Jordanian side by Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates; and Amjad al Qahawi, Ambassador of Jordan to Oman. — ONA



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, met Ayman Safadi, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister with Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, at Al Alam Palace on Wednesday.

— ONA

Oman, Jordan sign seven MoUs, two executive programmes

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan signed seven Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and two executive programmes on various areas. The agreements come within the context of the current official visit of King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman.

The agreements were signed by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, and Ayman Safadi, Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, at Al Alam Palace on Wednesday.

The first MoU was signed between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Jordanian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply in the field of industrial cooperation.

The second MoU was also signed between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and the Jordanian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply in the field of competition protection and

monopoly prevention.

The third MoU was signed between the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and the Jordanian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources in the field of mining.

The fourth MoU was signed between the Ministry of Labour and the Jordanian Ministry of Labour. As per the MoU, the two sides will work to enhance and develop cooperation between them on the basis of mutual interests and investing in human capital.

The fifth MoU was signed between the National Records and Archives Authority and the Royal Jordanian Hashemite Documentation Centre in the field of historical documentation and management of documents and archives.

The sixth MoU was signed between the Capital Market Authority and the Central Bank of Jordan in the field of information exchange and supervision of the insurance sector.

The seventh MoU was signed between the Consumer Protection

Authority and the Jordanian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply in the field of consumer protection.

As for the executive programmes, the first one was signed in the field of higher education, research and innovation for the years "2023-2024-2025", while the second one was on tourism cooperation for the years "2023-2026".

Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates in Jordan, said that Oman and Jordan signing of memoranda of understanding and executive programmes reflects the keenness of the two countries' leaders on taking practical steps towards consolidating cooperation.

On his turn, Foreign Minister Sayyid Badr underscored "the central role of the private sector in enhancing economy". This, he said, could be achieved through partnerships in investment fields, thanks to an abundance of opportunities in both countries.

— ONA

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HM greets President of Egypt

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Abdul Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on 6th of October Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President el Sisi. His Majesty also wished the people of Egypt further development and growth.

—ONA

Paid parking in Nizwa Central Market begins

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, OCT. 5

Paid parking in Nizwa Central Market will start on Thursday, Al Dakhiliyah Municipality said. It will cover parking areas near Nizwa Mosque, Islamic Culture memorial, Al Sulaimani gold store, Oman Post Office building and Modern Oman Bakery.

This is aimed at the optimal use of space due to the rising number of vehicles and to avoid traffic disruptions from improper parking.

The fees will be charged in two slots daily -- from 7 am to 1 pm and from 4 pm to 9 pm on Saturdays and Thursdays. As for Fridays and

official holidays, it is from 7 to 11 am and from 4 to 9 pm.

It is possible to book slots through the short message service (SMS) containing the vehicle's plate number, space plate code, space time required in minutes (30,60,120) to 92991.

The company managing the parking lots states that the reservation service will be available through the MAWQIFI app and the website.

The system will send a reminder 10 minutes before the reserved time expires. If the user wants to extend the time, s/he has to send another message to 90091 and repeat the same steps.

US praises Oman's peace making in Yemen

MUSCAT: The United States valued the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik in backing peace process in Yemen.

Tim Lenderking, US Special Envoy for Yemen, said the US is in constant communication and consultation with the Omani government in a bid to support security and stability of Yemen.

He asserted that his country highly appreciates the benign Omani endeavours and keenness to forge a peaceful solution to the Yemeni crisis.

The US Envoy referred to the recent phone call between Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister,

and his US counterpart, Antony Blinken, during which they discussed joint efforts to enhance security and support dialogue between the warring parties in Yemen.

As for the truce in Yemen, Tim Lenderking explained that the exaggeration of demands prevented a decision to extend the truce. He urges all Yemeni parties to make more concessions and place the interest of Yemen and its people above all else.

He stressed that the diplomatic approach adopted by the UN, the US and the international community will continue in Yemen to reach a political solution to this crisis. — ONA

Knowledge Oman to hold seminar on women in sustainability



MUSCAT: To mark Omani Women's Day, Knowledge Oman, the leading-knowledge sharing in the Sultanate of Oman, is all set to host a seminar under the theme, "Women: The Pulse of a Sustainable Society", in recognition of Omani women and their contribution to the growth of a sustainable Oman. The event is the first live, face-to-face seminar since the organisation went online with webinars during the Covid-19 pandemic. The event will take place at Muscat University on October 12.

The seminar will highlight the important role the Omani women play in shaping the Sultanate of Oman and contributing to building a prosperous and

sustainable society. Omani women from different fields of expertise that includes entrepreneurship, technology, psychology, legal, sports, private and public sector will participate in the event. The seminar will celebrate the achievements of the women and acknowledge the challenges faced in shaping them into who they are today.

Distinguished panelists and speakers include Dr Lamiya Al Haj, associate professor at Sultan Qaboos University, Dr Amal Ambusaidi, senior consultant psychiatrist, Zuwaina al Rashdi, CEO at World of Handicrafts, Safiya al Bahlani, CEO Safiya Arts Gallery, Reem al Zadjali, founder of Reem Al Zadjali Lawyers and Legal Consultants, and Fatma al Nabhani, tennis player. The event will be inaugurated by HH Sayyida Basma al Said, founder of Whispers of Serenity Clinic.

"On the occasion of the Omani Women's Day, we at Knowledge Oman are

pleased to host this public free event that highlights the important role the Omani women contribute to the development of the economy and how women play an integral role in growth of our beautiful country," said Balqees al Hassani, President of Knowledge Oman.

Since its inception in 2008, Knowledge Oman has recognised and highlighted the contributions of women in Oman by giving them important roles through which they may contribute towards the organisation and society.

The multi-diverse organisation has had women from various cultural backgrounds serve as key members. It has recently announced its first female Chairperson, Dr Yasmeen al Balushi, who took on the role from the organisation's founder, Tariq al Barwani. Balqees al Hassani, the current running president, has led the platform along with other local and expat community of women since 2018. Registration is mandatory at www.knowledgeoman.com

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Any Clarification, you may contact via
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Under-Secretary receives delegation

Muscat: Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthi, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, received Brigadier Mohammed Ahadi, Head of the Iranian side in the Omani-Iranian Military Friendship Joint Committee, in Muscat on Wednesday. They discussed several matters of mutual interest within the framework of the Omani-Iranian Military Friendship Joint Committee mission. The meeting was attended by Brigadier Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Manthari, Assistant Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) for Operations and Planning, Head of the Omani side in the committee. It was also attended by Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA

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US, South Korea fire missiles in response to N Korean launch

SEOUL: The United States and South Korea fired projectiles on Wednesday in response to North Korea's latest missile test a day earlier, as they sought to make a point about their ability to deter any aggression from Pyongyang.

The South Korean military said the US and South Korea fired four surface-to-surface missiles toward the Sea of Japan, or East Sea, in response to North Korea's provocation.

Each side fired two missiles which accurately hit mock targets and demonstrated the allies' capability to deter further provocations, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said.

North Korea launched a medium-range ballistic missile that flew eastward over Japan's archipelago on Tuesday, marking the latest in a series of tests by Pyongyang as tensions rise in the region. The US and Nato strongly condemned the North Korean test.

It was the first time in nearly five years that a North Korean missile had flown over the Japanese archipelago. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida called the launch "outrageous."

South Korean forces immediately responded on Tuesday by dropping two precision bombs from a F-15K fighter jet over the uninhabited island of Jikdo to the west of the Korean Peninsula, according to Yonhap.

The Yellow Sea is bordered by China and the Korean Peninsula.

South Korea's also military fired a Hyunmoo-2C short-range



A surface-to-surface missile is fired into the sea off the east coast provided by the Defence Ministry, South Korea. – Reuters



Japan's Prime Minister Fumio Kishida makes a statement protesting North Korea's ballistic missile launches at the Diet. – AFP

ballistic missile toward the East Sea overnight, but the missile flew erratically right after take-off and ended up crashing on its own base in the east coast city of Gangneung.

It was the first time in nearly five years that a North Korean missile had flown over the Japanese archipelago

The crash sparked a fire to the missile's fuel, but its warhead did not explode and no one was hurt. Still, residents in the area spent the night concerned due to the bright flashes and loud roar from the crash.

The move was criticised by lawmakers from South Korea's main opposition Democratic Party (DP), which decried what it called a "security vacuum" in

the government of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, Yonhap news agency reported.

Citing the joint chiefs, the South Korean agency also reported that the United States is once again sending an aircraft carrier to the waters east of the Korean peninsula in view of the tense situation.

The "unusual" return of the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier USS Ronald Reagan was intended to demonstrate the allies' readiness for defence, it said.

Most recently, the ship arrived there for a naval manoeuvre with South Korea in September for its first visit in almost four years.

— dpa

WHO probing Indian cough syrup after 66 children die in Gambia

GENEVA: The World Health Organization (WHO) issued an alert Wednesday over four cough and cold syrups made by Maiden Pharmaceuticals in India, warning they could be linked to the deaths of 66 children in The Gambia.

The UN health agency also cautioned that the contaminated medications may have been distributed outside of the West African country, with global exposure "possible." WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters that the four cold and cough syrups in question "have been potentially linked with acute kidney injuries and 66 deaths among children."

"The loss of these young lives is beyond heartbreaking for their families," Tedros said that WHO was also "conducting further investigation with the company and regulatory authorities in India."

According to the medical product alert issued by WHO, the four products are Promethazine Oral Solution, Kofexmalin Baby Cough Syrup, Makoff Baby Cough Syrup and Magrip N Cold Syrup.

"To date, the stated manufacturer has not provided guarantees to WHO on the safety and quality of these products," the alert said, adding that laboratory analysis of samples of the products "confirms that they contain unacceptable amounts of



diethylene glycol and ethylene glycol as contaminants."

Those substances are toxic to humans and can be fatal, it said, adding that the toxic effect "can include abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, inability to pass urine, headache, altered mental state and acute kidney injury which may lead to death." The Gambia's health ministry asked hospitals last month to stop using a syrup paracetamol, pending the outcome of an investigation, after at least 28 children died of kidney failure.

WHO said that information received from India's Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation indicated that the manufacturer had only supplied the contaminated medications to The Gambia.

"However, the supply of these products through informal or unregulated markets to other countries in Africa, cannot be ruled out," the UN agency said in an email.

— AFP

Yemen's UN envoy pushing for peace deal after truce ends

AMMAN: Yemen's warring parties should revive efforts for a broader deal to end its devastating seven-year conflict, the country's top United Nations envoy said on Tuesday after failed efforts to renew a truce deal on Sunday.

The UN special envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg said in Amman that this is a particularly sensitive period of time in Yemen. "Any small incident could spark something that could have devastating consequences."

"Luckily we have not seen a military escalation and this is so far so good," he added.

Grundberg said late on Sunday he would continue pushing for an extended and expanded deal



United Nations special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg in Amman, Jordan. – Reuters

between a coalition and the Ansar Allah group, both under

intense international pressure to come to an agreement. The initial

two-month truce was agreed in April and renewed twice despite grievances by both sides over its implementation.

"So I would urge all sides to exercise restraint and allow discussions that we have ongoing to bear fruit and... move Yemen out of the violence we have seen for the last seven years," Grundberg said.

He added the two sides failed to renew the truce because they were still far away on the latest UN-brokered proposals to pay civil service wages, increase fuel shipments, add air flights, open roads and expand military de-escalation.

A particular sticking point

was a mechanism for paying civil servants that would benefit all Yemenis and alleviate their worsening economic plight, he added.

"It's complicated. It's one that has been on the table and the parties have wanted a resolution for a long period of time," Grundberg added.

An expanded deal was crucial to build on progress that delivered more fuel shipments for the first time in years from the main Red Sea port of Hodeidah held by Ansar Allah and allowed commercial air flights to resume for over 26,000 passengers to and from Sanaa airport, Grundberg added.

"There has been progress here and we have the possibility of capitalising on this progress," he added.

The truce had led to a significant reduction of violence in a conflict that aid workers and officials say has killed tens of thousands, devastated the economy and left millions hungry.

Grundberg said civilian and military casualties have gone down, which is an important first step.

"This is not a small achievement," he said.

The UN special envoy said the war-torn country could ill afford a continuation of a devastating conflict.— Reuters

SHORT TAKES

NEW DELHI

10 dead after Himalayas avalanche hits climbers

Ten people are confirmed dead after an avalanche struck climbers in the Indian Himalayas, police said on Wednesday, with 18 other members of the expedition still missing.

Several dozen climbing trainees were caught in the snowslide near the summit of Mount Draupadi ka Danda-II in the northern state of Uttarakhand. The Indian air force and local disaster agency were assisting with rescue efforts before heavy snow and rainfall



forced them to abandon the search overnight. "Rescue teams have recovered 10 bodies," the Uttarakhand state police force said on Twitter after operations resumed in the morning. — AFP

PHNOM PENH

Myanmar leader not invited to Asean summit

Myanmar's junta leader has not been invited to a regional summit next month, host Cambodia said in a fresh diplomatic snub for the isolated military regime.

The Asean has led diplomatic efforts to resolve the turmoil that has gripped Myanmar since the military seized power last year.

Linking the invitation to "progress in the implementation of the Five-Point Consensus", a Cambodian foreign ministry spokesman said the junta had been invited to "nominate a



non-political representative for the upcoming Asean Summits."

This means junta chief Min Aung Hlaing would not be allowed to attend the meeting.

— AFP

BEIRUT

Lebanese lawmaker demands frozen funds

A Lebanese lawmaker is holed up at her bank in northern Beirut, demanding some of her deposits be freed up so she can pay for surgery needed by the end of the week.

This is the latest instance of Lebanese fighting to get into their bank accounts.

Cynthia Zarazir, who was elected to parliament in May, was unarmed as she entered Byblos Bank in Antelias, demanding about \$8,500 from her frozen savings for her upcoming



surgery.

Banks in Lebanon have applied strict withdrawal limits on foreign currency assets since 2019, amid a historic economic crisis. — dpa



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In brief

■ COPENHAGEN



TIGHT RACE SEEN AS DENMARK CALLS NOV ELECTION

Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen called an early general election for November 1, with her left-wing bloc neck and neck in the polls against the right and far right. "I have today informed the queen that elections to the Folketing (parliament) will be held," the Social Democratic leader told a press conference. Frederiksen had to call elections by June 2023, under the Danish system. But she had faced an ultimatum from a small party propping up her minority government demanding that she call elections before parliament's first debate on October 6 after reconvening from the summer break on Tuesday. — **AFP**

■ LONDON



UK RAIL WORKERS STAGE LATEST STRIKE OVER PAY

Train travel in Britain was disrupted on Wednesday by the latest in a string of strikes by railway workers over wages. Picket lines appeared at stations including London's Kings Cross and Euston as workers from the Aslef and TSSA trade unions and thousands of drivers walked out. The strike affected around a dozen rail companies. Railway workers are demanding wage increases to keep pace with decades-high inflation amid a cost-of-living crisis. The sector has spearheaded a wave of industrial action in recent months. Tens of thousands of staff in various industries have also gone on strike across Britain. — **AFP**

■ GENEVA



UGANDA EBOLA OUTBREAK DEATH TOLL UP TO 29

Sixty-three confirmed and probable cases have been reported in the Ebola outbreak in Uganda, including 29 deaths, the World Health Organization said. WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the vaccines used to curb recent outbreaks in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo were not effective against the type of Ebola virus circulating in Uganda. And he said the Uganda outbreak was taking a toll on health workers. "So far, 63 confirmed and probable cases have been reported, including 29 deaths," Tedros told a press conference in Geneva. — **AFP**

Putin formalises Ukraine annexations

KYIV: President Vladimir Putin formally incorporated four partially-occupied Ukrainian regions into Russia on Wednesday, a move Kyiv condemned as a meaningless land grab dreamt up by "a collective madhouse".

Pushing ahead with Europe's biggest annexation since World War Two, Putin signed off on a law annexing up to 18 per cent of Ukraine, some of which Moscow's forces do not control.

Including Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014, Moscow is laying claim to almost a quarter of Ukraine, though it has yet to spell out where all of the borders will be located and its own troops have been forced to retreat on two fronts.

The Russian leader's signature was the final stage in the legal process to annex Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine and Zaporizhzhia and Kherson in the south. He later said Russia would stabilise the situation there, an indirect acknowledgment of the challenges it faces to assert its control.

Kyiv says it will never accept an illegal imperial-style land grab and has recaptured hundreds of square miles of its own territory in recent weeks.

Andriy Yermak, head of Ukraine's presidential office, said on Telegram that what Russia was doing reminded him of a "collective madhouse".

"Worthless decisions by a terrorist country are not worth the paper they are signed on," he said.

With even Russian state



Russian President Vladimir Putin talks to participants of a teachers' competition at the Novo-Ogaryovo state residence outside Moscow. — **AFP**

TV hosts showing signs of despondency at the battlefield losses, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov dismissed the idea that they undermined the annexation of the regions.

"They will be with Russia forever and they (ceded land in the new territories) will be returned", a defiant Peskov told reporters.

A map published by the state RIA news agency suggested Russia wants big chunks of Ukraine under the control of the Ukrainian army which has been rapidly advancing in the east, and which this week made a breakthrough in the south too.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday night that his military had taken back dozens of towns in regions in the south and east that Russia has declared annexed.

Reuters could not independently verify his statements.

"This week alone, since the Russian pseudo-referendum,



A member of the Ukrainian National Guard prepares a D-30 howitzer towards Russian troops, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Kharkiv region, Ukraine. — **Reuters**

dozens of population centres have been liberated. These are in Kherson, Kharkiv, Luhansk and Donetsk regions all together," Zelensky said.

Moscow moved ahead with its annexation plan after holding what it called referendums over several days from September 23 - votes that were denounced by Kyiv and Western governments as illegal and coercive.

The European Union agreed a new package of sanctions on Wednesday to punish Russia for the annexation plan. The measures include more restrictions in trade with Russia in steel and tech

Zelenskiy says Ukraine retakes territory in rapid advance as Moscow maps show shrinking controlled areas. Russian forces dig in to try to stem Ukraine advance

products, and an oil price cap for Russian seaborne crude deliveries through European insurers to align the bloc with Washington.

Zelensky earlier met Ukraine's top military officials to discuss

their next steps, including to counter new types of weapons used by Russia, a probable reference to Iranian-made drones. The Ukrainian air force said 12 drones had attacked from the south overnight, six of which had been shot down.

Moscow, which has cut gas supplies to Europe blaming Western sanctions and technical difficulties, has started withdrawing gas from the Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Germany, which never entered into service due to East-West tensions, and redirecting it to Russia, Denmark said. — **Reuters**



Meldal, Sharpless and Bertozzi share the Nobel prize.

US duo and Dane win Nobel for 'click chemistry'

STOCKHOLM: A trio of chemists from the United States and Denmark who laid the foundation for a more functional form of chemistry where molecules are snapped together on Wednesday won the Nobel Chemistry Prize.

Americans Carolyn Bertozzi and Barry Sharpless, together with Denmark's Morten Meldal, were honoured "for the development of click chemistry and bioorthogonal chemistry", the jury said.

Bertozzi is the only woman among the seven Nobel laureates honoured so far this year, with women vastly under-represented in the history of the prizes, especially in the science disciplines.

The award marks the second Nobel for 81-year-old Sharpless, who won the chemistry Nobel in 2001.

Only four other individuals have achieved the feat of winning two Nobel Prizes, including Polish-born Frenchwoman Marie Curie, who won the chemistry prize in 1911 after first winning

the physics prize in 1903. She was followed by American Linus Pauling who won for chemistry in 1954 and peace in 1962.

American John Bardeen won the physics prize in 1956 and 1972, and Britain's Frederick Sanger won the chemistry prize in 1958 and 1980.

Click chemistry "is an elegant and efficient chemical reaction that is now in widespread use," the jury said in a statement.

"Among many other uses, it is utilised in the development of pharmaceuticals, for mapping DNA and creating materials that are more fit for purpose," it added.

Sharpless, a professor at Scripps Research in California, "started the ball rolling" and "coined the concept of click chemistry" around 2000, the jury said. Afterwards, Sharpless and Meldal, a professor of chemistry at the University of Copenhagen, "independently of each other, presented what is now the crown jewel of click chemistry: the copper catalysed azide-alkyne cycloaddition". — **AFP**

Amid Ukraine war, US set to fly Russian cosmonaut to ISS

WASHINGTON: The United States will on Wednesday carry a Russian to the International Space Station aboard a SpaceX ship, in a voyage that carries symbolic significance amid the Ukraine war.

Anna Kikina, the only female cosmonaut in service, is part of the Crew-5 mission, which also includes one Japanese and two American astronauts.

Blast-off is set for noon from the Kennedy Space Center, with the weather forecast so far promising.

Two weeks ago, an American astronaut took off on a Russian Soyuz rocket for the orbital platform.

The long-planned astronaut exchange programme has been maintained despite soaring tensions between the two countries since Moscow's invasion of Ukraine in February.

Ensuring the operation of the ISS has become one of the few remaining areas of cooperation between the United States and Russia.

"When you each are flying other's crew members, you know that you have a huge responsibility that you're promising to the other country," Nasa associate administrator Kathy Lueders told reporters in a recent press conference.

"At a working level, we really appreciated the constancy in the relationship, even during some really, really tough times geopolitically"

Kikina, 38 and an engineer



Russian cosmonaut Anna Kikina, Nasa astronaut Josh Cassada, Nasa astronaut Nicole Mann, and Japanese astronaut Koichi Wakata at the launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket in Florida. — **AFP**

by training, will become the fifth Russian female professional cosmonaut to go into space.

"I hope in the near future we have more women in the cosmonaut corps," the Novosibirsk native said in August.

The Soviet Union put the first woman in space, Valentina Tereshkova, in 1963, nearly 20 years before the first American woman Sally Ride.

Since then, America has flown dozens more women.

It will also be the first spaceflight for American astronauts Nicole Mann and Josh Cassada, but the fifth for Japan's Koichi Wakata.

After a journey of about 30 hours, their ship will dock with the station on Thursday, ready

to begin a five-month science mission and relieve the four members of Crew-4, who will stay a few days for handover. Crew-5's arrival will bring the total number of astronauts on the ISS to 11, including two other Russians and an American who arrived on the recent Soyuz.

Kikina will be the first Russian to fly with Elon Musk's SpaceX which, along with Boeing, has a "taxi service" contract with Nasa. Musk himself waded into the conflict on Thursday by proposing a peace deal that involved re-running, under UN supervision, annexation referendums in Moscow-occupied regions of Ukraine and acknowledging Russian sovereignty over the Crimean peninsula. — **AFP**

To speak to a human, press one!



Khalid Alsafi Al Huraibi
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The writer is an entrepreneur and innovation adviser

The more I observe how important it is to be connected to the Internet the more I believe we need to invest in developing our own AI Bill of Rights.

The online world has facilitated many blessings for us; we use it to communicate with our loved ones, we order our ration, rides and much more through it, not to mention how it gives us access to an ever-increasing number of public and private services.

It has also facilitated for us doing good through crowdfunding and crowdsourcing.

On the other hand, in several cases blessings left inappropriately appreciated and checks may turn into curses, as in the case of our overuse of social media.

ArtificialIntelligence,commonly abbreviated as AI, which means

machine intelligence as opposed to human or animal intelligence, has enabled us to automate systems at an unprecedented speed and convenience.

This would not be possible without these automated systems harnessing our personal and business data into algorithms that solve problems.

Today, the question is how can we develop these automated systems in a way that is humane, effective and private through a set of rules of a Bill of Rights?

TO SPEAK TO A HUMAN, PRESS ONE!

How many times have you waited on the line for an automated system to solve a service issue that would have taken a fellow human being a few moments?

WE NEED TO ESTABLISH THE RIGHT TO SPEAK TO A HUMAN BEING, ESPECIALLY WHEN THE ISSUE REQUIRES FAIR TREATMENT, EMPATHY AND CONSIDERATION

As we access our justice, education, health, housing, telecommunications and power services increasingly through web and mobile applications, we need to establish the right to speak to a human being, especially when the issue requires fair treatment, empathy and consideration.

Otherwise, our world would be on a slippery slope towards situations where life and death decisions related to ourselves and our loved ones would be taken by automated systems who have less understanding of the full picture of the impact of their decisions than a seasoned human being.

SAFETY FIRST

Warnings and red flags about risks of harmful data preaches are more common today because of the terabytes of data about each one of us in servers and clouds all over the world.

Loose data could be an invitation for ill-meaning individuals and organisations around the world who chose harming and endangering others as a way of life. We automated systems that are

developed in a way to prevent, mitigate and eliminate risks and dangers lurking around the web.

PRIVACY AND SURVEILLANCE

Unreasonable surveillance is a community’s worst nightmare; it corners you between leading a normal life and giving up your privacy, potentially to be used against.

To mitigate all the above risks, we should nudge all developers towards considering algorithmic justice.

We have rules for many blessings from mobility and driving to relationships, and how we build things; so why not adopt rules for automated systems, or an AI Bill of Rights that make our life much more humane, safer and effective?

Questions hang over European community summit

CHRISTIAN SPILLMANN

A chance to bring the continent together in the face of Russian aggression or an empty talking shop of squabbling rivals?

There are major questions over the prospects — and purpose — of the “European Political Community” summit being launched in Prague on Thursday.

The one-day gathering — a brainchild of French President Emmanuel Macron — will bring together the 27 European Union leaders with those from the broader neighbourhood, including Britain, Turkey and Ukraine.

Brussels has billed the initiative as an invaluable “platform for political coordination” among the disparate grouping of 44 nations invited.

But there are deep disagreements — and even open conflict — among some of those attending and scepticism that the one-day event will turn out to be much more than a glorified photo opportunity.

Russia, which is not invited, will loom over the meeting as discussions focus on the economic and security fallout from its war against its pro-Western neighbour.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky — currently overseeing a counter-offensive against Moscow’s forces — will connect via video link from Kyiv. His prime minister will stand in for him at the talks. “The ambition is to bring leaders together on an equal footing and to foster political dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest so that, together, we work on strengthening the security, stability and prosperity of Europe as a whole,” EU chief Charles Michel said in his invitation letter.

Those set to gather in the historic Prague Castle also include the leaders of Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia, Georgia, Iceland, Kosovo, Lichtenstein, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia and Switzerland.

EU officials have insisted that preparatory meetings showed there was “lots of interest” in the event from the countries invited.

But even one of those organising the summit said there were doubts over its “added value”.

Within the bloc there are questions over the usefulness of an enterprise some see as a vanity project for Macron, with diplomats saying powerhouse Germany had expressed reservations.

“We will see if it works. Maybe it’s a bad idea, or maybe it answers a real need for cooperation and then we have to make it more structured,” said one EU diplomat. — AFP

Sweden is back in the fight



Helene Cooper

The writer is a Pentagon correspondent for NYT

The last time this famously neutral country went to war, Napoleon was on the back foot in France, and Britain was preparing to burn Washington.

But Russia’s attack of Ukraine has upended 200 years of global pacifism for the children of the Vikings.

And so it was that as President Vladimir Putin of Russia issued veiled threats late last month about unleashing nuclear war, the United States was holding military exercises with Sweden, one of Nato’s most recent applicants.

While the war raged in Ukraine, hundreds of Marines joined their Swedish counterparts for maneuvers in the Baltic Sea, on and around some of Sweden’s 100,000 mostly uninhabited islands.

In the cold rain and under heavy fire, they scrambled up slippery rocks, landed combat boats on shores and crawled on their bellies through forested ravines.

On the island of Uto, which Russia attacked in 1719, American and Swedish marines spent two weeks launching round after round of artillery as part of their training to make sure the past does not repeat itself. (The Russians burned the place to cinders, leaving only a church steeple in one village.)

For the Americans, this is somewhat new territory. After 20 years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the maneuvers required for combat in the Baltic Sea represent a crash course in amphibious warfare, including diving into frigid waters while clad in heavy gear and carrying machine guns.

It means learning how to remain underwater for long periods of time before emerging in a burst of attacking machine gunfire.

“It is definitely a different type of environment than Afghanistan or Iraq, where we are very vehicular-mobile,” said Brig Gen Andrew Priddy, the commander of the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

From a wet and windy hilltop on the island of Lilla Skogsskar, Priddy kept watch as US and Swedish marines stormed the beaches of nearby Stora Skogsskar.

“Being able to operate in this kind of environment in the archipelago is extremely important, and we as a Marine Corps have a lot to learn from



Swedish Marines fire a mortar during joint military exercises with US Marines on the island of Uto, which Russia invaded in 1719.

them,” he said of the Swedes.

This is somewhat new territory for Sweden as well.

The terrain may be familiar, but war is not — not for this generation, or their parents’ generation, or their grandparents’ or great-grandparents’ generations.

FOR 200 YEARS, SWEDEN MAINTAINED A NONALIGNED FOREIGN POLICY DURING TIMES OF PEACE AND PROCLAIMED ITSELF NEUTRAL DURING TIMES OF WAR

The country’s last war was in 1814, when it pried Norway loose from the Danes. For 200 years, Sweden maintained a nonaligned foreign policy during times of peace and proclaimed itself neutral during times of war. Sweden avoided World War II, sparing itself the German occupation that Norway endured and the Soviet invasion suffered by the Finns.

During the Cold War, Sweden continued its neutral path.

The country sent troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations around the world and even to

Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks in the United States but declined to join Nato.

And then February 24, 2022, happened. The Russian war of Ukraine brought into sharp relief the limitations of being in Europe but not having the security guarantees of Nato’s collective defence pact.

The Finns — dragging the Swedes with them — applied for membership in the alliance.

“Military nonalignment has served Sweden well, but our conclusion is that it won’t serve us equally well in the future,” Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson of Sweden said at the time. “This is not a decision to be taken lightly.”

Within weeks of the announcements that the two countries wanted to join Nato, alliance military planners were scheduling shows of force with them, including a host of exercises.

In fact, as the Marines, most of them from the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, were in the Swedish archipelago, another group of Marines was practicing island seizures with the Finnish navy.

“We are sending a message to mostly Russia that we have partners, we are training, we are building up our capacity and the capability,” said Col Adam Camel, commander of the Swedish navy’s 1st marine regiment.

“We are united, I would say, and very eager to defend Sweden as well as this region.” — *New York Times*

London no more calling in Arabic

When the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) announced that it is shutting down its Arabic radio service, it shocked the entire Arab world. The shock and surprise were natural as the bonding between them developed in a period of 84 years.

The broadcaster took similar decision with regard to other several language services due to financial constraints.

But this move will cut 382 jobs to embark on its digital journey as the number of its followers on this platform has multiplied and wants its stronger presence on digital platform.

It is an upheaval felt at every level. One cannot deny that digitalisation of the media is the need of the hour. The news service of BBC is already present on digital platforms in 41 languages.

It is a reality that the BBC Arabic radio is a highly professional news media organisation of the modern day.

It has exhibited professional dexterity in dealing with many international developments of long-term implications. It was a role model for many others.

Recently it has started reducing the size of its team in various languages working for it from London. It has every right to decide its strategy to continue in the environment of changes in technology and reach out to more and more of its viewers and listeners.

At the same time, it has also strengthened its digital content to be more attractive for its audience. Instead of beating the same track, it has emerged as the most innovative and creative in production of its contents.

Liliane Landor, Director of the BBC World Service, has clearly declared that in this changed world this decision was a must. The people of Britain paid 500 million pounds annually for 84 years. This is how the BBC maintained its independence, integrity and reliability. This gave value to Britain as well.



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IT IS A REALITY THAT THE BBC ARABIC RADIO IS A HIGHLY PROFESSIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATION OF THE MODERN DAY. IT HAS EXHIBITED PROFESSIONAL DEXTERITY IN DEALING WITH MANY INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

This was a long arm of the empire where the sun never set. Its voice in Arabic was heard with respect and attention the same as its English service. It was London calling in Arabic.

The BBC has already shut down many of its language services. Similarly, the voice 'Huna London' (Here is London in Arabic) is lost in oblivion.

There were many who grew listening to this voice every morning and several times in a day. Now, they would feel lost in the absence of what was music to their ears and their window to the world and also to their surroundings in the Arab world.

It is the changing economic and technological environment in the world which has turned the table and taken away the voice from the daily life of many among us.

This is a lesson for many other media houses around us. They should learn from this experience. It is always advice to learn from others' experience, rather than repeating the same experience which was done by others.

The BBC has learnt some lessons. There is hope that it will emerge more attractive for its traditional audience. The transformation to digital transmission is a step which matches with the current economic and digital environments.

We never imagined that due to these constraints Britain would cut its long hands which reached across various continents, particularly to the Arab world. We can call it a tactical pull out from difficult media competition. But it has implications for the rest of the media houses.

They should revisit their strategy to continue in the sphere as major players. There are new rules for media. Those who would not learn it will disappear. The silence of the BBC Arabic radio is a major loss to the world media community as well as the audience.

READY TO FLY



Nasa astronaut Nicole Mann waves as she leaves ahead of the launch of the SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket, carrying the Crew5 Dragon, at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Wednesday. The launch, which is expected today, will begin a six-month expedition on the International Space Station for the crew aboard. – AFP

The Gorbachev diagnosis

The death of Mikhail Gorbachev in August, the last leader of the Soviet Union, sent me back to an extended interview I conducted with him in 2001. Reading the transcript anew, I was struck not only by the clarity of his thinking and the strategy that had motivated him to end the Cold War, but also by his conditional view — even then — of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Putin was the biggest beneficiary of the reform process that Gorbachev started, having gone from ex-KGB agent to president of Russia in just a decade. On Gorbachev's passing, Putin acknowledged the last Soviet leader's "historic" role, but was "too busy" to attend the funeral.

Back in 2001, I began by asking Gorbachev for his diagnosis of what had ailed the Soviet economy. "Our system was so cumbersome," he replied, "that it was not capable of responding to the challenges of the science and technology revolution." He became angry as he recalled that, in the early 1980s, the Soviet leadership that preceded him had planned to establish a commission to "solve the problem. Imagine a country that flies into space, launches Sputniks, creates such a defence system, and it can't resolve minor problem," he groused. "There's no toothpaste, no soap powder, not the basic necessities of life. It was incredible and humiliating to work in such a government."

The Soviet "system of total control" could no longer work, he said, because the people had outgrown it. "We knew what kind of country we had," he recounted. "It was the most militarised, the most centralised, the most rigidly disciplined; it was stuffed with nuclear weapons and other weapons. It was



Daniel Yergin

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A MONTH AFTER GORBACHEV'S DEATH, DEBATES ABOUT HIS LIFE AND LEGACY CONTINUE. A 21-YEAR-OLD INTERVIEW WITH THE FORMER SOVIET LEADER SUGGESTS THAT HE UNDERSTOOD RUSSIA'S PROBLEMS

possible to do things in a way that could have led to civil war and to the destruction of the world."

The route out of the crisis required ending the isolation. "We needed to put an end to the Iron Curtain," said Gorbachev. "We could solve our problems only by cooperating with other countries." That meant changing the nature of international relations and ending "the ideological confrontation" — and particularly the arms race. "We knew very well, if our arsenal and the American arsenal were to be used, we could destroy mankind 1,000 times over."

Gorbachev's reform agenda, which he called glasnost ("openness") and perestroika ("restructuring"), was underpinned by "new thinking" that recognised the world for what it was: interrelated, interdependent, and "becoming

increasingly a single whole." Mutual interdependence meant that "we must act differently ... It was very important for developing our plans, for developing domestic policies and particularly foreign policy."

This dramatic shift in thinking was fundamental to ending the Cold War and reconnecting with the West. But it also led to something that Gorbachev did not anticipate or want: the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Gorbachev detested Boris Yeltsin, who was at the forefront of the breakup and became the first president of the independent Russian Federation. To Gorbachev, Yeltsin was a wrecking ball.

Gorbachev had advocated reforms "aimed at evolutionary change, political change, creating an infrastructure for market economics, creating a legal base,

a legislative base for the market." Given that multiple generations of Soviets had never known markets, he did not think that anyone could "just announce markets" and then expect them to "emerge overnight." Rather, "We believed that it was necessary to have 10-15 years at best."

OWN IDEAS

Yeltsin had his own ideas. As Gorbachev put it, "He broke up the country... He speculated on people's wishes. He said, 'We'll do it within one year; we will conduct very good reforms, very rapid reforms, and in one year we'll begin to grow, and within three or four years we'll be among the three or four most prosperous nations in the world.'"

Gorbachev said he was "amazed at this kind of irresponsible deception of the people." He did not think Russia was ready for such

sudden change. "Yeltsin brought the country to a dead end. Two-thirds of the people live in poverty. We have a shorter life span, greater mortality, the population is decreasing, industrial production is one-half of what it used to be, scientific centres are being destroyed. It's incredible." But, by the time we spoke, Yeltsin had already been succeeded by Putin. I asked Gorbachev how he thought the new president was doing so far. His answer was measured: Putin has a "difficult legacy."

After inheriting "chaos in the economy, in the social sphere, in public policy, in the affairs of the federation, in military matters," Putin's first challenge was to stabilise the country. As of 2001, Gorbachev believed Putin had "done a great deal despite his shortcomings and mistakes... We see that he has made mistakes, but he wants to pull the country out of the crisis, and we see that, too. So, in the West you often criticise Putin without really understanding the context in which he started to act, and how he is acting."

Putin, he explained, "is working on what I feel is the most important problem... a strategy for more than a year or two, for a longer term."

Having met with Putin on several occasions, Gorbachev told me that, "He understands the problem," and that Putin had listened to his suggestions. Putin was "open to cooperation" with Europe, the United States, and others.



Putin was the biggest beneficiary of the reform process that Gorbachev started.

sport

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Liverpool's English defender Trent Alexander-Arnold (2nd L) scores the opening goal from a free kick during Uefa Champions League Group A match against Glasgow Rangers at Anfield in Liverpool, north west England. – AFP

LIVERPOOL EDGE RANGERS

BAYERN, NAPOLI UNDERLINE CREDENTIALS, INTER WIN

PARIS: Liverpool eased to a comfortable 2-0 win in the 'Battle of Britain' against Rangers in the Champions League group games on Tuesday while Napoli underlined their credentials with an impressive 6-1 thrashing of Ajax in Amsterdam.

On a night when a minute's silence was held before every match in tribute to the 131 victims of the Indonesia stadium tragedy, Bayern Munich and Club Brugge also made it three wins from three while Inter edged Barcelona in a tight contest in Milan.

Jurgen Klopp's Liverpool went into their Group A game against the Scottish champions on the back of just three wins in their first nine Premier League and Champions League games of the season.

But they settled quickly when Trent Alexander-Arnold produced a sublime free-kick to put the home side ahead after just seven minutes.

Rangers' 40-year-old goalkeeper Allan McGregor produced some fine saves, including four to deny Darwin Nunez his first goal for Liverpool, to keep his side in the hunt at half-time.

Seven minutes into the second half, however, Leon King's challenge caught the legs of Luis Diaz to give away a penalty.

Mohamed Salah stepped up and struck the ball down the middle as McGregor was unable to repeat the penalty-saving heroics he produced against Napoli.

"It was exactly what we needed. It was a super, solid performance," said Klopp, who switched from his usual 4-3-3 formation to a 4-2-3-1.

"Sometimes you have to change things."

Napoli stay top of Group A after another impressive victory, coming from behind to hammer Ajax 6-1 to take their tally of goals to 13 from three matches.

Mohammed Kudus put the home side ahead in the ninth minute but Luciano Spalletti's side bounced back with first-half goals from Giacomo Raspadori, Giovanni Di Lorenzo and Piotr Zielinski.

Raspadori added his second two minutes after the restart and



Liverpool's Egyptian striker Mohamed Salah (L) vies for the ball against Rangers' English defender Connor Goldson (C) at Anfield in Liverpool. – AFP

Khvicha Kvaratskhelia added the fifth just after the hour.

Ajax's night was made worse when captain Dusan Tadic was sent off after collecting a second yellow card and Giovanni Simeone closed out the win.

'UNSTOPPABLE' BAYERN

Bayern moved to the edge of qualification with a third successive win, thrashing Viktoria Plzen 5-0 in Group C.

"We were calm, we dominated and we were in total control," said Bayern captain and Manuel Neuer.

"When everything is going well, we're almost unstoppable."

German international Leroy Sane struck twice, opening the scoring from distance after seven minutes and adding a second five minutes after the break.

Between Sane's two goals, Serge Gnabry added a second on 13 minutes before Sadio Mane posted



Napoli's Giovanni Simeone (R) celebrates with Hirving Lozano after scoring the sixth goal against Ajax Amsterdam at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam. – AFP

his first Champions League goal for Bayern with number three after 21 minutes.

Substitute Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting came off the bench at half time and added the fifth just before the hour mark.

Hakan Calhanoglu fired Inter Milan to a 1-0 win over Barcelona at the San Siro which took the Italians into second spot in Group C, three points behind Bayern.

Inter had lost five of the previous 10 matches in all competitions but

Turkey midfielder Calhanoglu ended the crisis talk when he lashed in the only goal of the game on the stroke of half-time.

"It was very important today for us, to show something to our fans who are always with us. We showed that we deserved it," said Calhanoglu.

Barcelona boss Xavi Hernandez, however, was left fuming after two key handball decisions went against his team.

The first saw an equaliser ruled out following a pitch review by referee Slavko Vincic for Ansu Fati's handball just before the ball dropped to Pedri to tuck home.

Barca were then denied a stoppage time penalty after VAR officials ruled that Denzel Dumfries did not commit a handball offence despite touching the ball in a very similar way to Fati.

"If you ask me I'm outraged...

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS ON TUESDAY:
GROUP A Ajax (NED) 1 (Kudus 9) Napoli (ITA) 6 (Raspadori 18, 47, Di Lorenzo 33, Zielinski 45, Kvaratskhelia 63, Simeone 81) Liverpool (ENG) 2 (Alexander-Arnold 7, Salah 53-pen) Rangers (SCO) 0
GROUP B Club Brugge (BEL) 2 (Sowah 36, Jutgla 62) Atletico Madrid (ESP) 0 FC Porto (POR) 2 (Sanusi 69, Galeno 86) Bayer Leverkusen (GER) 0
GROUP C Bayern Munich (GER) 5 (Sane 7, 50, Gnabry 13, Mane 21, Choupo-Moting 59) Viktoria Plzen (CZE) 0 Inter Milan (ITA) 1 (Calhanoglu 45+2) Barcelona (ESP) 0
GROUP D Marseille (FRA) 4 (Sanchez 13, Harit 16, Balerdi 28, Mbemba 84) Sporting Lisbon (POR) 1 (Trincao 1) Eintracht Frankfurt (GER) 0 Tottenham Hotspur (ENG) 0

the word is outrage because it makes no sense, it's an injustice," Xavi told reporters.

"I think it's an injustice, I just can't hide it."

Club Brugge also claimed a third successive win to continue their surprise charge towards the next round.

Kamal Sowah and Ferran Jutgla were on target as the Belgian side made short work of Atletico Madrid in Group B.

Atletico had their chances with Antoine Griezmann crashing a penalty off the crossbar. They also had a goal ruled out for offside which added to their frustration.

"It's a very tight group and we will have to fight because we won't get anything for free," said Atletico captain Koke.

Club Brugge top Group B, three points ahead of the other three teams after Porto beat Bayern Leverkusen 2-0 with second half goals from Zaidu and Galeno.

Sporting Lisbon's march in Group D came to a shuddering halt in Marseille where the home side came from a goal down to win 4-1 and get their first win under their belt.

Lisbon still top the group with six points, two ahead of Eintracht Frankfurt and Tottenham Hotspur who played out a goalless draw in Germany. — AFP



Finch finds form to beat Windies

GOLD COAST, Australia: Aaron Finch dropped to four in the batting order and found some confidence-boosting form on Wednesday, hitting 58 to steer Australia to a three-wicket win over the West Indies in the opening Twenty20 international.

The hosts were in trouble when they slumped to 58-5 in the eighth over, but skipper Finch, who usually opens, and Matthew Wade (39 not out) steadied the ship, putting on 69 runs.

Finch fell in the 18th over and the game went to the wire, with Mitchell Starc hitting the winning runs with a ball to spare.

Australia won the toss and sent the West Indies in at Metricon Stadium, with Josh Hazlewood

grabbing 3-35 as the visitors made 145-9. Kyle Mayers top scored with 39, while Odean Smith chipped in 27 crucial late runs after they started strongly but faltered mid-match in the face of quality bowling.

“We were a bit sloppy in the field and with the bat. Lucky to get across the line. We just kept losing wickets. But Wadey the cool head in the end,” said skipper Finch.

“We had to suck up a bit of pressure towards that back end and it would have been nice for me to get the side home, but not to worry we got over the line.”

Australia got off to rousing start with David Warner, returning after missing their recent India tour, crunching 14 off five balls.

But he didn't last, thick edging off Sheldon Cottrell to Brandon King in the slips and it got worse when Mitchell Marsh, also back after missing the India series, was out in the same over.

Cameron Green, who is not in Australia's World Cup squad but had a stellar series in India, opened with Warner instead of Finch, who dropped to four for the first time in a T20 international.

Green made 14 before being bowled by Alzarri Joseph then Glenn Maxwell departed without scoring going for a big hit, as did Tim David soon after to leave Australia in trouble on 58-5.

At the other end, Finch settled into his new role with Wade for company. He brought up his 18th

half-century off 45 balls before he miscued a Joseph ball and Jason Holder took the catch. Pat Cummins followed him to the pavilion, leaving Australia needing 11 off the final over.

Wade hit a boundary off Cottrell's first ball, then was dropped on the next before Starc brought them home.

“Defending 146, we had our chances but we messed it up,” said West Indies skipper Nicholas Pooran. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES

West Indies 145-9 in 20 overs (Kyle Mayers 39, Odean Smith 27; Josh Hazlewood 3-35, Pat Cummins 2-22, Mitchell Starc 2-40) v Australia 146-7 in 19.5 overs (Aaron Finch 58, Matthew Wade 39 not out; Sheldon Cottrell 2-49, Alzarri Joseph 2-17)

Fritz recovers from Covid to oust Duckworth in Tokyo

TOKYO: American Taylor Fritz said he surprised even himself after climbing out of his sickbed, flying to Tokyo and beating Australian James Duckworth at the Japan Open on Wednesday.

Fritz spent seven days in quarantine in a Seoul hotel room after getting “pretty sick” upon arriving last week for the Korea Open, which he was forced to withdraw from.

The 24-year-old left South Korea and flew to Japan on Wednesday morning and barely had time to practise before he was due on court for his first-round match against the unseeded Duckworth.

The number three seed still emerged a 6-2, 6-7 (2/7), 6-1 winner and said the match had been “better than I thought it would be”.

“I don't feel amazing but I'm really happy that I was able to go through all that and still show up for my match,” said Fritz.

Fritz said he had only been well enough to exercise in his

room three days before he left quarantine.

But he made short work of the first set against world number 109 Duckworth and closed out the match convincingly despite a difficult second set.

“I felt, for whatever reason, confidence that I was going to be able to come out of the lockdown and strike the ball well,” said Fritz.

“I was more concerned about the cardio and my condition after being really sick and not being able to do anything.”

SHAPOVALOV THROUGH

Earlier in the day, Canadian number seven seed Denis Shapovalov beat American Steve Johnson 6-3, 7-6 (7/3).

Shapovalov lost to Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka in the final of last week's Korea Open and he said the Wednesday start to his Tokyo campaign had helped him recover. “I think the most important thing for me is to feel mentally fresh,” said the world number 22. — AFP



Taylor Fritz of the United States hits a return against James Duckworth of Australia during the Japan Open in Tokyo. — AFP

OOC takes part in OCA General Assembly in Cambodia



SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 5

The Oman Olympic Committee participated in the Olympic Council of Asia's 41st General Assembly in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh on Tuesday.

The General Assembly was chaired by Raja Randhir Singh, Acting chairman of OCA, in the presence of Hun Sen, Prime Minister of Cambodia, Thong Khun, chairman of the Cambodian Olympic Committee, as well as representatives of the 40 Asian Olympic Committee. The Oman Olympic Committee was represented by Taha bin Sulaiman al Kishry, Secretary-General, and Dr Marwan bin Juma al Jumaa, Member of the Board of Directors.

Hun Sen inaugurated the assembly in the presence of 400 sports officials. During the opening a minute of silence was observed in memory of the victims of the soccer stadium tragedy in Indonesia last Saturday.

During the assembly, Saudi Arabia won the rights to host the Asian Winter Games 2029, after voting by the representatives

of the Asian National Olympic Committees.

Saudi Arabia's Riyadh will be the first city to host the winter event in West Asia. The previous editions of the Winter Games were hosted by China, Japan, South Korea and Kazakhstan.

The reports of the next four Asian sessions were also reviewed, in Hangzhou 2023, Aichi-Nagoya 2026, Doha 2030 and Riyadh 2034.

In addition to presenting reports on the Riyadh's preparations to host the Asian Indoor Games and Martial Arts VII 2025, and the hosting of Asian Indoor Games and Martial Arts by Thailand in 2023.

At the end of the meeting, the Medal of Merit was awarded to the chairman of the Olympic Committee of Cambodia, Dr Thong Khun, and Secretary-General of the Olympic Committee of Vietnam, Tran van Manh in recognition of their efforts in serving Asian sports. Sri Lankan Dr Chaturanga Ranasinghe and Singaporean Dr Marcus Lee were awarded the Sheikh Fahad Award 'Hiroshima' Sports Medicine in Asia.

OEF launches show jumping training at Al Rahba race track

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 5

The Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF) launched the first training of show jumping competitions for the season 2022-2023, at the Olympic field at Al Rahba Farm in Barka on Tuesday.

The Oman Equestrian Federation earlier announced the show jumping season programme, which includes 17 competitions held at the Olympic field at Al Rahba Farm in Barka, starting the first competition on October 4, the second round will be on October 11 and the third will be on October 18. November will see five rounds on November 15, 18, 19, 22 and 23. Three rounds will be on December 7, 21 and 22. The new year 2023 will see six rounds. Two rounds will be on January 17 and 18, the rest of the four rounds will be on March 2, 4, 9, and the season will conclude on March 11.

The first training competitions include 100 horses, distributed in five categories, the beginners category 1, with a height of hurdles 70 cm, and beginners category 2 with hurdles height of 90 cm, the beginners category 3 at the height of 100 cm, the junior category at the hurdles height of 110 cm, and the intermediate category at a height of 120 cm.

The competition witnessed



jockeys and horses of government cavalry units and private stables. The competition started at four o'clock afternoon until nine o'clock in the evening.

At the end of competition, Ahmed bin Saif al Abri, Secretary-General of the Oman Equestrian Federation, honoured the winning participants in the various categories.

OEF SIGNS DEAL WITH OTE

On the other hand, the Oman Equestrian Federation signed

sponsorship agreements with Oman Trading Corporation (OTE) to support the activities during the season 2022-2023.

The agreement was signed by Munther bin Saif bin Hamad al Busaidi, OEF Chairman, and by the supporting institutions Khalid bin Saeed al Wahaibi, owner of Al Rayyan Stables and Salem bin Saad Bahwan al Mukhaini, CEO of the Oman Commercial Corporation, at the Oman Olympic Academy Hall.

With the support of Al Rayyan Stables, a league has been created that contains a set of important pillars, the most prominent is the classification of young people into two categories, from 12 to 17 years old, and from 18 to 21 years old. The riders points are calculated with each participation, through which the points are collected at the end of the season, and valuable prizes were allocated for each category.

Khalid al Wahaibi announced a surprise for all the participants in the tent pegging competitions, which are new jumping barriers with an Omani style that will arrive in the coming days. Al Wahaibi also added about the idea of holding the Al Rayyan International Championship this season and it will be announced in due course.

Iranians clinch Open and women's titles

ASIAN AMATEUR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP CONCLUDES IN MUSCAT



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 5

Zahmati Sobhan from Iran bagged the Open title in the Asian Amateur Chess Championship with 8.5 points while his team-mate Fooladi Behrooz came in second position with 7.5 points.

In the women's category, Naderina Niki from Iran snatched the title as she achieved eight points while Rouda al Serkal from the UAE came second with 7.5 points. Wijesuriya GPY from Sri Lanka finished in third place with seven points.

The organising committee awarded some special prizes and awards to the best individual players.

Wadeem al Kalbani from UAE was named as the best player in the U-1900 rating while Indian Amulya Guruprasad was awarded the U-1800 rating player. Her team-mate Aditi Arun captured U-1700 rating player award while Layashukurova Altnai from Kyrgyzstan won the best amateur player award (non-ranked player).

Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development,



was the chief guest in the concluding ceremony of the championship in presence of officials and dignitaries. After the conclusion of ninth round, the chief guest presented the trophies to the top winners.

"This is a major successful event in Oman and special thanks for Oman Chess

Committee members as they worked hard to organise this Asian event in Muscat. Hosting of these events is a great opportunity for encouragement for all the players, coaches and umpires to show their best level. These events will build up on their experience and will give them better chance to

impress at the international level. We are looking forward for Omani players to continue in registering top results in the regional and international events," the chief guest said.

Hisham al Taher, Secretary-General of Asian Chess Federation, affirmed that this edition of Asian Amateur Chess

Championship in Muscat is the best among all the previous editions.

"We are very glad with the success of this championship which was held virtually in the previous year before having it in reality this year. This edition of the Asian Amateur chess registered a record in the

number of players participated in the tournament from open and women categories."

"We are working closely with Oman Chess Committee (OCC) since it was established before eight years ago and we are willing to organise some events in the near future," he added.

Wasif, Mohammed set for Jordan Mena Digital final

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 5

Seventeen-year-old Wasif al Kharousi and Mohammed al Barwani will represent the Sultanate of Oman in the second Jordan Middle East and North Africa (Mena) Digital Final on Thursday and Friday.

The two Omanis had prepared themselves well to bring home the winning cup after topping the recently held Khareef Digital Championship and Oman Digital Championship, both managed by Oman Automobile Association.

The contestants have travelled to Jordan for the competition with a larger number of participants

attending, compared to the previous season.

Digital Motorsports Manager of OAA, Masoud al Hinai said: "At last year's event, the atmosphere and preparation in Jordan was perfectly managed and this year's winners of the national digital championships proved how hard they worked since their performance in the past."

This being their second held championship, the final in Jordan will be accommodating participants from all over the Middle East and North Africa, competing against each other at a professional level.

According to Masoud, the challenges on the simulators are done fairly due to contestants



Wasif al Kharousi (left) and Mohammed al Barwani will represent Oman in Jordan.

having the same equipment and that all it takes to win is practice and skills.

Wasif Al Kharousi, who was

ranked first in the championship in Oman, said: "Honestly, each year the competition series gets tougher but the organisation of the events gets even better."

The 17-year-old added: "This is my second Mena Digital Championship and I'm really excited and looking forward to it. I will give it my all to make my country proud."

The second-place winner, Mohammed al Barwani, 34, said: "This is a great step forward for simulator racing within our region. This isn't my first time competing in Jordan and from my previous visit, the experience was lovely with the great people who were very welcoming, making it feel like a second home to me.

"This time however, as I have been practicing on the Gran Turismo games every single day, I know I am ready and will perform my best to the end," Mohammed al Barwani added.

The Mena Digital Final is hosted by Jordan Motorsport (JMS) to attract young racers and video game enthusiasts to attend the event from across the region. Each country is represented by two contestants who are selected either through their national championship qualifiers or as their country nominees.

The OAA is hoping for the best performance by the Omani representatives in the final in Jordan and to make the most out of this opportunity.



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Tanmia acquires 19% stake in Oman’s Al Rimal Mining from Tata Steel



JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

Oman National Investments Development Company SAOC (Tanmia), a wholly-government owned enterprise, acquired 19 per cent stake in Al Rimal Mining LLC, Oman (Al Rimal) after T S Global Holdings Pte Ltd and Tanmia and the existing shareholders of Al Rimal entered into an agreement to transfer 19 per cent shareholding in Al Rimal to Tanmia. Tata Steel revealed the agreement in a regulatory filing with the London Stock Exchange.

“This is to inform you that Tata Steel Limited, through T S Global Holdings Pte Ltd, has concluded the divestment of its 19 per cent equity stake in Al Rimal to Tanmia on October 3, 2022, thereby reducing its shareholding from 70 per cent to 51 per cent in Al Rimal,” the filing stated. T S Global Holdings Pte Ltd (formerly T S Global Mineral Holdings Pte Ltd) is a wholly-

owned subsidiary of Tata Steel Limited. The financial terms of the deal have not been disclosed.

In May 2019, T S Global Holdings Pte Ltd signed a definitive agreement to induct Tanmia as a shareholder in Al Rimal Mining.

When the agreements were signed, Tata Steel said the other existing shareholders of Al Rimal would also divest their stakes of 11 per cent to Tanmia. This would give Tanmia a 30-per cent shareholding in Al Rimal Mining.

Al Rimal Mining is a step-down subsidiary of Tata Steel that was formed to focus on limestone mining in Oman. “This has reference to our disclosure dated on May 9, 2019, with respect to divestment of equity stake in Al Rimal Mining LLC, Oman (Al Rimal). This disclosure is being made in compliance with Regulation 30 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015,” Tata Steel said.

Oman’s first satellite set for orbit

New milestone: The integration of this satellite into the LauncherOne rocket is a crucial milestone in the mission to send the first Omani satellite into Low Earth Orbit using a modified Boeing 747 jet

BUSINESS REPORTER
CORNWALL (UK), OCT 5

The first Omani satellite, Aman, was successfully prepared for its launch into the Low Earth Orbit, at Newquay, Cornwall, in the UK on Tuesday, October 4, 2022. Integrated into a launch vehicle, the LauncherOne rocket, the satellite will be taken on its journey into space later this year. Satellite integration is a major step in meeting the objectives of Oman’s first space mission.

The Sultanate of Oman represented by ETCO, an Oman-based emerging technology innovator; Virgin Orbit, a leading US-based satellite launch company; SatRev, Polish nanosatellite manufacturer and operator and TUATARA, specialists in advanced AI, data analytics and cognitive technology solutions, continue to work on Oman’s mission to space.

The work undertaken, led to the first Omani CubeSat satellite, Aman, being integrated with the spacecraft during a procedure conducted at Newquay Airport, in Cornwall.

The Virgin Orbit integration team led the event, beginning with a final cleaning and checkout of the Omani satellite, ensuring that the Remove Before Flight (RBF) items on the CubeSat were taken away. Once the satellite was prepared, it was placed in the launch dispenser, followed by a series of rigorous checks.



Abdulaziz Jaafar, ETCO CEO

“Satellite integration marks an important milestone in the plan to send the first Omani spacecraft into space this year. It is encouraging to witness this first-of-its-kind project in the country’s history unfolding and we are looking forward to see it through to a final stage that will occur later this year when it will be launched into the low Earth orbit,” explained Abdulaziz Jaafar, ETCO Chief Executive Officer.

“Integration went as planned and it was a complete success. All risks have already been minimised due to the Fit-Check event that occurred during the previous month, where the same Virgin Orbit integration team was



on-site at SatRev headquarters in Poland to perform a detailed walkthrough of all planned integration steps,” said Grzegorz Zwoliński, CEO SatRev.

The project is fulfilling the Oman Vision 2040, a national programme aimed at fostering economic competitiveness and social well-being, stimulating growth and building confidence in all economic, social and developmental relations.

Oman’s space programme will enable groundbreaking scientific research and capture high-resolution satellite images, which will be further analysed digitally

using Computer Vision, Machine Learning, and AI solutions developed by TUATARA in strategic partnership with ETCO.

The Omani space project intends to provide long-lasting benefits and unlock new horizons for the next generation of world space explorers and innovators in the space sector, while investing in national talent that will build a promising future for Oman.

Looking forward to delivering added value up and down the country, the project will encourage and support companies in Oman to accelerate its transformation into a space-related economy.

OIA invests in US battery materials pioneer Group14 Technologies

NEW VISION: Muscat Stock Exchange to be strongly positioned for growth

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 5

Oman Investment Authority (OIA) has announced that it has successfully invested in Group14, a leading US company manufacturing trailblazing battery materials.

This investment is part of OIA’s strategy of seeking opportunities in new fields while partnering with global investors and attracting investment to Oman. Group14 specialises in manufacturing

innovative lithium-silicon battery materials to replace traditional lithium-ion batteries. The company attracted several leading investors in the battery materials field, including Porsche, SK Materials, and several others.

In the recently-issued 5th edition of its quarterly newsletter Enjaz & Ejaz, OIA stated that the technology used by Group14 lowers costs and elevates performance.

Group14 has built a strong customer pipeline with contracted revenue, including engagements with 90 per cent of the world’s battery manufacturers.

Through this investment, OIA intends to integrate Oman with the company’s supply chain.



Abdulsalam al Murshidi, President of OIA, stated in the newsletter’s foreword that OIA is getting ready to announce the launch of several national projects by OIA companies corresponding

with the celebration of Oman’s 52nd National Day. In his speech, he called on employees to start planning their individual and institutional goals for the upcoming year, 2023.

This issue of Enjaz & Ejaz also featured an interview with Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) CEO Haitham al Salmi.

In this interview, Al Salmi shed light on the six key areas covered in MSX’s strategy, which are: Developing the national economy, making MSX attractive and accessible, focusing on financial technology and infrastructure development, ensuring MSX has a solid commercial framework, achieving high job satisfaction among employees, and improving the workplace environment.

MSX has recently taken great strides towards achieving these goals. Investor confidence has grown, and the cap on foreign ownership of public stock

companies was increased to 70 per cent under Royal Decree 50/2021.

Draft rules and agreements related to the business of market makers and liquidity suppliers are no longer prepared. A series of promotional programs are being launched locally and internationally to familiarise people with MSX, its strategies, and available opportunities.

The duties of licensing and oversight of companies working in the securities field were transferred to MSX under Royal Decree 46/2022. An MoU was signed with the Saudi Tadawul Group to improve bilateral relations and locate investment opportunities.

Techno Plastic signs MoUs with Al Hassan, Muna Noor

MUSCAT: At the company's headquarters in Muscat, Techno Plastic Industry celebrated the signing of two memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with Al Hassan Company and Muna Noor Manufacturing & Trading LLC. This was a significant step for the Omani manufacturers who will work to increase cooperation in promoting their products in domestic and international markets.

Eng Omar bin Ahmed Qatann, CEO of Techno Plastic Industry, signed the first MoU with Maqbool Ali Salman, Chairman of Al Hassan, and the second MoU with Eng Ahmed bin Khalid al Barwani, CEO of Muna Noor Manufacturing & Trading.

The MOU with Al Hassan was signed on the occasion of their ten-year strategic collaboration, while the MoU with Muna Noor Manufacturing & Trading was signed with the intention of



promoting Techno products both inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman's markets.

The MoU will work to embody the status of these companies in terms of the quality of their products both internally and externally, according to Eng Omar bin Ahmed Qatan, CEO of Techno, who emphasised the significance of fostering cooperation between

Omani businesses and expanding the marketing of the company's products in both domestic and international markets.

Eng Ahmed bin Khalid al Barwani, CEO of Muna Noor, outlined how the MoU aims to strengthen cooperation between the two businesses and increase the effectiveness of marketing their products in local and regional



markets. He also emphasised that this agreement ushers in a new stage for the initial cooperation that benefits both parties.

Al Barwani noted that this MoU is the first of its type in Oman because it will enable the two companies to further their relationship between the two largest and most established factories in the Sultanate of Oman

producing plastic pipes and their accessories.

It is important to note that Techno has extensive experience in the plastic pipe industry and is ISO 9001:2015 certified for the production of pipes and polypropylene pipe joints that serve the industrial markets both inside and outside of Oman.

Techno strives to provide

quality-guaranteed products with improved durability and reliability while upholding high quality standards.

Al Hassan Group is one of the leading business groups involved in the manufacturing of low and high voltage switchgear panels and trading of electromechanical items across Oman.

With their strong workforce of 300+ employees, they are committed to offering high quality products with personalised and excellent services.

Muna Noor Manufacturing & Trading, on the other hand, has been a creative and strategic partner in all public and private projects for more than 47 years and is one of the industry pioneers in the production of plastic pipes and their accessories utilising the most up-to-date technologies. The company has been exporting its products to many African and Asian countries.

Daleel Petroleum announces support for Eidaad

MUSCAT: Daleel Petroleum, one of the leading oil-producing companies in the Sultanate of Oman, has recently announced its support for the national educational programme, Eidaad.

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI), the initiative aims to narrow the gap between industry and academia as well as provide local university students with an internship opportunity for a duration of one academic year. As part of a rigorous selection process, the company chose 11 students who will be officially welcomed to the organisation on October 2.

"Students will gain hands-on experience when they are exposed to real work experience through on-job training. They will have an opportunity to acquire knowledge and new skills or enhance their abilities. This kind of practical experience helps students and increases their confidence," said Mohammed al Darmaki, People and Support Senior Manager at Daleel Petroleum. We as Daleel Petroleum play a vital role to prepare our students for the future labour demands as part of our contribution to society," he added.

The selected students will be distributed by their respective majors, with three in Applied Geosciences and two each in Logistics, Law, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science.

Oman Shell launches second batch of students of Nawafidh Programme

MUSCAT: Oman Shell along with its partners, GUtech and Outward Bound Oman, celebrated the launch of the Shell Nawafidh Programme's second batch of Omani students. Oman Shell inaugurated the second batch's six-month long journey of learning with a ceremony that showcased alumni success stories and an icebreaker session to help the participants get acquainted with one another and the programme.

Conducted in partnership with GUtech and Outward Bound Oman, the main objective of Shell Nawafidh is to enable and empower youth to lead the transition into the emerging energy markets through technical training, workshops and networking opportunities with industry professionals.

The holistic learning programme not only helps Omani students and fresh graduates develop their technical abilities and improve their leadership



skills, but also enhances their potential, enabling them to take on diverse and important roles in the energy industry.

Speaking about Oman Shell's aim behind the launch of the programme, Malak al Shaibani, General Manager - Corporate Relations & ICV, Oman Shell, said, "Our aim is to power progress and adapt to the changing energy markets. Tomorrow's energy leaders must be provided with the opportunities they need to gain knowledge and skills pertaining to newer and cleaner energy sources and solutions.

The focus of the programme is on learning the latest technologies and applications related to these new sources of energy, which is in line with Oman Vision 2040 and its energy diversification goals."

She added, "We thank Shell Nawafidh's alumni for attending the opening ceremony today and inspiring the 55 new participants of the second batch, by sharing their experiences coming through this programme. Along with our partners, we look forward to supporting the new batch as they work towards becoming the energy leaders of tomorrow."

ahlibank opens new branch in MSQ area

MUSCAT: Supporting its robust digitisation drive and setting a new benchmark in customer convenience, ahlibank has opened an exclusive digital banking branch at a prime location in Madinat al Sultan Qaboos area.

The state-of-the-art facility is designed to enhance customers' banking experience and expedite everyday banking processes, incorporating the Bank's first multi-functional device — ahliexpress, while offering a brand-new outlet for new-to-bank clients. It will cater to customers in the predominantly upscale residential area with top-notch services that are in tune with global digital trends.

The new branch will redefine ahlibank's credentials as one of the most preferred banks in Oman, making 'digital' the new banking mantra for its Internet-savvy customers.

It will further augment ahlibank's growing digital



footprints in the country and leverage its active partnership with the government in realising the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which has set forth an ambitious national programme for the digital economy.

Muneer al Balushi, AGM - Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, "Our remarkable new facility, in the heart of the city, is an affirmation of our intent to create modern banking avenues for our customers who are constantly seeking innovative products and newer and better service modules to conduct their everyday banking chores."

Huawei launches 6th edition of ICT Competition

MUSCAT: In partnership with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Labour, and Omantel, Huawei launches its flagship annual Huawei ICT Competition 2022-2023 in the Sultanate of Oman. The initiative aims at bolstering the overall ICT ecosystem through nurturing local talent who will be the future Omani generation achieving the Sultanate of Oman's national development plans and ambitious in line with Oman Vision 2040.

This year's competition was launched during a ceremony held at Huawei Regional ICT Training Centre, and attended by Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communications and Information Technology, Li Lingbing, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Sultanate of Oman, Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy Under-



Secretary of Ministry of Labour for Human Resources Development, Talal al Maamari CEO of Omantel and Chen Jianhan CEO of Huawei, in addition to representatives from various ministries, universities, and senior executives from Huawei.

From October to December, thousands of undergraduate students are expected to participate in the competition, which is being

held virtually. Winners of the regional competitions will receive a certification, future learning opportunities, trophy, internship, opportunities to join Huawei or Huawei partners and \$20,000 cash prize.

Dr Ali al Shaithani, Under-Secretary for Communications and Information Technology, said: "We are proud to partner with Huawei for the 10 consecutive year

on a prestigious programme such as the Huawei Middle East ICT Competition.

The ICT sector is currently playing a significant part in strengthening the Sultanate of Oman's global competitiveness and overall economic growth. Collaborating with a global technology company reconfirms our commitment to empower our nation's youth and prepare a future generation for Oman's digital transformation journey."

Chen Jianhan, CEO of Huawei Oman, said: "Empowering the Sultanate of Oman's youth with global knowledge and new skills plays a key role in the future of socio-economic growth. Huawei is committed to developing the ICT industry by investing in local young talent and creating an open, collaborative ecosystem.

Moreover, by offering participants access to online learning, we can create equal opportunities for quality

education, and ultimately enabling more people to effectively contribute to the development of the digital economy."

The competition further promotes creativity amongst students by acting as a bridge between the classroom and the workforce, enhancing students' future employment opportunities. The training courses and competition programme this year focus on modern technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), cloud computing, data storage, big data, Security, Datacom, WLAN and enhancing communication between talented youth in the region. The competition is considered one of the auxiliary channels for the current efforts made by governments, universities, and educational institutions in the field of talent discovery and support to prepare future leaders who will be responsible for leading the development process by relying on technology.



2nd Oman-Switzerland Business Forum renews bonds of friendship



**BALQEES HAMOOD
AL ORAIMI**

MUSCAT, OCT 5

The second Business Forum organised by the Omani-Swiss Friendship Association (OSFA) at the Kempinski Hotel on Wednesday was an attempt to renew and develop bonds of friendship between the Sultanate of Oman and the Federal Republic of Switzerland. The Forum, held under the auspices of Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, focused on “Innovation and Sustainability” and welcomed a number of high-profile speakers who gathered from both Oman and Switzerland.

“We have redesigned our approach to work by simplifying procedures and creating a more supportive environment for enterprises with the launch of Oman Vision 2040 - our blueprint for sustainable progress and development”, Dr Al Yousef said. This inspiring roadmap is built around four main pillars, People and society, Economic growth, Governance, and Corporate

performance, which go hand in hand with Environment and sustainability, he said.

“The Oman National Investment and Export Development Programme, known locally as Nezdaher, is a model of our reimagined approach to business. Since March 2021, Nezdaher has been supporting international and local prospects in creating, publishing, and expanding their commercial footprint. The Oman Investment Centre will complete the work of Nezdaher”, he added.

Following the success of the 2019 Business Forum held in Berne in Switzerland, OSFA explored two leading topics for both countries, which are Innovation & Sustainability.

High-level speakers from Oman and Switzerland delivered their expert presentations on Finance & Investment, Tourism, Environment, and Digital Technology (AI). Throughout the event, guests were encouraged to network, collaborate, exchange ideas - and explore new ways of creating investment in both countries thanks to a mix of presentations, workshops -and panel discussions.

PDO produced water output to surpass 1.1 million m3/day

WATER MANAGEMENT: Move to phase out energy-intensive deep aquifer disposal in favour of reed bed technology use

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 5

Majority state-owned Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) – the nation’s biggest producer of oil and gas – is bracing for an upsurge in the generation of ‘produced water’ – a phenomenon once seen as the bane of oilfield operations, but is today increasingly viewed as a potentially valuable resource that can be suitably harnessed for desert agriculture, reservoir stimulation, and construction and industrial applications.

Produced water is typically referred to as naturally occurring water that is extracted from the subsurface along with oil and gas. But unlike potable or other types of surface or groundwater, produced water must be suitably and safely disposed of because it is contaminated with hydrocarbons, hydrogen sulphide (H₂S) and potentially toxic heavy metals as well.

Consequently, it must be either treated if used for oilfield or industrial consumption, or disposed of in deep aquifers – options that are energy-intensive given the copious volumes involved.

According to PDO, produced water output currently averaging a staggering 1 million m³/day, is set to surpass 1.1 million m³/day from 2022 onwards.



PDO's reed beds in Nimr

While roughly 70 per cent of this output is reused for reservoir pressure maintenance, as well as Chemical Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) operations, the remainder is sent to massive reed beds developed in the desert (15 per cent), as well as for deep disposal (15 per cent).

“We continue to seek alternative methodologies for the treatment, reuse and disposal of produced water in a manner that consumes far less energy,” PDO said in its latest Sustainability Report 2022.

“Our underlying premise is to manage water as a valuable resource rather than a nuisance and pursue alternatives for maximising produced water use where technically and economically feasible.

In the North, where salinity

levels are very high, there is a potential for salt making. However, in the South, where water salinity is low, the water could be used in agriculture. Other reuse opportunities include drilling, brick making, site preparation works and road construction,” the energy company stated.

Plans are also underway to reduce volumes currently being disposed of through deep aquifer disposal – a costly, energy intensive process.

Replicating its success in the development of Reed Beds at Nimr in the south of its concession, PDO now aims to phase out deepwater disposal at its Marmul Cluster through the deployment of reed bed technology. The company’s award-winning Nimr Water Treatment Plant uses

temperature resilient, salinity resistant reed plants to remove contaminants from produced water – a process that cuts CO₂ emissions and enables the use of some of the treated water for biosaline agriculture.

Around 15 per cent of PDO’s total produced water output is currently channelled into the Reed Water Bed project at Nimr, resulting in the greening of a 10 sq kilometre swathe of the desert. Several hundreds of barrels of oil have also been recovered from the produced water.

Energy savings as a result of the use of reed bed technology amounts to 68.7 gigawatt-hours per year, with savings in natural gas averaging about 21.5 million cubic metres per year, according to PDO.

Renewable energy sector is a major job generator



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

Despite the crises resulting from the Russian-European-American conflict and its adverse effects on international relations between the political and economic blocs in the world, the hostilities have increased global interest in the search for new energy and gas sources.

At the same time, we see countries of the world are focused on advancing their renewable energy projects and making use of solar and

wind energy, among other alternative sources.

Reports issued in this regard confirm the growth of new jobs in renewable energy, as global employment in these sectors has risen to 12.7 million jobs in 2021, an increase of 70,000 jobs, despite the continuing effects of Covid-19 and the growing energy crisis.

Today, the global market is expanding in these sectors with solar energy becoming one of the fastest growing sectors in the world, providing about 4.3 million jobs in one year. In fact, more than a third of the latest growth in the global workforce has come from the renewable energy sector.

A report by IRENA, in cooperation with the International Labor Organization, revealed that with the increasing concerns about climate change and the post-pandemic recovery, international interest is in the localisation of job opportunities related to clean energy manufacturing and the development of technology export capabilities.

IRENA believes that in the face of many challenges,

TODAY, THE GLOBAL MARKET IS EXPANDING IN THESE SECTORS WITH SOLAR ENERGY BECOMING ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING SECTORS IN THE WORLD, PROVIDING ABOUT 4.3 MILLION JOBS IN ONE YEAR.

renewable energy jobs remain resilient as it has proven to be a reliable driver of new job creation. It has encouraged governments around the world to pursue industrial policies that encourage the expansion of renewable energy jobs for individuals and communities.

It also urges countries to enhance supply chain reliability and contribute to greater overall energy security. Figures indicate that an increasing number of countries are creating jobs in renewable energy sources, with two-thirds of all these jobs coming from Asia. China alone accounts for 42 per cent of these jobs, followed by the European Union and Brazil with 10 per cent each, while the United States and India provide 7 per cent each.

Guy Ryder, Director-General of the International Labor Organization, sees an increasing focus on the quality of jobs and working conditions in renewable energy. The data shows that female employment is increasing in these sectors and in the field of training, and these trends can be reinforced through greater participation of women, which requires encouraging governments, workers’ and employers’ organisations to commit to this for the future. Some Southeast Asian countries today have become major centres for the manufacture of solar photovoltaic cells and biofuel production. Europe today represents about 40 per cent of the production of the wind industry’s requirements, and it is also trying to reshape the solar PV industry as well. Countries of Africa and the Middle East need to play an enhanced role in renewable energy.

Expansion in these areas needs to be firmly supported by comprehensive policies, including training of workers and good wages to achieve this goal.

OIA invests in US battery materials pioneer Group14 Technologies

FROM PAGE 13

Also, MSX launched a new mechanism that many advanced global stock exchanges use to calculate closing prices for listed companies. MSX also rolled out three new indicators for total return in key sectors: financial, industrial, and services.

Moreover, MSX established an ESG department; it is also part of a GCC collaboration to issue a unified guide for ESG practices. Furthermore, MSX improved procedures for budget allocation, follow-up, and project selection.

It also signed an agreement with its subsidiary, Muscat Clearing and Depository, to integrate support departments to lower costs and improve performance. The issue highlighted the secondment of three OIA employees from the Private Equity and Real Estate teams to Vietnam, USA, and UK.

Mohammed al Maanni joined Vietnam Oman Investments, Ali al Amri joined the offices of Cranemere, a private equity

company in the United States, and Aisha al Balushi was assigned to ICT Group, a real estate developer in London.

These assignments stem from OIA’s belief in the importance of training employees, honing skills and knowledge, and bringing global experiences to OIA.

As it does regularly, the newsletter highlighted pioneering and innovative projects and operations by its national subsidiaries. One section discussed Ibr’s Solar Power Plant, which commenced operations in January 2021, and is located 300 km from Muscat.

The plant is the largest solar photovoltaic plant in Oman and the first solar energy-generating plant to be connected to the main electrical grid.

The plant uses state-of-the-art technologies and is operated by the private sector. In another article, the issue highlights the pioneering operations of Transom Catering Company, an Oman Air subsidiary, from meal preparation to dry cleaning and logistic services.

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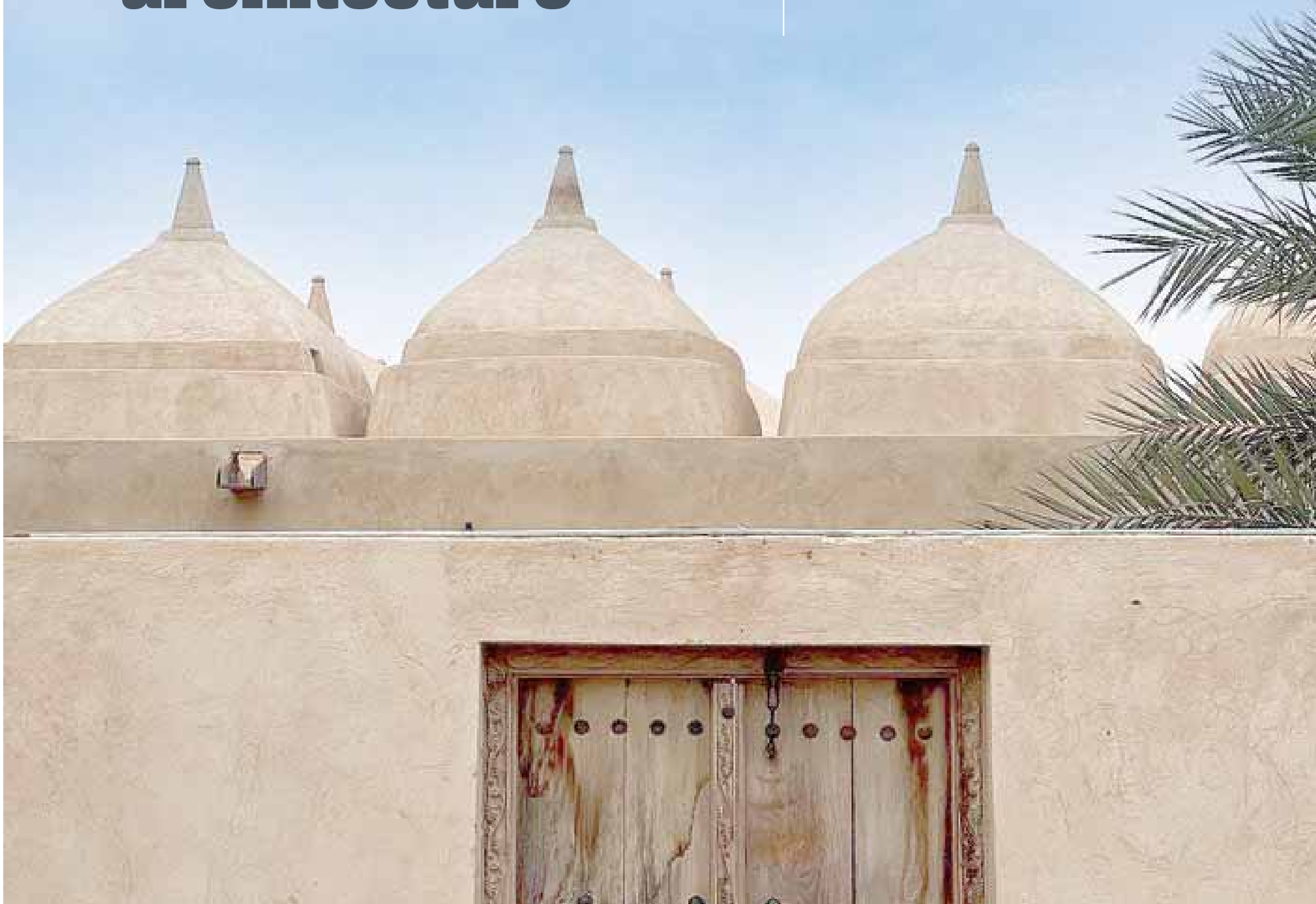
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Al Hamouda is a testament to the beauty of Islamic architecture

Comprising of 52 domes, Al Hamouda mosque in Jaalan Bani Bu Ali is not only a unique engineering feat but also establishes itself as an icon. Here's a few things you have to know about this mosque... **P20**



Cate Blanchett on film 'TÁR': 'We were standing on the edge of a cliff everyday'

ACCLAIMED AUSTRALIAN actor Cate Blanchett says the themes of her new drama "TÁR" galvanised its cast and crew, making the film shoot "the most stimulating" she had ever been on. Blanchett plays Lydia Tár, a world-renowned gay conductor of a Berlin

orchestra whose high-flying career comes tumbling down with an abuse scandal. Blanchett credited the film's writer and director Todd Field for drawing the best out of his cast with often unscripted, spur-of-the-moment ideas.



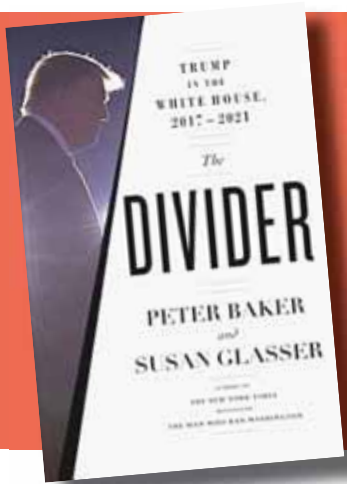
"People talk about improvising but I felt like we were standing on the edge of a cliff everyday saying, 'This may not work, let's give this a try', which was really exciting to make," she told. Field, who returns to film-making after 16 years, started writing the screenplay in March 2020 as the world around him began shutting down due to Covid-19. He finished the script in record time, writing the role of Tár specifically for Blanchett. "Some of the questions that the film is trying to ask have been questions that I've been asking myself for several years and trying to find the language to answer those questions, which I felt like I was failing miserably," Field said. "And I felt like I was having a hard time finding that language from other people." The movie delves deep into the world of classical music and the complexities of orchestra life. It highlights a poisonous mix of sex, power and exploitation. Field cast British-German cellist Sophie Kauer, 21, as young

Russian musician Olga, who catches Tár's eye as she arrives to audition for a place in the orchestra and whose appointment upsets the group's power balance. "The ISM, or Incorporated Society of Musicians, just released a study saying that bullying, racism and sexual harassment in the classical music industry is at its all-time worst. So I feel like the release of this film is very timely, that it's kind of bringing to light a lot of issues that our industry and also a lot of other industries face," Kauer said. Blanchett's performance has garnered early Oscar buzz after she won the best actress award at this year's Venice Film Festival, where "TÁR" had its world premiere. The 53-year-old has previously won two acting Oscars for her performances in "Blue Jasmine" and "The Aviator." "I don't read that stuff because I don't know what to do with it," she said. "But that's lovely. I mean, in the end, I just want an audience to see it and I want them to see it in the cinema." "TÁR" opens in US theatres on Friday and begins its global rollout in January.

READ

THE DIVIDER BY PETER BAKER AND SUSAN GLASSER

The married journalists who write for The New York Times and The New Yorker posit that Donald Trump began to emulate the foreign autocrats he admired.



FASHION TRENDS

South Korean actress Jung Hyeon (C) and other models present a creation for the Louis Vuitton Spring-Summer 2023 fashion show during the Paris Womenswear Fashion Week, in Paris. — AFP



CULTURE

A young man gets ready for a ceremony marking the end of the yearly initiation process for young men in Kabrousse, western Casamance. — AFP





A woman experienced in designing airport facilities

By Kabear Yousuf

It is the unquenchable thirst to carve a niche for oneself and to set precedence for the rest that makes one stand out, along with an undying passion and ambition in the chosen field. Underlining the fact that one ought to follow his or her heart, Nisreen Kayyali, a young Palestinian architect is hitting the headlines after she designed some of the maintenance facilities for international gateways and is creating and recreating these facilities for newer airports catering to the changing times and generations.



Having studied in the Jordanian capital of Amman, Nisreen made her presence felt in the GCC after establishing herself in the region with her architecture practice in Dubai. Today, she has completed over 500 projects ranging from mega projects such as airports, aircraft maintenance facilities, hotels, and large-scale residential and commercial buildings to private villas and mansions. The extensive portfolio of her firm, Nisreen Kayyali Consulting Engineers includes residential, commercial, religious, educational, and hospitality projects. Her project for Jordan, Al Baddad Aviation project, a 32000 M2 massive edifice located at the King Hussein Airport in Aqaba, Jordan, was built on A64000M2 land and consists of two buildings, viz, an administration building having a total area of 5000M2 and, an aeroplane maintenance hangar with a free SPAM of 110M and 32M height making it one of the world's largest Free SPAM Hangars. The scope of its work was full design including architectural, structural and electrical

and mechanical works.

EXCERPTS OF THE INTERVIEW:

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN DESIGNING AIRCRAFT' MAINTENANCE FACILITIES AT AIRPORTS?
I have designed aircraft' maintenance facilities at many airports. It was at the very beginning of my career when I first got the opportunity to design a project of this scale. At the time, I did not have a lot of experience, so I learned a lot of what needed to be done through extensive research. There were a

spaces. The first meeting with my clients determines which aspects of design I would need to take care of or pay attention to. For example, if my clients are particularly inclined to use their space to host, then I will focus on making their home design optimal for carrying out those activities. **FUNCTIONALITY, AESTHETICS AND CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT?**
In general, my focus is on balancing functionality and aesthetics with ease of movement throughout the project. The environmental impact of each design is also extremely important and consid-

It was my confidence in myself that became the true turning point in my career. I could only convince clients if I was myself convinced that I could bring or exceed the expected results. One of the biggest challenges of being a woman in the industry is being able to build that confidence in your abilities. In this case, truly formulating your own unique style that cannot be replicated by anyone else goes a long way. In other words, you cannot afford not to stand out. **WHAT ARE THE OTHER CHALLENGES IN THIS PROFESSION THAT YOU'D LIKE TO SHARE?**
There are many challenges and

FASHION

Chanel evokes cinematic glamour at Paris Fashion Week



CHANEL CREATIVE director Virginie Viard added a streak of Old Hollywood glamour to a sleek collection for spring and summer, sent down a catwalk lined with enormous screens projecting dreamy, black-and-white images of formal gardens and plush interiors. One of the largest labels to hit the runway for Paris Fashion Week, the show was held on the final day of events that have drawn crowds from abroad, marking the luxury industry's strong return from pandemic disruptions.



The audience sat in a darkened space that lit up when a short film began. It starred Kristen Stewart, who sat in the front row with South Korean singing star Jennie Ruby Jane. "The mythologies that define us, that unite us, they're ours to create," said Stewart, in the film that showed her posing in the Paris metro and walking on an empty cobblestoned street at night.



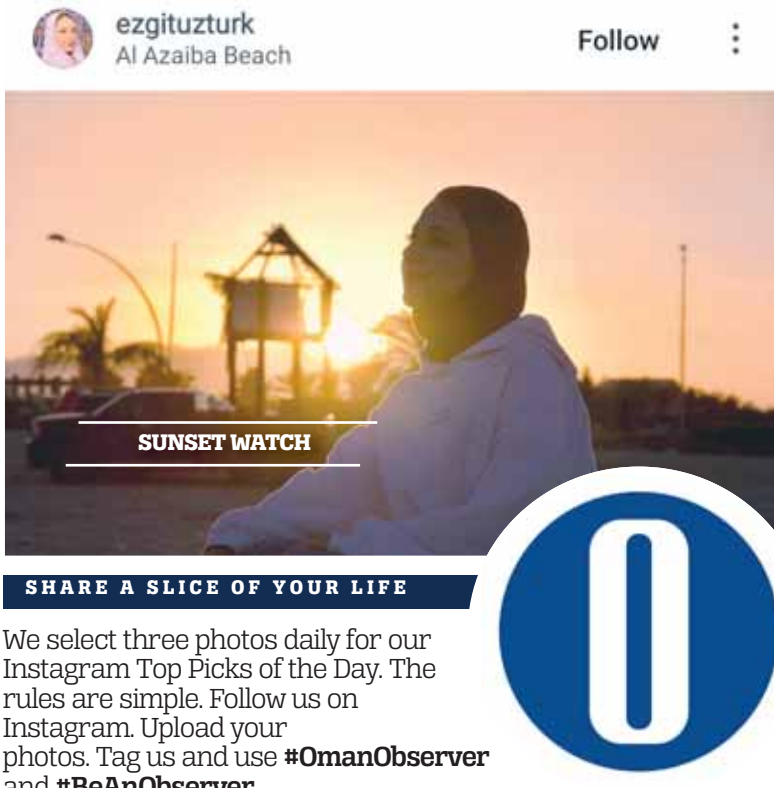
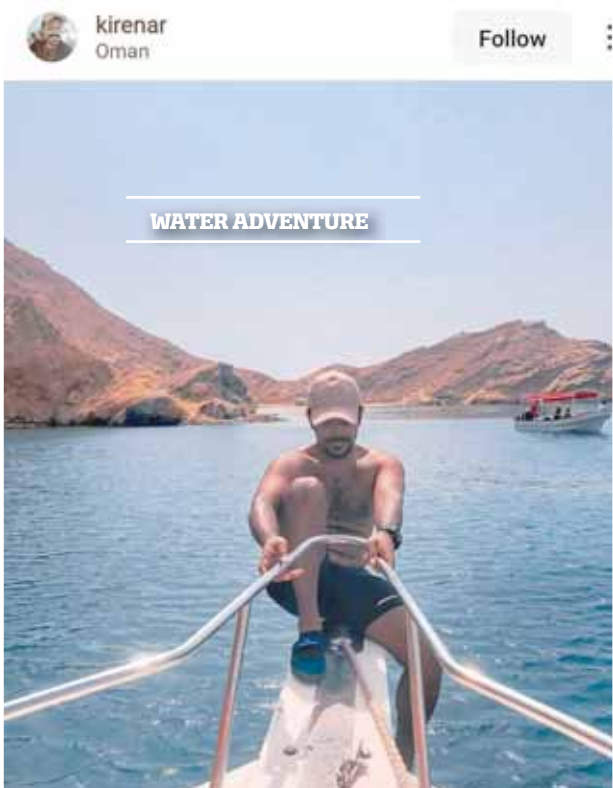
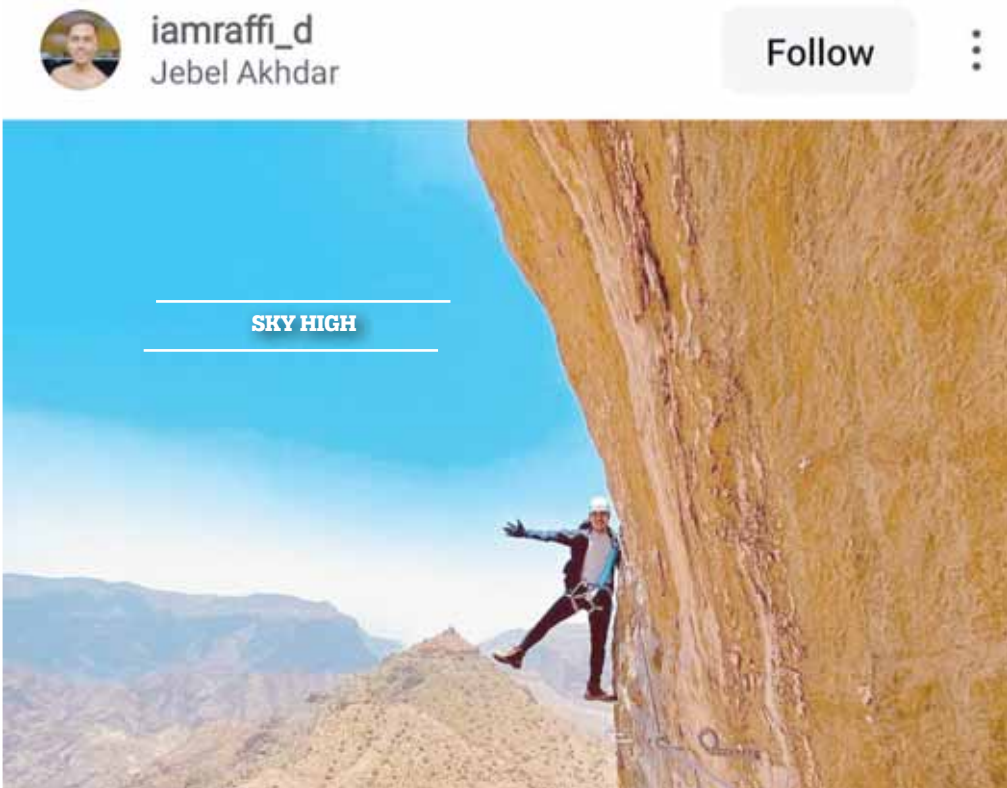
"EVERYTHING IS ON THE TABLE."

Models marched around the room on a carpet of black sand that felt squishy underfoot, wearing sparkly, low-heeled boots and shoes, paired with matching socks pulled up over the calves. Garments were elevated, with the lineup segueing from tweed minidresses and loosely-fitting suits to shimmering gold gowns and sweeping, airy skirts. The designer went light on accessories, with just a few handbags and sparse use of the label's signature gold chains, but added touches of sparkle and tufts of feathers to other looks. After the show, the audience stepped out into the bright sun to crowds of fans, who called TikTok star and magazine editor Bryanboy over to greet them. —Reuters



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Music world reacts to death of icon Loretta Lynn



LORETTA LYNN, who died on Tuesday at 90 years old, was a standard-bearer of country music and its most decorated female artist ever.

The self-taught musician proved a vast influence over her six decades in the business, and news of her passing triggered an outpouring of praise and condolences from her fellow musicians.

HERE IS A SELECTION OF TRIBUTES TO LYNN:

Singer Dolly Parton: "So sorry to hear about my sister, friend Loretta. We've been like sisters all the years we've been in Nashville and she was a wonderful human being, wonderful talent, had millions of fans and I'm one of them. I miss her dearly as we all will. May she rest in peace."

Sister and Fellow Singer Crystal Gayle: "The world lost a legend. We lost a sister. Love you Loretta"

Grande Ole Opry music venue in Nashville: "60 years of Opry membership, countless memories, songs and stories. Our Opry family turns to music when words fail. Thank you for all you've given to the Opry, @LorettaLynn. We love you"

SINGER MICKEY GUYTON: "REST IN POWER SWEET ANGEL"

Singer Darius Rucker: "She was an iconic legend and did things the way she wanted. I am so bless to call her friend. I miss u already Loretta. Love u. And rest now u angel."

Country Music Association: "We are heartbroken to learn about the passing of Country Music legend @LorettaLynnOfficial, the Coal Miner's Daughter. She paved the way for so many, inspired generations of female musicians and has forever left a mark on Country Music's history."

Singer Margo Price: "It's safe to say I wouldn't even be making country music today if it weren't for Loretta Lynn. She showed me what it looked like to be a musician and a mama."

Singer Leann Rimes: "oh, sweet loretta lynn... what a life! what an icon! what a trailblazer! what a beautiful soul! may she rest peacefully with the angels. my heart is with her family and friends. #lorettalynn #riplettalynn"

Nashville Songwriters Association: "Country music lost its Queen today. Loretta Lynn, we will always honour and love you."

Singer Trace Adkins: "The poet that could contextualize her life has yet to be born. I'll cherish the memories of the times I was in her presence. Rest in peace, darling."

Singer Ingrid Andress: "there are not enough words to thank you @LorettaLynn for making a path for women in country to ride on. your songs and stories will be with us forever." — AFP

TRAVEL TALES

Taste of Qatari hospitality: Traditional Arabic coffee



WITH ITS STRONG aroma of cardamom and its yellow, tea-like consistency, Arabic coffee is a ubiquitous symbol of hospitality across Gulf countries, not least in World Cup host Qatar.

Prepared by roasting coffee beans then boiling them with cardamom and saffron, the traditional "gahwa" is usually enjoyed in the Qatari majlis — the all-male gathering that forms the centrepiece of social life in the country.

"I didn't know it has coffee in it," said Lanka Perera, 29, a Sri Lankan expatriate who has lived in the tiny, gas-rich Gulf emirate for three years, adding that it doesn't taste like "the coffee that we know".

As custom dictates, the hot drink is prepared in front of guests by the head of the household and served by his eldest son.

But in more recent years, the beverage has spilt beyond its traditional confines, making its way into commercial establishments and cultural houses, offering a taste of Qatari culture to residents and visitors alike.

One such independent cultural centre is Embrace Doha, where Perera attended a session on the coffee and its origins.

"Gahwa is something that we drink almost every day... we see it in our office because there are lots of Qataris, so they bring it and then we taste it," she said.

"But... I didn't know what's in it and the story behind it, the origin behind it," she

confessed.

RITUAL AND CEREMONY

Since the introduction of coffee to the region around 600 years ago, it has

old market known as Souq Al Wakrah, south of the capital.

In 2015, an initiative by Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Oman and



acquired its own ritual and ceremony, now integral to the culture of the country and region.

Poured out of golden or silver "dallah" pots, it is consumed out of little cups that are only ever partially filled to avoid burning drinkers' fingers.

The coffee keeps coming until the drinker makes a certain waving gesture to indicate that he has had enough — a vestige of an era when it was often poured by deaf servers to prevent sensitive information from leaking out of the majlis.

"For hundreds of years, the whole country has changed, but coffee hasn't," said Shaima Sherif, the director of Embrace Doha, located in the heart of the

A PURPOSE DRIVEN LIFE



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Feeling well

WE USUALLY FOLLOW how people have different baselines of health, with some being more or less appreciative of whatever condition they are in. Yet, aeons have men lamented the joy of comfort, which I sometimes think is ephemeral. The feeling is manifested in all circumstances that health is not valued until illness comes.

In other words, many of us are very bad at evaluating good health when we are lucky enough to have it. However, anyone who experiences this superlative gratitude is unlikely to hold onto it for long. Are you not with me that by that morning after the symptoms had subsided, you were busy with e-mails and working again, unaware that only twenty-four or forty-eight hours earlier you could barely sit up straight in bed, let alone your desk or workplace? Doesn't that bother you? Are you so incapable of appreciating health and is there really anything you can do to change? However, you will certainly notice some people going through severe illness or injury experiences that completely change their outlook on life.

In fact, there are real costs to taking health for granted. First, it can make you less healthy, if you don't take care of yourself as a result. On the other hand, maintaining a certain level of appreciation is a good way, especially since throughout the pandemic Covid-19, for example, there has been this language about how the (the only) people who die are the elderly or the people who are suffering. From pre-existing health conditions, as if we sow accept it or as if these deaths were more acceptable!

What I really want here from everyone is to stick with gratitude. It is clearly linked to improved life satisfaction, increased sense of happiness and a greater ability to form and maintain relationships, of course, among other benefits. It seems to me that learning to appreciate the daily blessings is really like being healthy or eating your favourite food. So

is the ability to tap into a renewed source of contentment, especially since it's always easy to find stress in life!

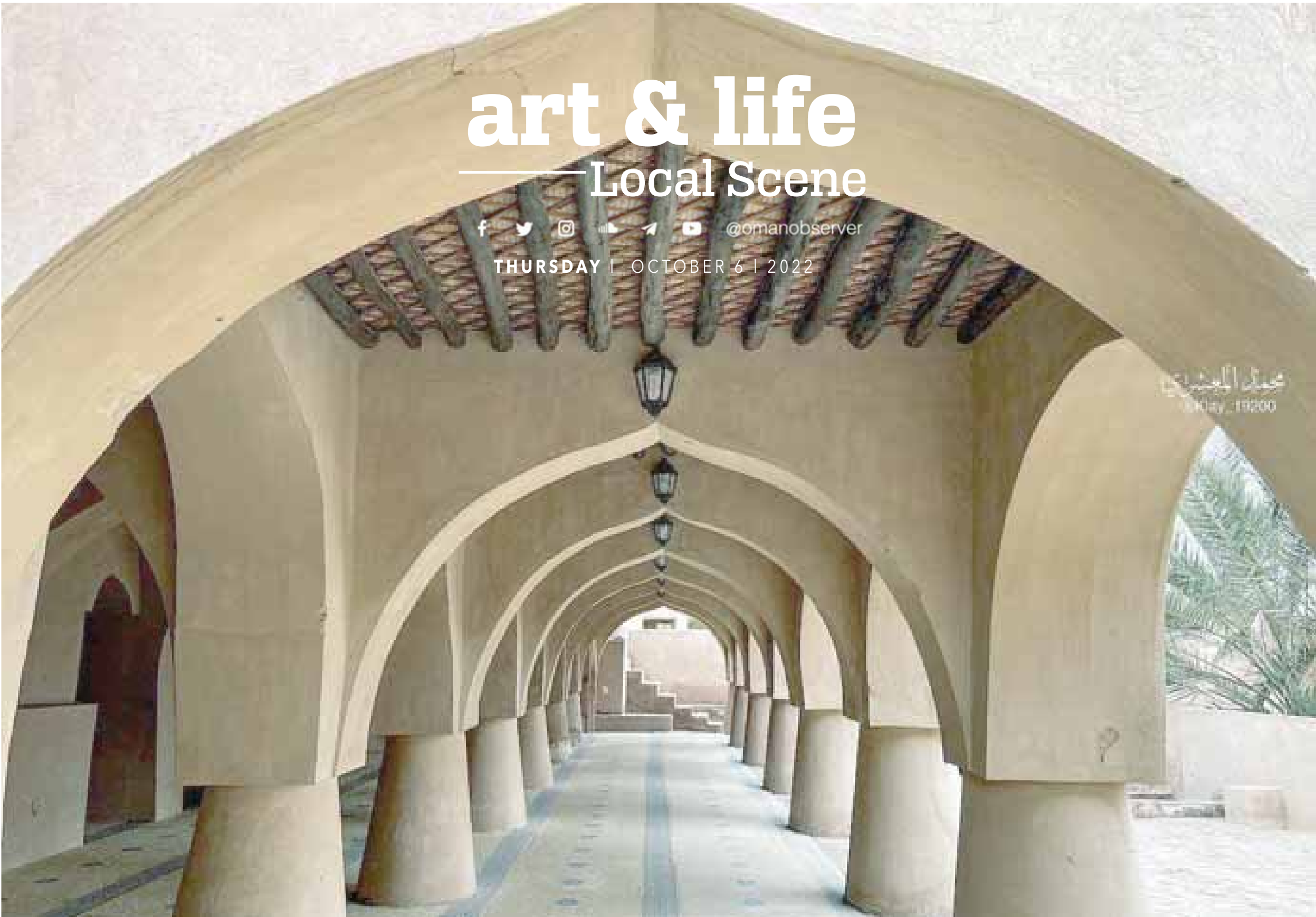
In this sense, one way to make the most of gratitude is to reframe the way people tend to think. Not to mention that there is an incomplete and definite belief in the true meaning of gratitude, which is that gratitude is a positive emotion that results from something good that happens to us. But I find it really an emotion, but also an act and an unlimited thanks that we can also learn, by developing habits that contribute to more continuous awareness, rather than a conditioned response to ever-changing circumstances. So how does that seem practical?... I don't know that we can, but with every breath, we have in every moment, be grateful that we are breathing.

So, as you think about the meaning of gratitude you will also find it, closer to the historical concept of gratitude, which was associated with ideas such as duty and reciprocity — when someone does something nice for us, we are expected to return the favour. In this sense, being grateful for your body may mean doing your best to take care of it (and perhaps refraining from risky behaviours).

Hence, as we've seen in the past two years, how Covid-19 shows that anyone can get sick, possibly seriously ill. Now, the end of the pandemic looms, it is tempting to imagine that humanity is about to wake up in the morning after a catastrophic illness.

In the end, perhaps the simple act of remembering the health we still have in the wake of the pandemic can make a small difference in how we proceed, even if not as a community, then at least as individuals. And surely right now, every day you still get a golden opportunity to try and stay healthy...so take it!

Dr Yousuf Ali Al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and writer.



art & life

Local Scene

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THURSDAY | OCTOBER 6 | 2022

Al Hamouda mosque is a testament to the beauty of Islamic architecture

Photos by
Mohammed Al Mashari

The entry of Islam into Oman not only transformed the lives of its people but also ushered in a new era of building design not just in residential houses but including monumental buildings like mosques.

The Al Hamouda Mosque located in the Wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali is one of the most famous ancient historical structures that demonstrates the early influence of Islamic architecture in the Sultanate of Oman. Built almost 500 years ago, Al Hamouda has become renowned for its domes and the geometric shapes and decors that spread across the whole expanse of the whole building. Comprising of 52 domes, not only is it a unique engineering feat but also establishes itself as an icon and over time, the locals eventually call it Al Qibab mosque or the Mosque of Domes.

The mosque is located in the Al Daher area near the old Friday market and with a strong foundation, continues to witness active commercial movements within the souq where people from

surrounding wilayats come to sell and buy various goods, including household items and traditional handicrafts.

The date of construction of the mosque dates back to the 17th century. Shoufani al Maamari, the architect who supervised the renovation of the mosque in 1411 AH noted that the mosque was designed in the traditional Islamic architectural style. The surrounding area of the mosque is abound with ancient archaeological buildings that show the legacy and authenticity of Oman's history. It is also surrounded by an old falaj, which is the only falaj that is found inside the mosque and was used for ablution in the past.

The mosque consists of three entrances and two service rooms and was built out of stone and plaster. The ceiling of the mosque is characterised by wooden carvings made wonderfully from palm fronds. The area of the mosque is more than 2000 meters and can accommodate more than 700 worshippers. All five prayers, Friday prayers and religious lectures are held in the mosque. It is also the centre for learning, studying and memorisation of the Holy Qur'an.

The domes of the mosque are not only exceptional for their Islamic architecture they also have openings called mabariq, which are not only allowing the entry of natural light and air into the mosque in an impressive way but also hold unique aesthetic and decorative forms of design.

Even though the mosque is very old, it still retains its grandeur, reflecting the capabilities of the ancient Omanis in architecture. Inside the mosque, there are 24 cylinders, five corridors, and a large number of arches.

Al Hamouda Mosque attracts many visitors and tourists from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman. People visit as it is an Islamic and tourist destination and a religious landmark and it is here where they come to learn about the mosque and its ancient history, which is rich in touches and ancient Omani engineering works.

The Mosque is one of the mosques that received the government's attention. It was restored twice, back in 1992 and 2010. These restorations did not include dramatic changes. The developers knew that it was important to preserve its general and basic shape.

