

ISTANBUL: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Information, took part in the 12th Conference of the Ministers of Information of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul on Saturday. Held under the theme 'Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in Post-Truth Era', the conference aims to enhance cooperation between the Islamic countries. **SEE P5**



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CURRAN BAGS FIVE AS ENGLAND BOWL OUT AFGHANISTAN FOR 112



P13

OMAN, KOREA PLEDGE STRONGER TIES IN ENERGY SECTOR, NEW INDUSTRIES



P20

CREATIVE IMAGINATION ON DISPLAY AT ART EXPO



MUSCAT

MWASALAT POINT TO POINT SERVICE STARTS

Mwasalat has introduced point to point services within the Ruwi area, which is fast becoming popular among those frequent these areas. The mini bus service has stops at Ruwi taxi point, Ruwi commercial area, Al Walajah School, Baladiya Street, Souq Ruwi, Hillat al Aliya, Hamriya roundabout, Hamriya, High Street, and returns to the bus station for the next service.

“This bus service is introduced as part of catering to the low income groups who want to ply between these points in down town Ruwi,” said a Mwasalat official. **SEE P5**

KHARTOUM

200 PEOPLE KILLED IN FIGHTING IN SUDAN

At least 200 people were killed in two days of ethnic clashes in Sudan's southern Blue Nile state, official media said on Saturday, up from an earlier toll of 150.

Clashes in Blue Nile, which borders Ethiopia and South Sudan, broke out last week after reported disputes over land between members of the Hausa people and rival groups, with residents reporting hundreds fleeing intense gunfire and homes and shops set ablaze. **SEE P6**

HM to visit Bahrain tomorrow

TWO-DAY VISIT FOLLOWS INVITE FROM KING HAMAD BIN ISA AL KHALIFA



MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will leave Oman for an official two-day visit to the Kingdom of Bahrain on Monday, according to a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court on Saturday.

The statement reads as follow: “In affirmation of the deep-rooted relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain and based on the keenness of the two countries’ leaderships to enhance joint ties, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik will go on an official two-day visit to Bahrain with effect from Monday, October 24, 2022, in response to an invitation from King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa of Bahrain. The visit will explore areas of the existing cooperation between the two countries in various spheres and means of promoting them to serve interests of the Omani and Bahraini peoples and meet their aspirations for further progress and prosperity.

During the visit, His Majesty the Sultan will be accompanied by a high-ranking delegation comprising 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; Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance; and Sayyid Faisal bin Hareb al Busaidy, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Bahrain.

May the Almighty Allah protect HM wherever he might be and guard him as a treasured source of pride and inspiration to his nation.” — ONA **SEE P3, P4**



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IT'S NOT DIWALI WITHOUT MITHAI

P7

INSIDE



UK GRIPPED BY LATEST JOHNSON PLOT TWIST

P9

SEEB CROWNED CHAMPIONS OF ASIA



Seeb made history on Saturday when they registered a 3-0 win over Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur City FC in the finals on Saturday. At Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur city, Ali al Busaidi, Abdulaziz al Maqbali and Mohsin al Ghassani scored goals to deliver Seeb the first-ever AFC Cup glory. This is the first time that an Omani club has won an international competition. **REPORT ON P10**

Ukraine faces massive power cuts

KYIV: Critical infrastructure across Ukraine was pounded by more than a dozen Russian missiles on Saturday, the Ukrainian air force said, with several regions reporting strikes on energy facilities and power outages.

At the same time Russian occupation authorities in the Ukrainian city of Kherson urged civilians to leave immediately

citing what they called a tense military situation as Ukraine's forces advance.

MASSIVE ATTACK

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy wrote on the Telegram app regarding Russian attacks on infrastructure that began overnight: “The enemy launched a massive attack: 36 rockets, most of which were shot down,”

The air force command earlier had said 33 missiles had been fired at Ukraine on Saturday morning, adding that 18 of them had been shot down.

Since Oct. 10, Russia has launched a series of devastating salvos at Ukraine's power infrastructure, which have hit at least half of its thermal power generation and up to 40% of the entire system. — **Reuters**

In a first, Oman to host Aga Khan Awards for Architecture & Music

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, will preside over the distribution of Aga Khan Award for Architecture at the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) on October 31.

As many as 463 projects contested the award's 15th edition, hosted by the Sultanate of Oman for the first time. The event marks the 45th anniversary of the award.

The winners are Urban River Spaces and Social Spaces projects of Bangladesh; Blimbingsari Airport project of Indonesia; Argo Contemporary Art Museum and Cultural Centre project of Iran; Renovation of Niemeyer Guest House project of Lebanon; and CEM Kamanar Secondary School project of Senegal.

It happens for the first time in the history of Aga Khan award that both the architecture and music awards coincide at one time and one country — the Sultanate of Oman.

His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said will preside over the distribution of the Aga Khan Music Awards on October 30. The winners are

Zakir Hussain of India; Afel Bocoum of Mali; Asin Khan Langa of India; Coumbane Mint Ely Warakane of Mauritania; Dawood Khan Sadozai of Indonesia; Benny Kandra Reni of Indonesia; Soumic Datta of the United Kingdom; Yahya Hussein Abdullah of Tanzania; Yasmin Shah Hosseini of Iran; and Zarsanga of Pakistan.

Special mentions included Dilshad Khan of India; Kalashan Band of Iran; Sin Zuhour of Pakistan; Zulkifli and Bur'am of Indonesia; and Syed Mohammad Mousavi and Mahor of Iran.

On October 29, 2022, His Highness Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd al Said, Secretary-General at the Secretariat-General of the Council of Ministers, will preside over the distribution of Aga Khan Music Awards.

The ceremony includes the distribution of the “March of Creativity Award” to the accompaniment of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra and the Aga Khan Music band. Music researcher Musallam bin Ahmed al Kathiri from the Sultanate of Oman will be felicitated for his contributions to the preservation of the Omani musical heritage. **TURN TO P2**



Sayyid Theyazin to preside over Aga Khan awards

FROM PAGE 1

His Highness Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), will preside over a symposium for winners of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture 2022. The event, due to take place at Al Bustan Palace Hotel, will begin at 9 am on Sunday, October 30, 2022, and continue until 1 pm. The symposium will be attended by experts, academics and architects from the global community and the Sultanate of Oman. The first session of the symposium will focus on infrastructure in an Omani context. The second session will deal with the social impact of architecture from an Omani perspective.

Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, gave the following statement: "The distribution of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture and Music 2022 in the Sultanate of Oman offers a variety of opportunities to academic researchers, musicians and architects. It will enable



them to learn about new and outstanding areas highlighted by the awards. It will allow them to be in touch with winners from different countries of the world and the protocols associated with the awards. It will also expand the Omani cultural scene integration with various countries of the world and consolidate social awareness about participation in these international awards. The hosting of the events provides a true manifestation of Oman's vision to become a destination for art, literature and culture."

Al Busaidi said that Oman's deep-rooted history and civilisation make it a destination for awards and an ideal venue for international organisations and international cultural events. The Aga Khan Award already placed Oman among its key locations for the upcoming hosting, he said.

Al Busaidi explained that Oman gains intellectual and tourist depth through the presence of this elite selection of participants, winners, senior invitees and cultural figures who meet here to attend the award distribution ceremony.

"Follow-up of the event via media platforms will highlight Oman's economic and scholarly domains, thus achieving one of the most important pillars of the country's cultural strategy, which targets cultural openness to the world and the global propagation of the Omani cultural identity," said Al Busaidi.

Al Busaidi pointed out that Oman will host the 7th International Photographers Forum in the forthcoming period. Besides a wide media coverage, the event will include meetings of the Arab Academy of Music aimed at promoting Oman.

The ceremonies, scheduled at the ROHM, will be held in the presence of ministers, under-secretaries, a selection of Omani architects and musicians and about 250 international guests — in addition to members of the Awards Steering Committee, the jury, candidates and winners of the Architecture and Music Awards.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established in 1977 and it seeks to identify, encourage and promote building

concepts that successfully meet the needs and aspirations of societies in which Muslims have a significant presence since the award's inception 45 years ago.

As many as 128 projects have received the award and nearly 10,000 construction projects have been documented.

The Aga Khan Award for Music was established in 1981 by the Aga Khan and is administered by a Steering Committee co-chaired by Aga Khan and his brother Ameen Aga Khan. Other members of the committee are Ara Guzelimian, Special Adviser and Honorary Representative at

the Juilliard School; Artistic and Executive Director of the Ojai Music Festival; and Sir Jonathan Mills, Director of the Edinburgh International Culture Summit; Joseph Melillo, Executive Producer and Professor Emeritus, Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM); Salima Hashmi, Professor Emeritus, Beaconhouse National University (BNU); Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the University of Central Asia (UCA); and Zhibar Rahman, Senior Programme Officer at the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Arts. — ONA



Meet seeks to boost GCC cooperation in health field



RIYADH: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the 8th meeting of the GCC Health Ministers Committee which convened in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The meeting discussed several topics of common concern to enhance joint GCC action in the field of health. It followed up on the implementation of the health resolutions taken by the GCC Supreme Council at its 42nd session which aimed at complementing the requirements of the global competitiveness and non-customs restrictions concerning the ministries of health of the GCC states. In addition, the meeting touched on the Supreme Council's resolution taken at its 37th session.

The committee debated the action plan of GCC Health Ministers Committee (2022-2026) which included a number of joint

programmes and projects aimed to boost health cooperation and integration between the GCC states. It followed up on the implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005). The committee followed up on the implementation of GCC strategic plan for the health cities programme, registration and classification of health specialties and strategic dialogues between the GCC countries and brotherly and friendly countries in the health field.

The meeting concluded by discussion on the medicines and medical equipment exempted from value-added tax and the WHO Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs).

The Sultanate of Oman's delegation was headed by Dr Mohammed bin Saif al Hosni, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Health for Health Affairs. — ONA

■ QUEEN ELIZABETH CRUISE SHIP VISITS OMAN



SALALAH: The Port of Salalah on Friday received the cruise ship Queen Elizabeth with 1,651 tourists on board as part of its tourism programme. The programme for the passengers of the cruise ship included tours to archaeological, tourist and historical monuments in Dhofar, in addition to visiting the beaches and traditional markets in the city of Salalah. It is worth noting that the Sultanate of Oman witnesses the visits of many cruise ships annually, due to its distinguished marine location overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. — ONA



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Engelbert Humperdinck (1854–1921)
Performed By Deutsche Oper Berlin



28 October | 7:00 PM

29 October | 4:00 PM

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Deep history and bright future

MUSCAT: Bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain are based on solid foundations, framed by warm, stable and constantly enduring ties that are deeply rooted in history.

These relations, which extend to different political, economic, social and cultural domains, are accorded great attention by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Hamad bin Issa al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain.

During the two leaders' upcoming talks in Manama, the two countries aspire to take their relations towards broader horizons of cooperation in different fields, notably economic areas, to generate more benefits for their respective peoples.

In view of the exceptional bilateral relations, the Omani-Bahraini Committee has worked on a number of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and executive programmes in cultural and tourism fields. It also coordinated between the Civil Service Employees Pension Fund in Oman and the Public Authority for Social Insurance in Bahrain. Coordination covered areas of civil retirement, youth and sports.

ECONOMIC POTENTIALS

Oman and Bahrain enjoy many economic and tourism potentials that encourage more partnerships. The two countries' visions (Oman Vision 2040) and (Bahrain Vision 2030) provide wide scopes for economic diversification, which open up opportunities for investment in sectors.

Statistics issued by the National Center for Statistics and Information indicate that the volume of trade exchange between the two countries is witnessing a remarkable growth,

OMAN, BAHRAIN
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to reach by the end of 2021 more than RO 320.7 million. Meanwhile, the volume of trade exchange between the two countries during the first half of 2022 amounted to RO 241.4 million.

The most important commodities exported from the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Bahrain include electrical, plastic, aluminium, medicines and other commodities, whereas the iron ores, gold ingots and electric wires topped the list of imported commodities from the Kingdom of Bahrain.

The number of Bahraini companies investing in the Sultanate of Oman reached 876, with a total invested capital of RO 566.2 million.

PRIVATE SECTOR COOPERATION

Thanks to the existing cooperation of the private sector between the two countries over the past years, the Kingdom of Bahrain has become one of the most important investment partners of the Sultanate of Oman, which indicates the growth of economic and trade relations between the two countries.

The private sector in the two countries also agreed during March 2022 to establish Oman-Bahrain Investment Holding Company with a capital of RO 10 million to be equally divided between Omani businessmen and their Bahraini counterparts. The company specialises in investing in the field of food security and existing companies operating in this field and in other sectors of importance to Oman Vision 2040.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

In the cultural context, the Gulf Radio and Television Festival, which has been held every year in Bahrain for more than 40 years, takes credit for honing the skills of Omani intellectual, artist and media persons. Oman achieved advanced places in the past editions of the festival held in the Bahraini capital, Manama.

On June 27, 2022, the Embassy of Bahrain in Muscat celebrated the inauguration of the Omani-Bahraini Friendship Society, which will contribute to strengthening relations between the two countries in various fields of culture and cognitive development.

Oman, represented by the National Records and Archives Authority, and Bahrain, represented by Issa Cultural Centre will organise during May 2023, a two-day symposium to be entitled "Omani-Bahraini Relations: A Deep History and a Bright Future".





Sayyid Faisal Hareb al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Bahrain

HM's visit to expand cooperation in all fields

OMAN, BAHRAIN COOPERATION HAS SEEN STEADY GROWTH SINCE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ARAB GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) AND THE FORMATION OF A JOINT MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE AND A JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

Economic relations between Oman and Bahrain are accorded the attention of the two wise leaderships and all officials. Recently, the two countries chambers of commerce held a series of meetings on forging Omani-Bahraini partnerships

MANAMA: Sayyid Faisal bin Hareb al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Bahrain, affirmed that relations between Oman and Bahrain are deep-rooted in history and consolidated through economic interests, thanks to a wide range of common factors binding the two countries.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Sayyid Faisal said that the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Kingdom of Bahrain and his scheduled meeting with King Hamad bin Isa al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain, will bolster joint action and promote relations in diplomatic, economic, cultural and scientific fields, with the two countries set to sign a number of memoranda of understanding.

Sayyid Faisal added that this

The joint Omani-Bahraini Committee is embarked on expanding vistas of cooperation in an array of economic and investment sectors, with the overall objective of achieving full integration between Oman Vision 2040 and Bahrain Vision 2030

cooperation has seen steady growth since the establishment of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the formation of a Joint Ministerial Committee and a Joint Business Council. This, he said, led to the two sides signing a number of agreements and memoranda of understanding aimed at regulating and cementing joint cooperation in all fields, including the financial, banking, mining, logistics, transportation and tourism sectors.

TRADE EXCHANGE

Sayyid Faisal pointed out that the joint Omani-Bahraini Committee is embarked on expanding vistas of cooperation in an array of economic and investment sectors, with the overall objective of achieving full integration between Oman Vision

2040 and Bahrain Vision 2030. A key mechanism to accomplish this mission is to promote investment promotion between the two countries and attract global investments, he added.

By 2021, the volume of trade exchange between Oman and Bahrain stood at RO 323 million, said Sayyid Faisal, noting that economic relations between Oman and Bahrain are accorded the attention of the two wise leaderships and all officials. Recently, the two countries' chambers of commerce held a series of meetings on forging Omani-Bahraini partnerships.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Sayyid Faisal said that cultural exchange between Oman and Bahrain has been manifested through many activities, including the participation of the Omani Lute Hobbyists

Association in Bahrain International Festival of Arts. Reciprocally, a Bahraini delegation took part in the Conference of the International Federation of Journalists (Congress 31) hosted by Oman last May, Sayyid Faisal observed.

Cooperation between Oman and Bahrain has also been tangible in the field of scholarships, said Sayyid Faisal, noting that 160 Omani students pursue their education in Bahrain in various disciplines, while 74 Bahraini students study in Oman's universities and colleges.

Sayyid Faisal further explained the Omani-Bahraini Friendship Society was announced this year and that the panel is hoped to develop relations between the two peoples in the economic, cultural, social and tourism fields. — ONA



Oman, Bahrain enjoy solid, well-founded relations



TO FURTHER COOPERATION, OMAN-BAHRAIN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY WAS ANNOUNCED IN JUNE THIS YEAR WITH THE PRIME AIM OF OPENING UP NEW VISTAS OF COOPERATION

The two countries are bound by strategic, cultural, commercial, and historical relations that stem from bonds of love and kinship

MUSCAT: Dr Jumaa bin Ahmed al Kaabi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Sultanate of Oman, has said that the two countries enjoy well-founded relations.

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), Al Kaabi said, "Fraternal relations between Oman and Bahrain are deeply rooted in history, as evidenced through centuries-old civilisations of Dilmun and Majan. The two countries are bound by strategic, cultural, commercial, and historical relations that stem from bonds of love and kinship. Bilateral relations are now in their prime, thanks to the directives of the wise leaderships of the two countries."

Al Kaabi added that the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the Kingdom of Bahrain will culminate in the signing of a number of agreements

HM's visit will culminate in the signing of a number of agreements and executive programmes in various fields

and executive programmes in various fields. This, he said, will open up prospects for cooperation that meet the aspirations of the two countries' peoples.

Al Kaabi pointed out that cooperation between the two countries covers many fields such as space science, information technology, stock exchange, social development, small and medium enterprises, entrepreneurship and meteorology. This is in addition to executive programmes in the fields of youth, sports, environment, climate change, agriculture, livestock and tourism, he added.

JOINT COMMITTEE

Al Kaabi indicated that "Meetings of Bahrain-Oman Joint Committee, established in 2006, gave rise to

the signing of 25 agreements, memoranda of understanding and executive programmes. This helped to consolidate bilateral relations."

"To further cooperation, Oman-Bahrain Friendship Society was announced in June this year (2022) with the prime aim of opening up new vistas of cooperation.

The committee's meeting in August 2021 identified four areas of cooperation, namely food security, the labour market, mining and the banking and financial field, under the guidance of the foreign ministers of the two countries. Emphasis was laid on 28 areas of cooperation, to achieve specific goals," said Al Kaabi in his statement to ONA.

TRADE RELATIONS

"On the economic side, trade relations

scaled new heights and saw a growth rate of 10% this year to the tune of USD 720 million.

The two countries chambers of commerce and industry exchanged visits among the business community in both countries, notably through Bahrain Businessmen Association. As many as 490 firms operate in the two countries within the context of partnerships in various projects," Al Kaabi added.

The ambassador pointed out that work is under way to establish an Omani-Bahraini company that will be tasked to set up joint ventures.

This is in addition to 60 companies operating in the fields of tourism, services and construction, within the sphere of small and medium enterprises, he added at the conclusion of his statement. — ONA



Al Dakhiliyah students to get training in 3D printing and modelling

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, OCT. 22

A 3D modelling laboratory, which was established with the support of Oman LNG Development Foundation, was launched in Nizwa.

It was inaugurated by Dr Hafez bin Said bin Abdullah al Rahbi, Dean of University of Technology and Applied Sciences, Nizwa, in the presence of Saif bin Mubarak bin Saleh al Julandani, Director-General of education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate; Dr. Amer bin Nasser al Mataani, CEO of Oman LNG; and Ismail bin Suleiman al Sawafi, Director-General of Social Responsibility and Public Relations of Oman LNG.

The Modelling Laboratory project comes within the framework of implementing the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan 2021-2025 to promote a culture of innovation and to provide teachers and students with the Fourth Industrial

Revolution skills like 3D printing.

Al Julandani said in his opening speech, "This project is a continuation of the existing technological projects in the centre and an extension of the foundation's support project to provide ten 3D printers to the schools of the governorate. Through the project, we look forward to helping innovators with abilities to produce their projects in a way that they can present, market and promote. Students will be trained in 3D design and 3D printers."

The laboratory will also provide training programmes for students as well as teachers and those interested in innovations from the community.

This project will help schools to embrace the Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies.

"We take the opportunity to express our great pleasure when the private sector helps to support educational projects. We thank Oman LNG for its support to this project and others."

MODERN AND EFFICIENT

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION GAINING SPEED

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Mwasalat has introduced point to point services within the Ruwi area, which is fast becoming popular among those frequent these areas.

The mini bus service begins at Ruwi bus station and stops at Ruwi taxi point, Ruwi commercial area, Al Walajah School, Baladiya Street, Souq Ruwi, Hillat al Aliya, Hamriya roundabout, Hamriya, High Street, and returns to the bus station for the next service.

"This bus service is introduced as part of catering to the low income groups who want to ply between these points in down town Ruwi," said a Mwasalat official.

This down town Ruwi transportation service is extended upto late night and is available every 4 minutes for the convenience of the passengers.

This service, besides the short distance services to places like Wadi Kabir, is planning more



such inclusive services to other nearby areas of the city including Old Muscat and Sidab.

"I have been using this short distance service since it launched recently and I found it very convenient to fulfil my tasks in and around Ruwi," said a passenger, adding that "these services are cheaper than line taxi services."

'Mwasalat', the erstwhile Oman National Transport Company, is a member of ASYAD Group, and

is engaged in offering a modern and efficient public transport system, committed to cutting-edge technology.

In addition, it has been working on a daily basis with its stakeholders in providing a world-class public transport service.

It has so far transported 5 million passengers in its 36 bus routes. An average of nearly 4,000 passengers make use of the service daily.

It has transported more than 210,000 passengers and 9,100 tonnes of cargo on the Shannah-Masirah route since the beginning of Covid-19 pandemic through its ferry service between Masirah Island and Shanna Port.

This ferry service contributes greatly to facilitating the movement of passengers between the island and the mainland, and helps enhance economic activities and services.

Need for blood units on the rise

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

There has been an increase in the demand for blood units and its components despite the increase in the number of donors, according to the Central Blood Bank in Bausher, part of the Department of Blood Banks Services at the Ministry of Health (MoH).

The demand for blood units per day in all the hospitals and clinics is 140 units whereas it was

100 units on an average before 2020, an increase of nearly 40 per cent.

The demand for blood and its components has been steadily rising from 10 per cent to 15 on an average basis and it has suddenly jumped four fold, according to the CBB.

According to the Department, the cases that require blood transfusion or one of its components are RTA cases, any other accidents (workplace/home), during surgeries,

malignant blood diseases, bone marrow failure, some cases of genetic blood diseases, some cancerous tumors, and in some cases of childbirth.

"We have raised the sourcing of blood units and hundreds of blood donation camps are organised, some on our own while some are in cooperation with private organisations," a representative of the Blood Bank at the Hala Polyclinic blood donation camp told the Observer.

The Department raised the

voluntary blood donation rate to 96 per cent at the level of the central blood bank, in addition to increasing the number of collected blood units to 14 per cent in 2021 compared to 2020. In addition, the Department organised many blood donation campaigns in cooperation with different authorities. In 2021, it conducted more than 300 blood donation campaigns.

"However, the demand for blood units is steadily rising owing to many factors," he added.

Oman attends OIC conference in Turkey

ISTANBUL: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Information, took part in the 12th Conference of the Ministers of Information of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Istanbul on Saturday.

Held under the theme 'Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in Post-Truth Era', the conference aims to enhance cooperation between the Islamic countries.

The Sultanate of Oman's



delegation was headed by Mohammed bin Said al Balushi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Information.

The meeting reviewed ways to develop programmes for combating disinformation and Islamophobia and

debated the establishment of the OIC media forum.

Speaking at the opening session, Hissein Ibrahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), said that the conference would discuss

the challenges facing the media in the OIC member states and review the media discourse delivered by both the conventional and modern media.

The OIC secretary-general said that the session would discuss a number of issues most notably the Palestinian cause and the attacks on Al Aqsa Mosque and would focus on the member states in the African continent.

— ONA

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Directorate General of Financial Affairs at Ministry Of Health announces to all companies and institutions dealing with (MOH Headquarters) and (Directorates General of Health Services and its affiliated departments at all the Governorates) to submit their invoices to the concerned authorities not later than **06.11.2022**, to settle all their claims before the end of current year 2022.

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Advertisement No. (40/2022)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tenders:

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44/2022/MM/PA-11-Recall-1	Supply of Lubricant Oils	25/- OMR	07/11/2022	18/11/2022	21/11/2022
61/2022/MM/PA-17-Recall-1	Supply of Building Materials	25/- OMR	07/11/2022	18/11/2022	21/11/2022
66/2022/MM/PA-21-Recall-1	Supply of Plumbing Materials	25/- OMR	07/11/2022	18/11/2022	21/11/2022
67/2022/MM/PA-22-Recall-1	Supply of Painting Materials	25/- OMR	07/11/2022	18/11/2022	21/11/2022
114/2022/MM/PA-25	Supply of Printers	25/- OMR	13/11/2022	28/11/2022	01/12/2022
115/2022/MM/PA-26	Supply of Chain Saw Machines	25/- OMR	13/11/2022	28/11/2022	01/12/2022
116/2022/MM/PA-27	Supply of Containers for Collecting Coal	25/- OMR	13/11/2022	28/11/2022	01/12/2022

- Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.
- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through link mentioned above.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond as per details mentioned in E-Tendering and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality and valid for (90) days starting from the deadline for submission.
- Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.
- Clarifications and support:
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
 - For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to etenderhd@mtc.gov.om or call (+968 24402200).
 - For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to esnad@gstb.gov.om or call (+968 24402200 / 24402330).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



At least 200 killed in fighting in Sudan’s south

KHARTOUM: At least 200 people were killed in two days of ethnic clashes in Sudan’s southern Blue Nile state, official media said on Saturday, up from an earlier toll of 150.

Clashes in Blue Nile, which borders Ethiopia and South Sudan, broke out last week after reported disputes over land between members of the Hausa people and rival groups, with residents reporting hundreds fleeing intense gunfire and homes and shops set ablaze.

Fighting peaked on Wednesday and Thursday to some of the worst in recent months, prompting the provincial governor to declare a state of emergency on Friday.

“Two hundred people were killed” in three villages in the Wad al Mahi area, some 500 kilometres south of the capital Khartoum, said local assembly chief Abdel Aziz al Amin.

“Some of the bodies have not been buried yet,” he told state television, calling on “humanitarian groups to help” local authorities bury the dead.

Governor Ahmed al Omda Badi had ordered a “state of emergency... in the whole Blue Nile state for



Sudanese protesters block a street in Omdourman the capital Khartoum’s twin city. – AFP

30 days”, according to a Friday provincial decree seen.

Abbas Moussa, the head of the

Wad al Mahi hospital, said on Thursday that “women, children and elderly” people were among

the dead.

Several hundred people had demonstrated in the Blue Nile

capital, Damazin, earlier that day, shouting: “No to violence”. Some demanded Governor Badi

be sacked, accusing him of not protecting them.

From July to early October, at least 149 people were killed and 65,000 displaced in Blue Nile, according to the United Nations.

The Hausa have mobilised across Sudan, claiming they are discriminated against by tribal law which forbids them to own land in Blue Nile because they were the last group to arrive there.

The issue of access to land is highly sensitive in impoverished Sudan, where agriculture and livestock account for 43 per cent of employment and 30 per cent of GDP, according to UN and World Bank statistics.

Sudan has been grappling with deepening political unrest and a spiralling economic crisis since last year’s military coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan.

A surge in ethnic violence in recent months has highlighted the security breakdown in Sudan since the coup.

A total of 546 people were killed and at least 211,000 forced to flee their homes in inter-communal conflicts across the country from January to September, according to the UN. — **AFP**

Australia, Japan agree to strengthen security ties

SYDNEY: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and his Japanese counterpart Fumio Kishida agreed on Saturday to strengthen security ties between the two US allies amid China’s push for greater influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

At the annual Australia-Japan Leaders’ Meeting, held in the Western Australian capital Perth, the two signed a security cooperation agreement updating a 2007 pact, to respond to a changed regional security environment.

As part of the bolstered security partnership, Albanese said Japan’s military would train and exercise in northern Australia alongside Australian Defence Force personnel.

In their fourth summit since Albanese took office in May, they said the agreement would serve “as a compass” for security cooperation for the next decade. They agreed to consult and study responses to emergencies that could affect regional security.



Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Japan Prime Minister Kishida Fumio pose with koalas during their visit to Kings Park in Perth. – **AFP**

Albanese and Kishida also discussed climate change, expressing support for a regional transition to net zero carbon emissions and boosting investment in clean energy tech.

“Both our countries are committed to net zero by 2050,” Albanese told reporters after a signing ceremony.

Among those efforts, the leaders agreed to help build

secure supply chains between the two nations for “critical minerals, including those that are required for building the green technologies of the future,” Albanese said.

“This partnership will mean we build secure supply chains, promote investment, develop Australia’s domestic sector and make sure Japan’s advanced manufacturers have the critical minerals they need.” — **Reuters**

Chinese ex-president Jintao escorted out of party congress

BEIJING: Chinese former president Hu Jintao was unexpectedly escorted out of the closing ceremony of a congress of the ruling Communist Party on Saturday.

Hu, 79, Xi Jinping’s immediate predecessor, was seated to the left of Xi. He was led off the stage of the main auditorium of the Great Hall of the People in Beijing by two stewards, a Reuters witness at the congress said.

Video footage published showed a steward repeatedly trying to lift Hu from his seat, drawing concerned looks from officials seated nearby. Hu then put his hand on a sheet of paper placed on Xi’s folder but Xi quickly put his hand on the sheet.

China’s top legislator Li Zhanshu, seated to Hu’s right, gave the former president’s folder to a steward, wiping his own head with a cloth after Hu finally stood up.

Looking distressed, Hu appeared to resist leaving as the stewards escorted him out, turning back to his seat at



China’s President Xi Jinping talks to former president Hu Jintao at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. – **AFP**

one point. On his way out, he exchanged words with Xi and patted Premier Li Keqiang, seated to the right of Xi, on the shoulder.

Video of the incident, highly unusual given the meticulous stage management of most such events, was widely shared on Twitter but could not be found on China’s heavily censored social media platforms.

On China’s Twitter-like Weibo, a few social media users alluded to the incident by commenting on old posts featuring Hu, a

common tactic used to evade cyberspace censors.

By Saturday evening, however, the comments section of almost all Weibo posts containing Hu’s name were no longer visible, according to a review.

State media coverage of the ceremony did not include the scene, which occurred as journalists were entering the hall.

Hu had appeared slightly unsteady last Sunday when he was assisted onto the same stage for the opening ceremony of the congress. — **Reuters**

SHORT TAKES

KABUL

Fighters involved in Afghanistan attack killed

Taliban forces have killed six fighters from the IS group who were involved in a suicide bombing on an Afghan educational centre that killed dozens of female students, an official said.

On September 30, a bomber blew himself up next to women at a gender-segregated study hall in Kabul packed with hundreds of students sitting a practice test for university admissions.

At least 53 people, including 46 girls and young women, were killed in the attack, according to the Unit-



ed Nations. No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing, but on Saturday the Taliban authorities blamed the IS for several recent attacks on civilians, including the one at Kaaj Educational Centre.

BEIRUT

Lebanon, Syria discuss sea border deal

Lebanese President Michel Aoun and Syrian President Bashar al Assad discussed delineating their countries’ shared maritime border, a Lebanese official said.

A dispute over their shared sea boundary emerged last year after Syria granted a licence to a Russian energy company to begin maritime exploration in an area Lebanon claimed.

Several gas discoveries have been made in the eastern Mediterranean. Aoun earlier said



demarcating the border would be next after Lebanon agreed its southern maritime boundary with longtime foe Israel following years of indirect US-mediated talks.

BAGHDAD

Confidence vote on new Iraqi govt delayed

Iraq’s major political forces have postponed a confidence vote in the new government planned for Saturday, amid persistent haggling over the allocation of cabinet posts, lawmakers said.

Prime minister-designate Mohammed Shia al Sudani was tapped to form a new government on October 13, raising hopes of an end to a year of deadlock since Iraq’s last election, but the nominee has been locked in talks with po-



tential partners over who gets which ministry. “The session has been postponed,” said Kurdistan Democratic Party lawmaker Sherwan Dubardany.

As inflation stalks Europe, leaders shudder



JASON HOROWITZ

As winter approaches, Europe's united turn away from Russian energy is beginning to bite in households everywhere, eroding living standards and in some countries threatening to chip away at the united front for sanctions against Russia

THE retired women wheeled their canvas shopping carts to the fresh pasta counter of an outdoor market in Rome this week and commiserated about how the price of tagliatelle, oranges, napkins, utility bills — you name it — had gone through the roof.

“Prices have gone up on everything,” said Simonetta Belardi, 69, a self-described leftist who argued that while inflation whittled away her savings, it also wore down her support for Ukraine in the war that many across Europe blame for the astronomical costs. She was no fan of Russia, she said, but the time had long passed for an end to military support for Ukraine and a shift to diplomatic negotiations for peace. She said more and more people she knew, in need of economic relief, were losing their patience, too.

“All they want is arms, arms, arms,” she said of Ukraine. “I’m sick and tired of them.”

It is a sentiment — impatience, even inchoate anger, at the inflation fueled by the war — that transcends the shoppers in Rome’s piazzas and can be found among the weekly protests in Germany or in the swelling ranks of French strikers. And it has leaders nervous.

While Britain’s economic tailspin was largely self-inflicted by unfunded tax proposals, the resignation on Thursday of Prime Minister Liz Truss sent perhaps the clearest signal yet that political peril awaits those who fail to address inflation and the erosion of living standards, no matter the cause.

The situation is arguably even more dire on continental Europe. The annual inflation rate in the European Union is at its highest in decades — 10.9 per cent in September, up from 3.6 per cent a year earlier.

That is worse even than in the United States or Britain, and it is being driven largely by the bloc’s unique and anguishing withdrawal pains as it tries to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin for his war of Ukraine by quitting its long dependence on cheap Russian gas.

As winter approaches, Europe’s united turn away from Russian energy is beginning to bite in households everywhere, eroding living standards and in some countries threatening to chip away at the united front for sanctions against Russia.

Mario Draghi, the departing prime minister of Italy and an architect of the continent’s united line against Russia, warned as much would happen if Europe failed to reach a deal to cap prices on the alternative gas imports.

Spiraling energy costs, he said in a speech at the United Nations in September, would be something that “puts at risk the economic recovery, limits the buying power of families and damages the production capabilities of businesses.”

It “can wear down the commitment of our countries toward Ukraine,” he added.

In Italy, the pressure is everywhere. Trade unions want the government to spend more on energy subsidies to help companies like pottery makers, who need to power their furnaces, but also farmers, who are getting slammed on the cost of fertilisers, which are produced with gas or potassium from Russia.

This week, former prime minister Giuseppe Conte, who has recast himself as a populist hero of the poor in Italy’s south, announced he would join a large demonstration on November 5 demanding peace for Ukraine and an end to arms shipments. Critics say he is advocating Ukraine’s surrender.

As elsewhere, the incoming right-wing government of Giorgia Meloni will have to struggle with how to cushion



The billionaire media mogul Silvio Berlusconi, flanked by Matteo Salvini and Giorgia Meloni at a rally for her right-wing alliance in Rome.

inflation’s blow without inflating already bloated deficits.

Draghi, a former president of the European Central Bank, has argued that running a higher deficit would spook international markets, raise interest rates and hurt Italians.

Whether that can be avoided while resisting Putin and the temptation of Russian energy is the question.

But the Baltic countries, which are taking the hardest economic hit, have shown that opposition to Putin remains the priority.

Estonia, which last month registered an inflation rate of 24 per cent, the highest in Europe, has not wavered on the war. Nor has Lithuania or Latvia, where inflation is running about 22 per cent.

But the loss of purchasing power is not without political consequence.

Support for Estonia’s far-right nationalist party just six months before a parliamentary election has grown, although it has shown no sympathy for Putin, and it supports sending arms to Ukraine.

For its part, Britain has strongly supported Ukraine, but as Truss’ government imploded under the weight of its own reckless economic policies, a debate emerged about whether to cut back on military spending even as Ukraine seeks more arms.

In Germany, Europe’s biggest economy, the leadership is trying to spend its way out of the crisis as only it can. But even there it’s not clear the relief will be felt in time, and whether it will exacerbate the country’s already deeply divided stance on how to help Ukraine and whether to work with Russia or isolate it.

Today, 67 per cent of Germans worry about rising costs of living — 16 per cent higher than last year. It’s the country’s top concern, despite government aid packages.

German authorities said that an aid package of 200 billion euros that was proposed by the government earlier this month appeared to have eased some popular anxiety,

with promises of gas and electricity price caps, as well as direct aid to struggling families and businesses.

But in France, the strikes and demonstrations are gaining in intensity as a fear of eroding living standards dominates concerns, polls indicate.

Inflation, pushed by soaring energy prices, will shave \$73 billion from the gross domestic product and shrink France’s purchasing power by 1.4 per cent next year, with the effect felt largely in poorer households, a recent study predicted.

“The energy crisis is very unequal,” said one of the study’s authors, Éric Heyer, an economist at the Paris-based French Economic Observatory.

In August, President Emmanuel Macron of France called on people to endure the economic hardship as a show of solidarity with Ukraine, and conservation efforts have reduced French energy consumption by 14 per cent. It was France’s duty to “accept the price of our freedom and values,” Macron said.

While there is still general opposition to Russia, on the question of sacrificing purchasing power to support Ukraine, “public opinion is much more divided,” said Adrien Broche, the co-author of a study showing that only one-third of the French now agree with bearing the economic consequences of the war.

In Italy, Meloni has had to assure skeptics that she would keep Draghi’s hard line against Russia despite having in her coalition Matteo Salvini, a populist leader who used to wear shirts with Putin’s face on them, and Silvio Berlusconi, who this week was caught on tape privately blaming Ukraine’s President, Volodymyr Zelensky, for forcing Russia to attack.

Lorenzo Codogno, a former director-general of the Italian treasury who runs a consulting firm that closely follows Italian politics, said he thought Meloni would maintain her strong support of Ukraine but would probably appeal to Europe to help lower taxes on core food items to help low-income Italians.

It’s not Diwali without mithai

VISITING a South Asian sweet shop during Diwali is a joyous and chaotic experience. Lines trail out the door. Employees furiously pack ornate boxes containing laddoos enriched with ghee, spongy rasgula and all manner of colourful sweets, often made with dairy, sugar and nuts and sometimes topped with a layer of edible silver foil.

Friends and relatives meet around the display cases by happenstance, exchanging good wishes. Diwali, which will be celebrated within South Asia and among its diaspora on October 24 this year, commemorates the triumph of light over darkness.

Central to that celebration is mithai, or sweets. Mass-produced mithai are readily available online, but these five independent shops make their sweets by hand every day, offering their local South Asian communities a taste of the familiar. Diwali is their prime time.

When Sukhdev Bawa immigrated to New York in 1981, his first job was driving a taxi. “My wife thought it was too dangerous,” he said. So he switched over to the sweets business, working for two other shops before starting his



PRIYA KRISHNA

own. At Maharaja Sweets, which he opened on a busy stretch of Jackson Heights, Queens, in 2000, he prepares snacks like mathi, deep-fried dough rounds that can be sweet or savoury.

Bawa’s employees travel to India frequently to bring back ideas for regional sweets to add to the menu, like anarkali, a Bengali sweet filled with cherry and pistachio, and rose bahar, squares filled with rose-flavoured sugar.

Maharaja sells about 80 different kinds of sweets. And while some shops use shortcuts, like milk powder, to produce such large quantities of mithai, Bawa prefers to use fresh milk: “We get the proper taste.”

Before she opened Punjab Sweets in Kent, Washington, in 2001, Iqbal Dha, the owner, said she used to drive more than three hours to Canada to buy mithai like besan burfi, which is made with chickpea flour, and milk cake, which is prepared by cooking milk down to a thicker consistency and mixing it with sugar.

Dha, wearing a colourful salwar kameez alongside her employees, learned to cook from her mother, and from preparing meals for langar, a Sikh tradition that provides free communal meals to anyone who needs one. She’s particular about what she eats, she said. “If I go to any wedding parties, I never eat because I don’t like it,” she said. “I like my food. I always eat at Punjabi Sweets. My employees, too.”

Her kitchen staff is made up entirely of women.



Mass-produced mithai are readily available online, but these independent shops make their sweets by hand every day, offering their local South Asian communities a taste of the familiar

She shut down indoor dining during the pandemic, but hopes to have it back up and running soon. Like many mithai shops, Punjab Sweets is a watering hole for the local Desi community. “People are calling me at home, saying, ‘We miss Punjabi Sweets,’” Dha said. “People have been buying from here since they were kids,” she said.

Jayasri Sweets in Herndon, Virginia, is known for its kaja, a flaky, deep-fried pastry from Andhra Pradesh. It is a specialty of the owner, Jayasri Gampa, who shapes the dough every day the shop is open. You won’t find the regional confection at many other mithai shops in the United States. Her version is glazed on the outside and crunchy with sugar on the inside.

“People even started taking it back home to India to show them how the American kaja is,” said Gampa’s husband, Dilipkumar, who helps run the business. “It has become that popular.” The family opened Brij Mohan in 2005. Sohan Lal Gaba, an owner, said that when he moved to the United States, the quality of milk, sugar and chickpea flour was much different than what he was used to in India. “There was no one to teach me about the ingredients and everything here,” he said. “I just figured it out myself, what I can do with available ingredients.” He has grown accustomed to using cow’s milk instead of buffalo milk, for example, in sweets like the shop’s bestselling slabs of milk cake, and sandwich gulab jamun filled with sweetened milk solids.

Beware of Internet romance



Dr Hamed al Sinawi @alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

The Netflix documentary ‘The Tinder Sinder’ tells the real story of a young man who used a dating social media application and presented himself as a son of diamond factory owner and tricked young women into lending him money that he would never repay. Once he meets a woman he would give her expensive gifts and take her to dinners in fancy restaurants using money he borrowed from other women he had previously conned. He would then pretend he was being attacked by his enemies who also stole his bank account details. He then asks the women to take out bank loans and new credit cards in order to help him. Once they sent the money, he stopped contacting them. According to the documentary, he swindled around \$10 million from women from different countries.

Watching this documentary made me wonder, what makes young and often educated women fall for such a trap. Why would they believe someone they met through an Internet dating app and fall in love with him? This made me search about the psychology of Internet romance and how people sometimes get emotionally attached to others just by meeting them virtually. Several psychological explanations were offered for such attachment, some are based on loneliness, lack of intimacy in real life relationships and curiosities. One particular study showed people were more likely to form a relationship through the Internet when they discover similarities in interest, emotional attachment and general views about the world with

‘STUDIES SHOWED PEOPLE WERE MORE LIKELY TO FORM A RELATIONSHIP THROUGH THE INTERNET WHEN THEY DISCOVER SIMILARITIES IN INTEREST, EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT AND GENERAL VIEWS ABOUT THE WORLD WITH THE OTHER PERSON’ the other person. The Internet makes it easier for people who have social anxiety to prevent them from meeting people face-to-face and the fact that you can remain anonymous or use a fake name makes it easy to express feelings that one would be shy from disclosing them to others. Another study showed that people often form Internet romance with others from different parts

of the world and some eventually meet face-to-face and even get married and have a family. Despite common beliefs that victims of Internet romance are lonely middle-aged women who are widows or divorced, recent study showed middle aged men who are married but have marital problems so the Internet romance serves as an escape for them. Some tend to idealise the “virtual partner” simply because their real parent is not fulfilling their emotional needs. While some Internet romance involves sexual behaviour others are emotional only with no sexual element. So how can one spot real Internet relationships from a scam? Psychologists warn of few signs that may suggest that you are being scammed. A scammer would prefer to move communication away

from dating apps and would ask the victim for their personal contact number earlier in the relationship. They would also ask lots of personal questions about you but avoid answering when you ask them the same questions. They usually tend to express their love quickly and use terms like “I never felt so close to someone like this before.” If you happen to be in the same city they would avoid meeting you in person or cancel at the last minute. Scammers may use emotional blackmail by telling you that they are in urgent need for a surgical operation and they need the money for that. Finally, while some Internet relationships are genuine, others may be fake and meant to abuse you emotionally and financially, so be vigilant and watch out for scammers.

Particle physics pushing cancer treatment boundaries

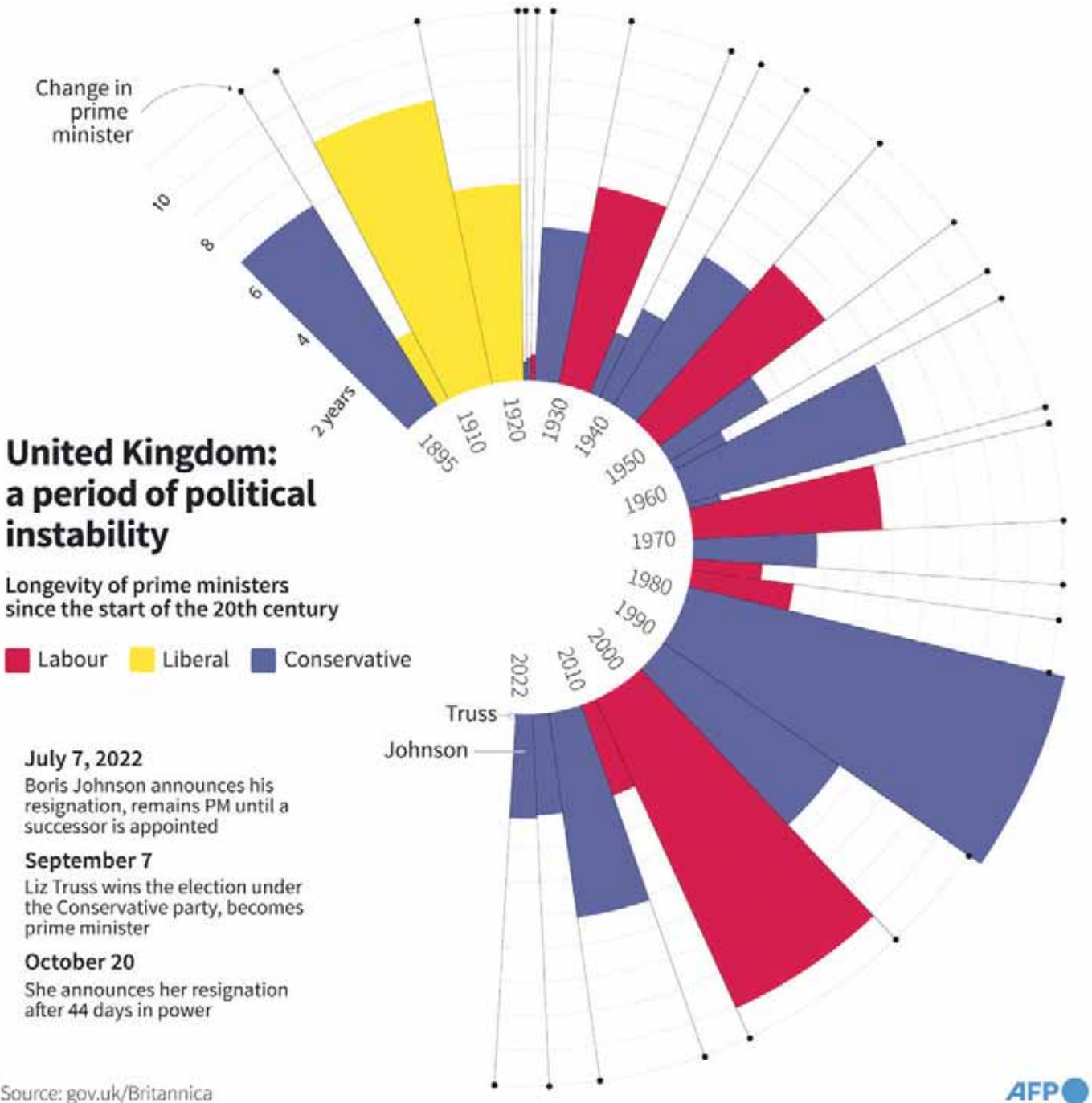
NINA LARSON

Researchers at Europe’s science lab CERN, who regularly use particle physics to challenge our understanding of the universe, are also applying their craft to upend the limits to cancer treatment. The physicists in Geneva are working with giant particle accelerators in search of ways to expand the reach of cancer radiation therapy, and take on hard-to-reach tumours that would otherwise have been fatal. In one CERN lab, called CLEAR, facility coordinator Roberto Corsini stands next to a large, linear particle accelerator consisting of a 40-metre metal beam with tubes packed in aluminium foil at one end, and a vast array of measurement instruments and protruding colourful wires and cables. He said during a recent visit, is aimed at creating very high energy beams of electrons -- the negatively charged particles in the nucleus of an atom — that eventually could help to combat cancerous cells more effectively. They are researching a “technology to accelerate electrons to the energies that are needed to treat deep-seated tumours, which is above 100 million electron volts” (MeV), Corsini explained.

The idea is to use these very high energy electrons (VHEE) in combination with a new and promising treatment method called FLASH. This method entails delivering the radiation dose in a few hundred milliseconds, instead of minutes as is the current approach. This has been shown to have the same destructive effect on the targeted tumour, but causes far less damage to the surrounding healthy tissue. With traditional radiation therapy, “you do create some collateral damage,” said Benjamin Fisch, a CERN knowledge transfer officer. The effect of the brief but intense FLASH treatment, he told reporters, is to “reduce the toxicity to healthy tissue while still properly damaging cancer cells.” FLASH was first used on patients in 2018, based on currently available medical linear accelerators, linacs, that provide low-energy electron beams of around 6-10 MeV. At such low energy though, the beams cannot penetrate deeply, meaning the highly-effective treatment has so far only been used on superficial tumours, found with skin cancer. — AFP

SUNAK, THE FORMER CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER UNDER JOHNSON, IS AMONG THE FAVOURITES, AS IS PENNY MORDAUNT, LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

How the next British PM will be chosen



DANIEL VICTOR

JUST over six weeks after Britain’s Conservative Party picked Liz Truss to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister, a new leader must again be selected. This time, the process is expected to be much faster than the two-month affair that put Truss into office. There will be no prolonged campaign, with plans to have a result by next week, possibly as soon as Monday. Like Truss, the country’s next leader will not be selected by a vote of the general population. Instead, the 357 Conservative members of Parliament and, perhaps, about 170,000 dues-paying members of the Conservative Party will choose

the party’s next leader, who will then become the prime minister. The 357 Conservative members of Parliament have until 2 pm on Monday to submit a nomination for their preferred candidate. Candidates must receive at least 100 nominations to be considered, meaning no more than three can advance in the process. If only one candidate earns 100 nominations, the process will end, and that person will be the next prime minister. If two candidates reach the threshold, the Conservative members of Parliament will vote to indicate which one has more support. If three candidates receive 100 nominations, the vote by lawmakers on Monday will eliminate one candidate, with the top two finishers advancing to

the online vote. Basically, but under a different process. When Johnson stepped down in July, eight Conservatives were nominated for the position, with the field whittled down over five rounds of voting among members of Parliament. Truss triumphed over the runner-up, Rishi Sunak, in a vote among the 170,000 dues-paying party members. It took nearly two months from when Johnson resigned on July 7 to Truss being selected on September 5. It could be as soon as Monday if only one candidate gets more than 100 nominations or if the second place finisher drops out. If it is put to an online vote among party members, the vote will end on Friday. — New York Times

From reliability to resilience: A journey worth appreciating

With a current population of around 4.5 million, approximately half Omanis and half expatriates, the Sultanate of Oman is fortunate to have a tolerant, respectful, and compassionate population, so many of whom reflect the objectives of their Ibadi faith.

It is of significant credit, that amidst the instability and turmoil of the Middle East North African (MENA) region, a geopolitically diverse one from any perspective, Oman has remained free of terrorism, and with settled hierarchical governance complemented by populous representation based on elections to a House of Representatives, the Majlis. In so many respects, its socio-political model is one to be aspired to by much of the world.

In fact, one could be forgiven for casting a sideways glance at the United Kingdom this week as political naivety, incompetence, and chicanery have left their indelible mark on that nation's history in the form of the Prime Ministerial fiasco. Only with a remarkable level of resilience can that nation recover its significantly besmirched reputation, and its leadership, whoever it is, be taken seriously. Certainly, positive outcomes to such rare and traumatic events require bold, authoritative, and above all, constructive decisions made responsibly, implemented pragmatically, by socially invested individuals.

Ah, resilience. Now there is a word, a measuring stick for the characteristics of humanity. I always thought that reliability was the most desired of God's gifts, but I have changed over the last decade, finding that being trustworthy, consistent, and dependable was often not quite enough. Yet resilience, the ability to return to shape after being bent, is a metaphorical treasure, and our ability to regain our equilibrium, to get our mojo back, to be happy again after sadness, are absolute gold! Journalist Amanda Ripley wrote of resilience as a special skill, and those who have it as having three advantages. The belief that they can influence life events, find meaning and purpose in turmoil, and the conviction that they will learn from their experiences. There is too, a dose of pragmatism, realising that if a solution doesn't appear today, it's



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The writer is a media consultant

IF WE PONDER FOR A MOMENT THE ADAGE THAT, 'IF YOU GET THE LITTLE THINGS RIGHT, THE BIG THINGS WILL LOOK AFTER THEMSELVES,' WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESILIENCE, WHETHER INDIVIDUALLY, OR WITHIN SOCIETY

because a better one will see the light of day tomorrow.

If we ponder for a moment the adage that, 'if you get the little things right, the big things will look after themselves,' we should be able to understand the role of human resilience, whether individually, or within society. It is a quality that has so much upside, with an implied ability to remain strong and principled, while meeting the diverse challenges of the 360 degree societies of today that would have us tempted at every turn.

The 'Janus face,' of deception lurks behind so many of our contemporary problems, and indeed behind even more solutions, that we must always maintain our dignity, and our ability to reflect upon the consequences, mindful not of the effect upon ourselves, but others. We, those making the decisions, being in that position of responsibility and accountability, don't need the consequences of those solutions and decisions. However, those who look to us... do.

We can draw a long philosophical bow I guess, and wonder why those invested with the responsibility of decision-making, would want it? Some are born to it of course, but most others seek not the trap-pings and fineries of the corridors of power. Whether in commerce, industry, politics, or whatever, but the challenges, the contests, the joust, the prize being the knowledge that they have achieved something, and not for themselves, but for others.

You see, greed and avarice are too easily assuaged, and once met, there is no more challenge. No more to compete for, whether in the form of plunder or reputation, and resilience will beat the living daylight out of indulgence, every day of the week. Resilience is, I guess, why the mighty Oak broke, and the Willow bent, with only the Willow surviving.

This most gentle of nations is right to welcome, right to open its arms and its hearts, yet is even more right to maintain its renowned cultural reserve, as resilience is the extant 'rare earth' we would all aspire to be endowed with or blessed with. So, does that make it a two-edged sword? Surely, but one you would rather have... than not.

BACK TO EU



A protester attends a march calling for Britain to rejoin the European Union in London on Saturday. – Reuters

UK gripped by latest Johnson plot twist

JOE JACKSON AND JITENDRA JOSHI

British former prime minister Boris Johnson's prospective return to Downing Street reads like a Shakespearean arc of redemption after a fall -- but critics see elements of farce.

Johnson, 58, has long been struggling to write a biography of William Shakespeare, missing several deadlines after securing a lucrative publishing advance in 2015.

He may have been concentrating on the manuscript during his recent self-imposed leisure time, after announcing his imminent departure in July and quitting in September.

For much of the time since July, he has been on UK and foreign holidays -- reportedly cutting short a trip to the Caribbean on Friday to try to reclaim the crown in the Conservative party's latest leadership contest.

Following the resignation of Prime Minister Liz Truss, Johnson's supporters have urged him to resume a tenure that was abruptly curtailed by a cabinet uprising.

They appear motivated in part by a burning desire to halt Rishi Sunak, the former finance minister who was initially promoted by their Caesarean hero Johnson, but they accuse of then back-stabbing, Brutus-like.

Shakespeare's tragic heroes, such as King Lear and Macbeth, see the error of their ways too late, providing a redemptive coda to their doomed

THEY APPEAR MOTIVATED IN PART BY A BURNING DESIRE TO HALT RISHI SUNAK, THE FORMER FINANCE MINISTER WHO WAS INITIALLY PROMOTED BY THEIR CAESAREAN HERO JOHNSON, BUT THEY ACCUSE OF THEN BACK-STABBING, BRUTUS-LIKE

stories.

Has Johnson learned anything from his own many missteps?

‘THE SCREAM’

He still has a Sword of Damocles hanging over him, in the shape of a House of Commons investigation into whether he lied to MPs over the “Partygate” affair.

Ex-aide Dominic Cummings, now a vocal critic of Johnson, argues that his former boss discreetly backed Truss against Sunak out of Machiavellian self-interest.

He expected her tenure to be disastrous and short-lived, paving the way for his return, Cummings claims.

“It is extraordinary the state of British politics... this soap opera is in danger of tipping over into absolute farce,” ex-Johnson aide Will Walden told LBC radio on Friday.

Switching artforms, he likened the situation to the nightmarish scene evoked in Edvard Munch's painting “The Scream”.

Johnson remains a favourite of some Tory lawmakers and grassroots -- who will elect their new leader next week if Conservative MPs cannot settle on a single candidate.

Supporters believe only he has the democratic mandate from the electorate needed to rule until,

and then win, the next general election due by January 2025.

“If Liz Truss is no longer PM there can be no coronation of previously failed candidates,” declared ex-culture secretary Nadine Dorries, a Johnson loyalist who in her spare time writes romantic fiction.

Johnson has, in his brief time away, been portrayed in a Sky television drama about the Covid crisis, played in Shakespearean guise by Kenneth Branagh, replete with dream sequences inspired by Greek tragedy.



Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson gestures, at Gatwick Airport, near London on Saturday. – Reuters

His life story has been adapted for the stage including at this summer's Edinburgh Fringe festival, when Johnson was depicted having failed to learn any of his lines for a school performance of Shakespeare's “Richard III”.

‘FANTASY LAND’

As under the scheming Richard, others warn that the kingdom faces dangerous divisions if Johnson returns.

Several Tory lawmakers have said they would be unable to

remain under a second Johnson government, potentially forcing an early general election if the party loses its governing majority.

“The problem for them was his personality, and that hasn't changed since he left 45 days ago,” Open University politics professor Simon Usherwood told AFP.

Johnson's return as leader would be “a major trauma to the party, possibly fatally so”, he cautioned.

“As we saw with Truss, a favourite of the party members isn't the same as a favourite of voters in general or even a credible PM at all.”

But not everyone is convinced that Johnson can overcome the high bar he needs to run in the new Tory race -- a minimum 100 nominations from Conservative lawmakers.

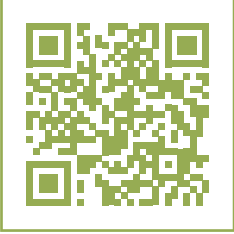
“I don't think that MPs will want to go back and pick the same person they drummed out of Downing Street only a few months ago,” said Tim Bale, a historian of the Conservatives.

“It's fantasy land to think that voters want him back. But then some Tory MPs do live in fantasy land,” he added.

“Johnson would just be the final joke that the Conservative party tried to play on the country, and the country wouldn't be laughing.” — AFP

sport

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FIRST EVER OMANI CLUB TO EMERGE CHAMPIONS IN ASIAN TOURNAMENT

SEEB ROMP TO AFC CUP GLORY

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Seeb imprinted Oman football's name in the history of the AFC Cup as they registered a 3-0 win over Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur City FC in the final clash on Saturday. With the historic triumph, Oman's representatives lifted the coveted cup after a long journey in the Asian competition.

At Bukit Jalil National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur city, Ali al Busaidi, Abdulaziz al Maqbali and Mohsin al Ghassani scored the winning goals to deliver Seeb the first-ever AFC Cup glory.

After the match, the champion players were awarded the gold medals and Seeb captain received the AFC Cup trophy. The celebrations started after the podium ceremony among Seeb players and Omani fans who were present in the stadium. Seeb and Omani fans celebrated in Muscat as well after the historic accomplishment for the Seeb club.

Seeb's national experienced head coach Rasheed Jaber started with a line-up featuring Ahmed al Rawahi as goalkeeper. Ali al Busaidi headed the defence accompanied by Juma al Habsi, Mohammed al Musalami, Hassan al Ajmi and Mohammed al Habsi. The middle line consisted of Ajibola, Salah al Yahyaei, Eid al Farsi and Mohsin al Ghassani with Abdulaziz al Maqbali, the lone forward.

Seeb began the match strongly as they pressed hard towards

the lead for Oman's representative and encouraged the players to score more goals in the coming minutes. In the 37th minute, Abdulaziz al Maqbali doubled Seeb's lead through a header after a perfect assist and cross from Salah al Yahyaei. The first half ended with Seeb leading at 2-0.

Coach Rasheed Jaber introduced Ahmed al Siyabi in the second half as replacement of Mohammed al Habsi. Later, the Malaysian players started their scoring attempts to reduce the gap and Paulo Jose missed a free kick in the 56th minute which was saved by Seeb goalie Ahmed al Rawahi. Australian referee Shaun Evans showed a yellow card for the Malaysian player Galifuoco after his strong interference with Mohsin al Ghassani in the 57th minute. After a period of playing smart football, Seeb's efforts paid dividends when Mohsin al Ghassani converted a scoring attempt into a third goal in the 69th minute.



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Seeb began the match strongly as they pressed hard towards Malaysian goalkeeper Mendoza seeking for an opening goal. On the other side, the hosts Kuala Lumpur City FC's took the advantage of the first quarter with large fans support as the forwards were looking for a leading goal

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OCA LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP STARTS IN AL SAWADI



CYCLE KOM CLINCH OPENING HONOURS

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Cycle KOM –NRO powered to the opening honours of the Oman Cycling Association (OCA) League Championship by winning the 47km team time trial in Al Sawadi on Saturday.

Cycle KOM, captained by seasoned cyclist Paul Willcox, claimed the top honours with 250 points by finishing in one hour one minute and five seconds.

The other team members included Hashim al Farsi, David Hynes, Daniel Baldwin and Greg Pollard.

Oman Club finished second with a timing of 01:03:02 (230 points) and Oman Royal Army team was third on 01:03:19 (210 points) in the first stage of OCA League competed by 18 teams.

Salalah Club (01:03:21 – 200 points) came in fourth spot and



Capital Team (01:04:39 – 190 points) finished fifth.

Talking to Oman Daily Observer after his team's win, Paul Willcox said it was nice for the team to defend the stage podium position.

"We were clear favourites being

the winners from last season and having strong time trialists within the team, however this also added to the pressure. Although we won last year, it nearly unravelled when we lost two of the team early on," the cyclist from the United Kingdom said.

"We wanted to make sure not to repeat the same mistakes, so we have been training hard together of late. This paid dividends today, and we finished with all five. It really was a terrific team performance and we felt like we were in control of the whole race," the veteran cyclist added.

"We averaged 46.5km/h for the 47km. And winning by 2 minutes is a big margin in such a TT distance," he said.

Izki (01:08:26), Bahla Club (01:09:26), Gulf Cycles (01:09:34), Al Musannah Club (01:10:06) and Wave Riders (01:10:06) took up the sixth to 10th positions respectively.

The OCA League Championship includes eight stages featuring 18 cycling teams of the Sultanate of Oman.

The second stage of the OCA League will be a road race at Seeb Airport Loop on October 28.

National U19 boys to be put under training throughout the year

MUSCAT: Putting your best foot forward is a key ingredient to achieve success. However, at times, even that doesn't assure a victory. Youngsters should take defeat in their strides and what is most important is to learn the lessons from the setbacks, according to Oman

Cricket's chief development officer and former Sri Lankan captain, Duleep Mendis.

In a departure from tradition when only winners are honoured, Oman Cricket board

unanimously decided to honour their U19 national team lads despite the team failing to qualify for the ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup Division 1-Asia Qualifier.

Oman went down to Hong Kong in the semifinals of the U19 CWC Division 2- Asia Qualifier at home.

Mendis thanked the parents and the boys for fighting hard and said, "The boys represented Oman well and played very hard. They put everything in training and during the match. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. That's how the game of cricket is. It is a learning curve for the boys. Participation at this level will go a long way in their development.

"The more you fail at this level, or for that matter at any level, the more determined one should be to achieve goals. This is the main reason why the Oman Cricket board decided to felicitate the boys and thank the parents and coaches for their efforts."

He said: "The way forward is that we are forming a permanent U19 squad, which will be provided training under

qualified coaches throughout the year. It will help the boys make better cricketers."

Pankaj Khimji, Oman Cricket Chairman, said: "The boys made Oman proud by representing the country. Playing for the country is the proudest moment for any cricketer. It's been a great journey for the boys and I am sure they would have learned a lot.

"The performance and the way the team has played has made Oman Cricket reach a decision that we need to focus more on the U19 cricket. We can't just start and stop by participating in a tournament. We have decided to have the U19 team train and prepare themselves throughout the year. Our focus will be on the U19 as much as on our national senior team."

Adeel Shafique, coach of the U19 team, said: "We really worked very hard and just missed out on qualifying for Division 1. I was as gutted as the boys as we knew that we had put in lot of hard work over the past three months. The boys are good enough to even beat the teams in Division 1. This is a fantastic group of 18 and though we missed out, they have done their best. We are proud of the lads and they certainly have a bright future."

Later, Alkesh Joshi, Oman Cricket treasurer, presented awards to top performers including Aryan Bisht, who scored a total of 248 runs in five matches and picked seven wickets. Also present during the ceremony were OC vice-chairman Paul Sheridan and secretary Madhu Jesrani.



PDO shine, Al Maskariya bags gold in women's bowling

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Sarah al Maskariya snatched the gold medal for the masters and individual categories in the 14th edition of the Women's Bowling Championship at Al Noor Bowling Centre.

The tournament was organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth represented by the Women's Sports Department in cooperation with the Oman Committee for Bowling.

Nine teams participated from various governmental and private institutions including Petroleum Development Oman, Muscat Municipality, Oman Electricity Transmission Company, Mohammed al Barwani Holding Company, Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company,



Worli Engineering Company, Royal Court Affairs, Okio Company and Omran Company.

Petroleum Development Oman team snatched the first place in the general category and the Worli Oman Engineering Company team won second place, while the third place went to the Oman Electricity Transmission Company team.

Eng. Nahla bint Abdulwahab al Hamdiya, head of the Economic Committee of the State Council, sponsored the closing ceremony. As many as 35 players participated in the singles competitions, 28 players in the doubles competition, and 16 players in the masters category.

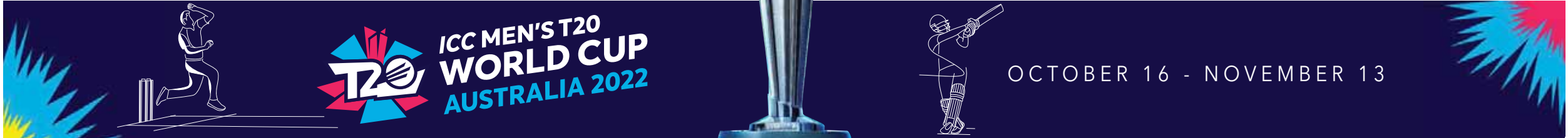
Sarah bint Nader al Maskariya from the PDO achieved first place and won the gold medal in the singles category, Aziza bint

Omar al Braikiya from the OETC claimed the silver medal, while the third place was won by Tamader bint Issa al Balushiya from Worli Oman Engineering Team.

In the doubles category, Aziza al Braikiya and Zahra al Rawahiya from OETC snatched the gold medal, the second place was won by Sarah al Maskariya and Heba al Nabeehiya from PDO and Tamader al Balushiya and Fatima al Zadjaliya from Worli Oman Engineering claimed the bronze.

Petroleum Development Oman won gold medals in team competitions, while the silver medals snatched by Worli Oman Engineering, Muscat Municipality team claimed the bronze medals.

In the masters category, Sarah al Maskariya won the gold medal, while Aziza al Braikiya took the silver medal.



Clinical New Zealand thump holders Australia

SYDNEY: New Zealand thrashed hosts and defending champions Australia by 89 runs on Saturday to start the Twenty20 World Cup Super 12 in style and avenge defeat in last year's final.

Devon Conway carried his bat with a majestic unbeaten 92 to help New Zealand blast 200-3 before Australia were skittled for 111 in the 18th over to make a nightmare start to their title defence.

Conway's knock came from just 58 balls with seven fours and two sixes, joining a select group to make 90 or more at a World Cup. Mitchell Santner and Tim Southee both took three wickets each.

It was New Zealand's first win against Australia in Australia in any format since 2011.

"It was one of those days, an outstanding day," captain Kane Williamson purred.

"The openers set the tone, lots of contributions right through the batting and that was a very good score on this pitch," said Williamson.

"The bowlers then did well and were well supported in the field. Everyone knows their roles in this team, we knew about the quality of their bowling, took the game deep and we were very clinical in what we needed to do."

The match at a sold-out Sydney Cricket Ground was a repeat of the 2021 final in Dubai when Australia powered to an eight-wicket win and maiden crown.

Aaron Finch's men now have their work cut out to match that feat in a tough Group 1 with Afghanistan, England and qualifiers Ireland and Sri Lanka awaiting them. Only the top two make the semifinals.

"They (New Zealand openers) set the tone in the first four overs and we didn't recover," said skipper Finch.

"We needed early wickets, which didn't happen, and when we chased, we lost too many wickets. We weren't good enough, with



the net run-rate taking a bad hit.

"We play Sri Lanka next, four games left, need to win everything and have some luck on our side."

New Zealand got off to a sensational start after Finch sent them in to bat, with Finn Allen cracking two fours and a six off Mitchell Starc's opening over.

Not to be outdone, Conway then crunched two blistering boundaries off Josh Hazlewood as the Black Caps plundered 29 from the first two overs.

Adam Zampa dropped Allen in the next over as Pat Cummins was similarly punished, taken for 17. But the young right-hander's luck ran out when Hazlewood returned and the wily pace spearhead bowled him for 42 — off just 16 balls.

The introduction of Marcus Stoinis and Zampa helped Australia stem the run flow, but Conway brought up his 50 with a six off the spinner Zampa, who trapped Williamson (23) lbw in the same over.

Hazlewood removed Glenn Phillips for 12 before Jimmy Neesham hit a six off the final ball to reach 200.

Conway said credit had to go to the 23-year-old Allen.

"He's a young guy and he's fearless," he said. "The way Finn plays complements my game."

SLOG

Australia's chase started badly when David Warner fell for three in the second over, dragging the ball onto his stumps off Southee.

Finch (13) hit a giant six off Trent Boult but didn't last much longer, striking Santner straight to Williamson at cover as his miserable form continued.

It was a similar story for Mitchell Marsh, briefly hitting big to make 16 before being caught by Neesham going for another slog to leave Australia teetering at 34-2 in the fifth over.

Phillips pulled off one of the catches of the tournament so far to remove Stoinis for seven, leaping full length to his left as he ran from deep cover.

And when the big-hitting Tim David, preferred to Steve Smith, became Santner's third wicket, out for 11, it was all but over at 68-5 in the 11th over.

Matthew Wade (two) and Glenn Maxwell (28) were their last hope with the tailenders offering little resistance for the outclassed hosts. — AFP

Curran bags five as England bowl out Afghanistan for 112

PERTH: Sam Curran took his first five-wicket haul in Twenty20 internationals as England bundled out Afghanistan for 112 in their opening match of the T20 World Cup on Saturday.

England skipper Jos Buttler, who leads the team in his first global tournament since becoming white-ball captain, won the toss and elected to field first, and the seam bowlers combined with superb catching did the trick for the team billed as one of the tournament favourites.

Curran, a left-arm quick, returned figures of 5-10 — the first England bowler to take five wickets in T20s — to send Afghanistan packing in 19.4 overs and surpass his previous T20 best of 3-25.

Mark Wood struck with his first ball in the third over of the innings to get Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who had cracked a six in the previous over, caught behind for 10.

Ibrahim Zadran hit back with a



six and two fours but the England quicks largely kept a lid on the scoring for the first six overs of powerplay — when only two fielders are allowed outside the inner circle.

Ben Stokes, who bowled the opening over and returned figures of 2-19, came back to get Hazratullah Zazai out, with Liam Livingstone taking a splendid running catch at full stretch in the

deep.

Zadran attempted to keep up the tempo in his run-a-ball knock, which ended with a check shot to backward point off left-arm quick Curran. He made 32.

The series of stunning catches continued with Adil Rashid running backwards to complete an excellent take at deep mid-on to send back Najibullah Zadran and give Stokes his second wicket.

Buttler also joined in the catching heroics as he gloved a one-handed catch down the leg side to send opposition skipper Mohammad Nabi trudging back to the pavilion for three.

Wickets kept tumbling as Curran picked two on successive balls including Rashid Khan for a duck to be on a hat-trick at the end of his third over.

Usman Ghani played out the hat-trick ball at the start of the 20th over but got out in the next ball as Curran wiped off the tail. — AFP



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Oman’s mega green hydrogen project to come on stream by 2029



CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Saudi-based international energy developer ACWA Power says a major green hydrogen project planned in the Sultanate of Oman’s Dhofar Governorate could be operational before 2029.

It’s the first such announcement since a consortium comprising ACWA Power, integrated Omani energy group OQ and leading industrial gases company Air Products signed a joint development agreement (JDA) in May 2022 covering a multibillion-dollar investment in a world-scale green hydrogen-based ammonia production facility powered by renewable energy in Oman.

Earlier, in December 2021, the parties had signed a Memorandum of Understanding affirming their initial interest in developing the mega-scale venture.

In an interview published over the weekend, London-based publishing house MEED quoted a top ACWA Power official as saying that the integrated green hydrogen and ammonia project, potentially costing \$7 billion, is expected to be operational before 2029.

“It is an integrated project that will produce hydrogen – particularly very low carbon hydrogen,” Lovato told

MEED. “The intention is to replicate this process in several regions in order to reduce cost,” he said, adding: “Oman is the second one that has been announced and it is still in early stages. Commercial operations are expected to start in 2027 or 2028.”

The Oman project, the downstream elements of which are expected to be developed at Salalah Free Zone, will be broadly modelled on processes envisioned in a similar giant scheme that will power the \$500 billion futuristic city NEOM being built in northwest Saudi Arabia, the official noted. ACWA Power and Air Products are also involved in the NEOM green energy venture.

As for a timeframe for the implementation of the Oman project, Lovato stated: “An exact time has not been defined yet, only a general range. It is the second one that will use the same approach as NEOM.”

During the JDA signing in May, officials had said that the Oman venture would likely be equally owned by the project partners. The joint venture project would be based on proven, world-class technology and include: the innovative integration of renewable power from solar, wind and storage; production of hydrogen by electrolysis; production of nitrogen by air separation; and production of green ammonia.

Revenues of local banks reach RO 930.8 million for 9M 2022

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The total revenues of local banks listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) for the first nine months of 2022 reach RO 930.8 million as compared to RO 861.1 million during the same period last year. The increase comes from revenues from interest, Islamic banking and various financing and investment activities. Meanwhile, the net profits of local banks for the first nine months of the year registered a growth of 13.5 per cent amounting to RO 308 million as compared to RO 271 million in the same period last year.

The preliminary financial results of the eight banks listed on the MSX indicated an improvement in their various financial indicators, with banks focusing on financing many productive sectors in conjunction with the lifting of restrictions imposed on economic activities after the easing of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Preliminary financial results indicated that the banks total assets increased by the end of September to RO 36.2 billion, compared to RO 35.4 billion in September last year.

Most banks recorded an increase in their net profits, with the exception of Bank Dhofar, whose net profit fell from RO 28.2 million to RO 26.1 million, and Oman Arab Bank, whose net profits fell



THE NET PROFITS OF LOCAL BANKS FOR THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THE YEAR REGISTERED A GROWTH OF 13.5 PER CENT AMOUNTING TO RO 308 MILLION AS COMPARED TO RO 271 MILLION IN THE SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR.

from RO 11.3 million to RO 10.6 million. Bank Muscat recorded the highest profits at RO 148.3 million, National Bank of Oman (NBO) came second with RO 35.5 million. Third is Sohar International Bank with RO 28.1 million, Bank Dhofar came in fourth place with RO 26.1 million, Ahli Bank came in fifth with RO 25 million, HSBC Bank Oman ranked sixth with a net profit of RO 23.6 million, Bank Nizwa came in seventh place with RO

10.7 million and Oman Arab Bank with RO 10.6 million.

Most banks distributed dividends to their shareholders, with the exception of Oman Arab Bank. Bank Muscat came at the forefront of the highest paying banks. In addition to distributing 5% bonus shares, Ahli Bank distributed cash dividends of 7.5%, and HSBC Bank Oman distributed cash dividends of 5.4%.

The market value of the banks listed on the MSX increased, by the end of September, to RO 4.484 billion, registering a gain of RO 795.7 million from its level at RO 3.688 billion during the same period last year.

These gains were the result of higher shares of Bank Muscat, National Bank of Oman, HSBC Oman, Bank Dhofar

and Ahli Bank. The market value also benefited from the increase in the capital by Sohar International Bank and Bank Muscat. Bank Sohar increased its capital from RO 295.3 million to RO 455.3 million by offering preferential right shares. Bank Muscat, on the other hand, raised its capital from RO 357.4 million to RO 375.3 million by distributing bonus shares to shareholders.

Bank Muscat topped the list of the highest banks in terms of market capitalisation at the end of September, with RO 2.1 billion, followed by Sohar International Bank with RO 477.3 million, National Bank of Oman with RO 439 million, Bank Dhofar ranked fourth with RO 425.4 million, then HSBC Oman with RO 306 million.

Oman, Korea pledge stronger ties in energy sector, new industries

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 22

Seeking to build on their close economic ties, the Sultanate of Oman and South Korea agreed on Thursday, October 20, 2022, to boost cooperation on energy and in new industry fields to ensure stable energy supply chains.

South Korean news agency Yonhap quoted the country’s Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy as saying that the pledge was made during the visit of Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Diplomatic Affairs Under-Secretary at Oman’s Foreign Ministry. Al Harthy had talks with Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun in Seoul.

The two sides underlined the need to secure stable energy supplies through joint efforts amid



growing uncertainties in the global market, particularly as natural gas accounts for about 80 per cent of total trade between the two nations, said Yonhap.

In 2021, Oman was the fourth-

largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplier to South Korea, accounting for 9.6 per cent of Seoul’s total LNG imports. South Korea was Oman’s No. 1 LNG buyer, taking up 44.2 per cent of Oman’s total gas exports.

“They also agreed to expand cooperation further to renewable energy, green hydrogen and other new sectors,” the trade ministry noted in its press statement.

During the meeting, Ahn noted that South Korean companies have taken part in various development projects in Oman, including the Duqm refinery project, and voiced hope for continued contribution to the development of the Sultanate of Oman. He also called for the hosting of a joint economic committee meeting at an early date to discuss detailed ways to boost investment and energy cooperation, the ministry

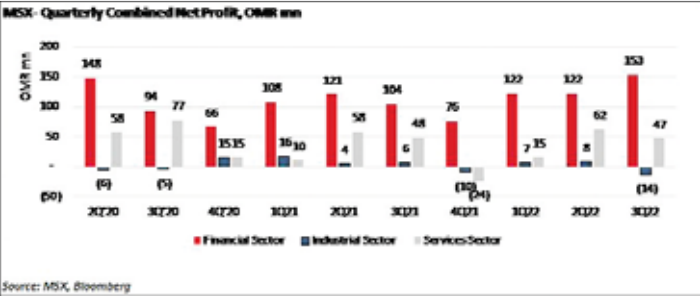
stated.

Bilateral trade between Oman and Korea climbed to \$4.47 billion during the first nine months of this year, up from \$3.39 billion for the whole year of 2021, Yonhap added, citing government data.

Oman News Agency (ONA) added that Al Harthy was in Seoul to attend the Oman-Korea political consultations committee meeting. The two sides reviewed aspects of enhancing cooperation between the two countries, notably in the fields of energy, trade exchange and investments.

The Korean side showed interest in Oman’s promising opportunities in the green hydrogen sector and a keenness to invest in related industries. Both sides agreed to arrange visits for Korean business people to explore investment and tourism opportunities in Oman.

MSX 30 Index ends week lower by 1.95%



MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week down by 1.95%. The Financial Index ended the week lower by 1.57%. The Services Index and industrial index ended the week down by 3.19% and 3.71% respectively. The MSX Shariah Index declined by 1.86%. U-Capital Issued a report on MSX — Corporate Net Profit Snapshot — 9M22 / 3Q22.

MSX-listed companies' combined net profit grows by 10% YoY during 9M22, supported mostly by the Financial and Services Sector companies. The combined net profit of MSX-listed companies grew by 10% YoY during 9M22 to about RO 521 million.

On sector-wise basis, the Financial Sector showed a YoY growth of 20% while the Services Sector posted a 7% YoY growth in combined net profits of the companies compared to 9M21 and supported the combined net profit of the stock market.

The Industrial sector, however, saw a drop of 100% YoY in its combined net profit, largely due to a significant drop in combined profits of Cement (-2,240%), Food & Beverage sub-sector (- 49%YoY) and the Engineering & Construction sub-sectors (-3687%).

Dhofar Cattle Feed has announced that it has changed company's name from Dhofar Cattle Feed Company SOAG to Dhofar Food & Investment SAOG. The Company logo changes are in process with the concern authorities and will be announced after approval.

Salalah Mills Company, which owns and operates Oman's biggest flour milling complex in Dhofar Governorate, has disclosed to shareholders that it has signed a financing agreement with Alizz Islamic Bank covering a sum of RO 10 million for the financing of a new industrial bakery project

MSX-LISTED COMPANIES' COMBINED NET PROFIT GROWS BY 10 PER CENT YOY DURING 9M22, SUPPORTED MOSTLY BY THE FINANCIAL AND SERVICES SECTOR COMPANIES

at Khazaen Economic City in Barka. The announcement came in a filing to the Capital Market Authority last week.

Salalah Mills CFO Ravi C Tripathi said the tenure of the loan is about 10 years.

Latest CBO data for conventional banks indicates that the weighted average Omani rial interest rate spread (calculated as lending rate minus deposit rate) contracted by 1.6 bps on year-on year basis (YoY), at 3.575% during the month of July 2022, as the deposit rate dropped by 5.4 bps YoY and lending rate dropped by 7.0 bps YoY.

On month-on-month (MoM) basis, the spread contracted by 5.7 bps as deposit rate decreased by 0.3 bps while lending rate decreased by 6.0 bps. The weighted average deposit rate on RO deposits at 1.867% is below the local peak of 2.011% witnessed in February 2021 while the lending rate averaged (weighted) at 5.442% during July 2022.

The RO spread is down about 1.7bps in July 2022 on year-to-date (YTD) basis. Weighted average FCY spread expanded by 41.9 bps on month-on-month (MoM) basis during July 2022 at 3.652%. The FCY spread is higher by about 166.4 bps when compared to that recorded in July 2021.

The spread is up 157.5 bps since December 2021. Weighted average FCY lending rate stood at 5.133% while deposit rate stood at 1.481% during July 2022.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

The Pearl REIF IPO generates significant investor interest

MUSCAT: Investor interest is gathering momentum with the commencement of the subscription period to the IPO of The Pearl REIF. Investment Manager and Issue Manager Sohar International has been holding several meetings with key investors to highlight the unique investment opportunity of investing in Oman's largest Sharia compliant fund.

The meetings were well attended by a wide cross-section of investor groups including institutional investors, high-net worth individuals and established family offices. Oman Investment Authority and its subsidiary, Omantel are the promoters of The Pearl REIF.

Highlighting the positive response, Wahbi al Riyami — Chairman, The Pearl REIF (representing Omantel) said, "The promoters of The Pearl REIF have made every effort to make the investment opportunity available



to more investors, particularly attracting a wider participation from the retail segment. The pricing of the IPO of The Pearl REIF has been structured to offer the common investor the opportunity to invest in a well-structured instrument, with strong underlying assets and robust long term contractual agreements. I am pleased to note significant investor interest and confident of their subscription to the issue."

Further elaborating on the

strength of the offer, Aown Abbas al Bahrani, Deputy Chairman of the Pearl REIF and Director of Public Markets at OIA, said, "The keen interest of the investor community reflects the key highlights of the offering, which is being the largest fund of its kind in Oman, marquee tenants, stable cash flow visibility and the backing of promoters who will continue to be shareholders of the Fund."

The Pearl REIF is offering 208,137,400 Offer Units at a

price of 112 Baisas per Offer Unit (including Offer Price of 110 Baisa and Offer Expenses of 2 Baisa per Offer Unit) for subscription. The Fund has projected an Average Distributable Profit Yield of 9.2%, which compares favourably to other yield instruments in Oman such as term deposits, perpetual bonds or sukuk.

Investors are required to submit their applications before October 30, 2022, through the electronic channels of any of the collection agents: Sohar International Bank, Ahli Bank, Bank Muscat, NBO, U-Capital and United Securities.

All applicants must have an account and Investor Number with Muscat Clearing & Depository (MCD). Any applicant may apply to obtain an Investor Number and open an account by completing the MCD application forms. This may be obtained from the MCD or its website at www.mcd.gov.om, or from brokerage companies licensed by the CMA.

Bank Muscat's limited-edition Visa Prepaid Card gets excellent response

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, has been receiving excellent feedback from customers regarding the exclusive Visa Prepaid Card launched earlier this year, courtesy of Visa.

These Limited-Edition cards are specifically designed as a collector's item and reflects the spirit and overall experience of the Fifa World Cup, which is one of the world's largest sporting events. Customers can easily apply for up to 5 cards as well as activate and load funds on them via Mobile or Internet banking.

The bank has also announced that each card can be loaded with an amount as low as RO 5 and be used for both POS and online transactions. The Visa Prepaid Card features contactless payment technology, and can be managed easily through the bank's Mobile Banking app or Internet Banking.

Customers can easily review transactions to manage their expenses. In addition, the cards can be used for secure online payments apart from POS payments and ATM withdrawals. The unique design and features has led to positive responses from a number of the bank's customers.



Given the limited stocks and good demand for these cards, the bank has advised all those who would like to apply for the card to do so at the earliest.

Bank Muscat's contactless Visa Prepaid cards are a popular option for customers to complete their low-value point-of-sale (POS) transactions at groceries and supermarkets with a simple tap of the POS terminal without the need to enter their personal identification number (PIN) for transactions up to RO 40.

The card will be particularly useful for visitors to Qatar as they can use it to manage expenses

and can also keep it afterwards as a collector's item or souvenir of their trip of a lifetime to the biggest football event ever in the region.

The option for customers to apply for Visa Prepaid Cards through Internet or Mobile banking from the ease and convenience of their homes or offices continues the bank's customer-centric strategy of launching new payment products and services that offer new, convenient and highly secure e-payment options and improve financial inclusion.

The bank has stated that it will continue to launch new digital payment services and platforms to further enhance the ease of banking and customer convenience. It must be noted that contactless cards feature best-in-class security for POS and online transactions.

In case of any loss or misplacement of the card, it can be blocked immediately by calling the Bank Muscat Contact Centre on 24795555. For more details on the bank's Visa Prepaid cards, please go to <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/bm-cards/Pages/Visa-Prepaid-Card.aspx>.

OAB holds special event to celebrate Omani Women's Day



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) celebrated Omani Women's Day with a special event organised exclusively for its female employees at the bank's headquarters.

The Omani Women's Day event showcased the bank's commitment to fostering an inclusive organisational culture and celebrating the integral role that Omani women continue to play in the development of Oman's socioeconomic goals and objectives.

The event was a huge success and saw a large number of female employees attending various educational and wellness workshops throughout the day to help them realise their personal and professional goals and unlock their full potential.

Commenting on Omani Women's Day, Leen al Atassi, Head of Corporate Communications said: "We are delighted to recognise and celebrate the valuable contributions and achievements of Omani women. At OAB, we emphasise and value promoting women in leadership roles and developing future women leaders. We place significant importance on gender diversity in the workplace, with more than 39% of our workforce comprising of women and 36% of middle management positions filled by women. We are also proud to have 16 talented women leaders running our branches across Oman."

Make every drive comfortable with GAC Motor GA4

MUSCAT: GAC Motor GA4 is a popular choice for families looking for impressive space, comfort and performance. The GA4 pack a punch with its turbocharged output adding to high levels of delight on every journey. The GA4 has an attractive exterior highlighted with halogen headlamps, sharp daytime running lights and halogen front fog lamps.

Interestingly the halogen headlamps are also equipped to allow height adjustment, alert through alarm and courteously guide the owner home with



the follow-me-home ability. Defining the GA4's character is the clean flowing lines that move outwards from the front all the way to the rear.

Adding to the GA4's profile is the imposing and stunning grille and the 16" aluminium alloy wheels. Completing this look is the addition of the sleek and attractive LED rear combination lights that lend a treat to the eyes, especially of those behind it. The GA4 is also equipped with cornering lights, side mirrors with turn signal indicators, heated power side mirrors, front and

second row windows with tinted glass and shark fin antenna.

In Oman, GAC Motor vehicles are distributed by New World Autos and backed by Saud Bahwan Group. For more information, please visit www.gacmotoroman.com or www.youtube.com/GACMotorOman or www.facebook.com/GACMotorOman or www.instagram.com/GACMotorOman/. For further details, & to ascertain the availability of stocks, please visit the GAC Motor showroom at Wattayah, Al Seeb, Suhar, Nizwa, Sur or Salalah.

Energy crisis raises fears for German business, production stoppages

BERLIN: Many small and medium-sized (SME) companies in Germany fear for their future as a result of the energy crisis, a new survey has found. However, the economic situation is still relatively stable for the time being, according to an economic survey conducted by the umbrella organisation for SME trade associations, the Mittelstandsverbund, among its members.

According to the association, more than one-third of the trade associations estimate that the energy crisis will threaten the existence of a large number of their members if politicians do not take countermeasures.

The federal government has announced extended state financial aid for companies in the course of the planned protective shield worth billions of euros. The organisation represents trade associations such as Edeka, Rewe and Expert. According to the Mittelstandsverbund, 57 association group head offices with about 42,000 affiliated companies from a total of 16 sectors took part in the economic survey.

According to the survey, more than 26 per cent of the companies expect a decline in sales in the coming months, while in a survey in the previous quarter, the figure was 16 per cent. For about 30 per cent of the companies, earnings declined from July to September. The number of employees stagnated. — **dpa**

Total deposits in Oman's banking sector rise

MUSCAT: The total balance of credit granted by conventional and Islamic banks, or what is known as other depository companies, in the Sultanate of Oman increased by 3.5 per cent to reach RO 28.5 billion at the end of August.

The data issued by the Central Bank of Oman indicated that the credit granted to the private sector recorded a growth of 2.4 per cent to reach about RO 23.9 billion by the end of August 2022.

Data related to its distribution over various sectors indicated that non-financial companies acquired the largest share, which amounted to 45.9 per cent at the



end of August, followed by the individuals sector by 45.4 per cent, and the remaining percentage

was distributed to the financial companies sector by 5.1 per cent and other sectors by 3.7 per cent.

The total deposits in the banking sector grew by 5.2 per cent to reach RO 26.2 billion by the end

of August 2022. Within this total, the private sector deposits with the banking system increased by 1.6 per cent to reach RO 17.4 billion.

When looking at the distribution of the total deposit base of the private sector over various sectors, the figures indicate that the individuals sector acquired the largest share, which amounted to about 51.9 per cent, followed by the non-financial companies sector and the financial companies sector with a share of 29.6 per cent and 15.7 per cent, respectively, and the remaining percentage 2.8 per cent was distributed among other sectors.

■ DRONE MARKET TO REACH \$10.5 BILLION



A Kenya Airways employee controls an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) as it spreads pesticide over a tea farm at Kipkebe Tea Estate in Musereita. The agricultural drone market is expected to grow in the coming years, with some reports suggesting it could reach \$10.5 billion by 2028. Kenya, a country vulnerable to drought and food insecurity in some areas, is investing in agricultural technology in the hope to reduce costs and increasing crop yields. — **AFP**

US 2022 budget deficit halves to \$1.375 trillion



An American flag flies outside of the US Capitol dome in Washington. — **Reuters**

WASHINGTON: The US government on Friday reported that its fiscal 2022 budget deficit plunged by half from a year earlier to \$1.375 trillion, due to fading Covid-19 relief spending and record revenues fueled by a hot economy, but student loan forgiveness costs limited the reduction.

The US Treasury said the \$1.400 trillion reduction in the deficit was still the largest-ever single-year improvement in the US fiscal position as receipts hit a record \$4.896 trillion, up \$850 billion, or 21 per cent from fiscal 2021.

President Joe Biden touted the deficit reductions in remarks at the White House and at Delaware State University, and said the deficit would shrink by another \$250 billion over the next decade, given Medicare's ability to negotiate lower drug prices.

Biden chided Republicans for voting against the deficit reduction. While his administration lowered the deficit, it has boosted spending on infrastructure and expanded benefits for middle- and low-income Americans.

"You know, we've gone from an historically strong economic recovery to a steady and stable growth, while reducing the deficit," Biden said.

Outlays for fiscal 2022, which ended on September 30, fell by a record \$550 billion, or 8 per cent from last year to \$6.272 trillion. But the outlays for September, the fiscal year's final month, included the recognition of \$430 billion in costs from the Biden administration's plan to forgive student debt of up to \$20,000 for former college students now earning under \$125,000 a year and under \$250,000 for married couples.

The move brought the September budget deficit to \$430 billion, six times the prior-year September deficit of \$65 billion. — **Reuters**

Weak oil demand to lower GCC economic growth

BENGALURU: Economic growth in the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council will remain strong but slow significantly next year as high oil prices hurt demand for the commodity, a poll showed.

Crude prices, a key catalyst for Gulf economies, have fallen more than 30 per cent from a near 14-year high of \$139 in March as global recession fears and weak demand, especially in China, outweighed support from a large cut to the Opec+ supply target.

China, the world's largest crude oil importer, has been fighting Covid-19 flare-ups and stuck to a zero-Covid-19 policy that is weighing heavily on economic activity and global oil demand.

China is a major revenue source for the region and the October 10-19 poll showed overall growth in the six economies comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would slow to 4.2 per cent next year compared with 6.6 per cent in 2022.

"GCC countries have benefitted from sharply higher oil prices, turning budget deficits into surpluses, and increased oil production which has bumped up GDP growth.

"However, the outlook for 2023 is more challenging, given the strength of the US dollar," noted



Trucks wait for fuel pumps to reopen after morning prayers, at a petrol station in Khobar, Saudi Arabia. — **Reuters**

Khatija Haque, head of research and chief economist at Emirates NBD.

"There is some downside risk to our 2023 growth forecast if Opec+ intervenes to reduce output in the face of weakening oil demand next year, and as higher borrowing costs could weigh on consumption."

Saudi Arabia, the region's largest economy and world-leading exporter of crude oil, and Kuwait were both expected to grow 3.5 per cent in 2023, down from this year's respective 8.1 per cent and 7.6 per cent forecasts.

Among other GCC economies, growth was expected to drop next year in the United Arab Emirates, Qatar and Oman, while in Bahrain growth was forecast to slow to 3.0 per cent compared with 3.4 per cent this year.

The boon for these economies is low inflation as prices of consumer goods are controlled by government subsidies and price caps at a time when other developed economies are facing multi-decade high price increases.

Inflation was expected to dip in all GCC economies next year.

Qatar, Kuwait and UAE were expected to experience slightly higher inflation compared to other members at near 3 per cent next year, still down from over 4 per cent in 2022.

"The low level of Saudi price inflation is largely due to the decision to keep the fuel price in Saudi Arabia at the July 2021-level; this was not the case in the UAE and Qatar," said Ralf Wiegert of S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"Aggressive rate hikes by the US Fed will further disadvantage the Gulf countries' external

AS OTHER ECONOMIES REDUCE THEIR RELIANCE ON OIL, GULF COUNTRIES ARE DIVERSIFYING THEIR REVENUE STREAMS. ANALYSTS SAY EVEN THOUGH OIL GDP MAY DECLINE NEXT YEAR NON-OIL, GROWTH COULD PERFORM AT THE SAME LEVEL OR BETTER.

competitiveness as their currencies are tied to the dollar."

As other economies reduce their reliance on oil, Gulf countries are diversifying their revenue streams. Analysts say even though oil GDP may decline next year non-oil, growth could perform at the same level or better.

"A common feature is the emphasis on tourism, which features prominently in the UAE. Saudi tourism plans are particularly impressive," said Wiegert.

"Those plans will support the Gulf monarchies transition to a less-carbon intensive economic structure, but only up to a point. That process and the windfall revenues from oil, which is used to finance it, is driving non-oil growth to a significant extent in the next two to three years." — **Reuters**

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Creative imagination on display at art expo

An exhibition detailing the 'Methods of Creative Imagination' opened at the Cure8 Art Gallery in Muscat last Wednesday. The exhibition showcased paintings of 10 women artists, who learnt the art (methods) of Creative Imagination from Dr Nasser Palangi, a renowned artist, art teacher, author and many other things that relate to Art... **P20**

Deutsche Oper Berlin to perform Hansel und Gretel at ROHM

THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE MUSCAT will be presenting the opera *Hänsel und Gretel* composed by Engelbert Humperdinck on October 28 and 29 with Sir Donald Runnicles conducting the Deutsche Oper Berlin. This is the first time that this will be played in Oman.

For over a hundred years Engelbert Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel* has been one of the

most popular operas for the entire family. Taken from a play first written for children by the composer's sister, Adelheid Wette, based on the story by the Grimm brothers, the resulting work with its catchy tunes and dramatic appeal to children and adults alike is a two-hour symphonic masterpiece. It has been translated into over twenty languages and remains to this day many chil-

dren's very first contact with opera.

Andreas Homoki and his set designer Wolfgang Gussmann tell the story so that children can enjoy it. The opera is dramatic and fun: enjoy the enchanting nocturnal scenes in the forest, be thrilled by the spine tingling theatrical effects and the witch's long-awaited appearance, a scene managed with both drama and comedy. Children as young as eight will thrill to Humperdinck's fairytale, in which Good triumphs over Evil and Hansel and Gretel, by virtue of their courage and ingenuity, liberate not only themselves but also all the other children. This production features the extraordinary participation of 30 children from Oman.

Following two special performances for schools on the 26 & 27 October, the performance will take place at the Royal Opera House Muscat over two dates on October 28 at 7pm & a matinee performance on October 29 at 4pm.

For details or bookings, visit the ROHM box office, website or app.



READ

LONG LIVE THE PUMPKIN QUEEN

BY SHEA ERNSHAW

Sally, the new Queen of Halloween Town, must save her town from a sleeping curse.



DINING

Turkish chef Fatih Tutak poses at his restaurant in Istanbul. Fatih Tutak was awarded two stars to his restaurant in the first edition of the Michelin Guide Star Revelation of Istanbul. The Turkish megalopolis finally finds its place on the world map of gastronomy as Fatih believes this is an opportunity to show that "Turkish cuisine is not limited to kebab". — AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

American DJ and music producer, Thomas Wesley Pentz, also known as DJ Diplo, performs at Club Paradiso during the Amsterdam Dance Event (ADE) in Amsterdam. — AFP





As seas rise, Bangladesh farmers revive floating farms

MOHAMMAD MOSTAFA, a farmer in the low-lying deltas of southwestern Bangladesh, has revived his forefathers' farming practice of growing crops on floating rafts as rising seas and storm flooding threaten more and more farmland.

With prolonged waterlogging posing an increasing threat to families growing their own food, more have turned to using the rafts as secure platforms to grow vegetables and fruit including cucumbers, radishes, bitter gourds, papayas and tomatoes. Most are sold as saplings.

The rafts, woven from the stems of invasive hyacinths, are providing a lifeline for families during the increasingly extreme monsoon seasons, when dry land can be especially scarce.

The 200-year-old technique was initially adopted by farmers in the region during the flooding season, which used to last about five months each year. But



nowadays the area remains underwater for eight to 10 months and more land is being flooded.

"These days, the land is under water for a longer time. This ancient technique has helped us to earn a living," said 42-year-old Mostafa, as he planted balls of seedlings on floating beds.

"My father and forefathers all used to do this. But the work is not that easy. So, at first I tried to earn as a fruit vendor but ended up in debt," said Mostafa, the sole breadwinner in his six-member family. "I tried my luck at floating farming five years ago and that made a great difference to my life."

The approach, now practised by some 6,000 subsistence farmers across the swampy southwest, may prove crucial as climate change sends sea levels higher and makes the monsoons more erratic.

Dighjoy Hazra, an agriculture official in the Nazirpur sub-district of Pirojpur, said that the number had risen from around 4,500 five years ago.

Floating farms now cover a total 157 hectares (388 acres) in Pirojpur district, with 120 hectares in Nazirpur that expanded from 80 hectares five years ago.

"It requires less space than conventional farming and does not need pesticides," Hazra said. "When we're fighting... the impact of global warming, floating farming could be the future."

Low-lying Bangladesh is considered among the most climate-vulnerable countries, with the impact of rising waters compounded by storms, floods and erosion.

The climate impact is being compounded by natural factors, such as tectonic shifts that are causing the land beneath to sink, and upstream dams

holding back silt that would replenish the eroding delta.

Between 2000 and 2019, Bangladesh was ranked seventh in a list of countries hit hardest by climate change, according to the Global Climate Risk Index 2021 produced by non-profit Germanwatch.

"Because it is the largest delta in the world... a huge portion of Bangladesh's land area experiences frequent flooding, especially flash floods along with river erosion," the Asian Development Bank said in a 2021 report.

Bangladesh is also frequently hit by cyclones that barrel up the Bay of Bengal, while global warming makes rainfall patterns increasingly erratic. More than a quarter of Bangladesh's population of 165 million live in the coastal zone.

Rising sea levels and coastal erosion could cause Bangladesh to lose 17 per



cent of its land surface and 30 per cent of its food production by 2050, according to a 2019 International Monetary Fund report.

Navigating a boat along one of the country's countless waterways, Mostafa said he is now able to feed his family "without asking for help."

The profit margins, however, have been shrinking as costs rise, he added. This year, he spent about 4,500 taka (\$43) for a boatload of water hyacinths weighing about 1.2 tonnes to weave into new rafts for the year. Last year, the cost was just 1,000 taka.

The rafts, which take two months to make, are typically around 6 metres long and 1 metre wide, but can be several times that length, farmers said. They need to be replaced with new ones after three to four months.

Mohammad Ibrahim, another farmer

in the area, said the floating beds allow him to grow more crops reliably.

"Water levels are rising. I still can remember I used to play football in the land that now goes underwater during the normal tide," the 48-year-old said as he sold gourd saplings that he grew on the floating beds on a boat.

The effort is not without cost.

His wife Murshida Begum, 35, said she works more than eight hours a day making balls of seedlings that are planted on the rafts, but the hyacinths often cause itching and sores across her palms and fingers.

Kajol Begum, a 30-year-old mother of two daughters, said: "The work is so hard and painful. I can't sleep at night due to waist pain. But what else will I do when water is everywhere most of the time?" — Reuters

TRAVEL TALES

Ancient carvings discovered at iconic Iraq monument



WHEN MILITANT GROUP fighters bulldozed the ancient monumental Mashki gate in the Iraqi city of Mosul in 2016, it was part of the extremists' systematic destruction of cultural heritage.

Now, US and Iraqi archaeologists working to reconstruct the site have unearthed extraordinary 2,700-year-old rock carvings among the ruins.

They include eight finely made marble bas-relief carvings depicting war scenes from the rule of the Assyrian kings in the ancient city of Nineveh, a local Iraqi official said on Wednesday.

Discovered last week, the detailed carvings show a soldier drawing back a bow in preparation to fire an arrow, as well as finely chiselled vine leaves and palms.

The grey stone carvings date to the rule of King



Sennacherib, in power from 705-681 BC, according to a statement from the Iraqi Council of Antiquities and Heritage.

Sennacherib was responsible for expanding Nineveh as the Assyrians' imperial capital and largest city — sitting on a major crossroads between the Mediterranean and the Iranian plateau — including constructing a magnificent palace.

Fadel Mohammed Khodr, head of the Iraqi archaeological team working to restore the site, said the carvings were likely taken from Sennacherib's palace and used as construction material for the gate.

"We believe that these carvings were moved from the palace of Sennacherib and reused by the grandson of the king, to renovate the gate of Mashki and to enlarge the guard room," Khodr said.



- 'ICONIC' -

When they were used in the gate, the area of the carvings poking out above ground was erased.

"Only the part buried underground has retained its carvings," Khodr added.

ALIPH, the Swiss-based International Alliance for the Protection of Heritage in Conflict Areas, said the Mashki gate had been an "exceptional building".

IS targeted the fortified gate, which had been restored in the 1970s, because it was an "iconic part of Mosul's skyline, a symbol of the city's long history", it added.

ALIPH is supporting the reconstruction of the Mashki Gate by a team of archaeologists from Iraq's Mosul University alongside US experts from the University of Pennsylvania.

The restoration project, which is being carried out in collaboration with Iraqi antiquities authorities, aims to turn the damaged monument into an educational centre on Nineveh's history.

Iraq was the birthplace of some of the world's earliest cities.

It was also home to Sumerians and Babylonians, and to humankind's first examples of writing.

But in the past decades, Iraq has been the target of artifacts smuggling. Looters decimated the country's ancient past, including after the 2003 US-led war.

Then, from 2014 and 2017, the IS group demolished pre-Islamic treasures with bulldozers, pickaxes and explosives. They also used smuggling to finance their operations.

Iraqi forces supported by an international coalition recaptured Mosul, the extremists' former bastion, in 2017. — AFP



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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Madrid exhibition shines a light on the scars of breast cancer



AN ART EXHIBITION in Madrid seeks to shine a spotlight on breast cancer and the physical and psychological scars left by mastectomies. The exhibition at the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum of Art, titled "From the skin to the canvas: another take on breast cancer", features digital copies of works by Francisco de Goya, Peter Paul Reubens and Hans Baldung Grien which have been altered to make it look like the nude subjects have undergone mastectomies. "With this intervention we're calling attention to the process of the illness," said Juan Alberto



Garcia de Cubas, president of the Fundacion Cultura en Vena (Culture in Your Veins Foundation), which organised the exhibition. As part of the show, Cultura en Vena filmed a video of Goya's The Naked Maja being taken to a hospital in an ambulance, where the painting undergoes "surgery" as a team of artists paints a scar over her left breast. The work of art is then moved by ambulance to the museum and hung on the wall. Gema Salas, a 44-year-old architect who underwent a mastectomy to treat breast cancer, said the exhibition had a profound effect on her. Women who undergo mastectomies often have to learn how to love themselves and their bodies again, Salas said. "For me the painting represents how after treatment, when you feel a bit lost, it's like being reborn as a woman," she said. "Having a scar does not mean that you are any less of a woman." — Reuters

TOURISM

Qatar gets the Middle East's first pandas



QATAR BECAME the first Middle Eastern country on Wednesday to receive Chinese giant pandas — Suhail and Soraya — who, in true Gulf fashion, took up residence in luxury air-conditioned quar-



ters. Crowds of children and reporters watched as the four-year-old male and three-year-old female took their first steps in a temporary enclosure in a ceremony at the Al Khor park about 50 kilometres (30 miles) north of Doha. The Chinese government sent the animals as gift to mark the World Cup that starts on November 20. China has not qualified for the event, but is a major customer for Qatar's



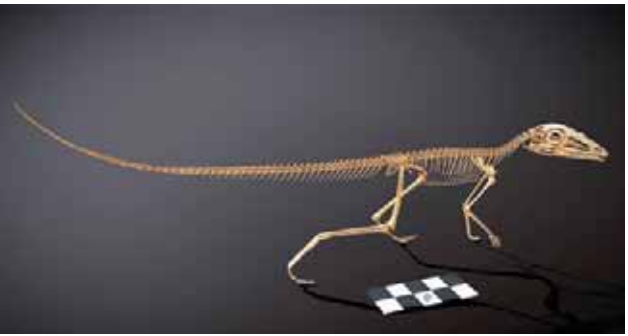
natural gas. Suhail, who weighs 130 kilograms (286 pounds), and his female partner, who is 70 kilos (154 pounds), must undergo 21 days quarantine following their arrival along with two keepers, the Panda House. China's Ambassador to Qatar, Zhou Jian, said the new complex was "world-class, magnificent and comfortable". "I believe that these two lovely pandas will soon become

SCIENCE

Fossils Reveal Pterosaur Relatives Before They Evolved Wings



FEW CREATURES were built to soar like pterosaurs. Tens of millions of years before the earliest birds, these Mesozoic reptiles had pioneered flight with sail-shaped wings and lightweight bones. The origins of these reptiles have remained murky because of a lack of fossils from the earliest flyers. "The oldest pterosaur we have already had wings and were capable flyers," said Davide Foffa, a paleontologist at Virginia Tech, which makes it difficult to chart their aerial evolution. For decades, paleontolo-



gists have postulated that the earliest pterosaurs dwelled in trees and experimented with gliding before flying. But Foffa and his colleagues may have discovered a more ground-bound origin for these ancient aviators. In a study published recently in the journal Nature, the researchers reanalysed a cache of fossils and concluded that the earliest pterosaur relatives were off to a running start long before they took off. The team examined sandstone blocks excavated around the turn of the 20th century from a quarry in Scotland. These hunks of rock entomb the remnants of armour-clad ancestral crocodiles, early dinosaurs and lizards from the late Triassic Period, or 237 million years ago. One of the smallest animals found in these rocks is Scleromochlus, a slender reptile that could fit on a hand. Its fossils are difficult to study because the bones disappeared long ago. Foffa and his colleagues placed blocks containing Scleromochlus specimens under a micro CT scanner to digitally reconstruct the skeleton in 3D. The researchers identified several traits Scleromochlus shared with lagerpetids, small reptiles that scurried around Pangea during the Triassic Period. That includes a large skull for its size and a hooked femur head that slots into the hip vertically instead of splayed out to the side like a lizard's leg. According to Stephen Brusatte, a paleontologist, lagerpetids appear to have been bipedal creatures reminiscent of pint-size dinosaurs. Their anatomy, however, reveals a much closer affinity to pterosaurs. If Scleromochlus is an early relative of pterosaurs, it challenges the assumption that pterosaurs initially jumped or glided. Scleromochlus lacked the sturdy hips of a hopping animal and would have been awkward in trees, says paleontologist Kevin Padian: "They're long-legged and short-armed. That's not how an arboreal animal like a squirrel is built." Instead, Scleromochlus was most likely more comfortable pursuing insects on the ground. This left its forearms free, potentially setting the stage for such animals to eventually flap. — NYT



art & life

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Creative imagination on display at art expo

By Kaushalendra Singh
@patkaushal

Art is an expression of imagination through paint, brush and colours. Doing art is not as easy as it sounds, because giving any imagination a pattern is as difficult as catching a pleasant breeze or an aroma. Artists have to go through that pattern through an exercise called 'Methods of Creative Imagination'.

An exhibition detailing these methods opened at the Cure8 Art Gallery in Muscat on Wednesday under the auspices of Her Highness Sayyida Aliya bint Thuwaini al Said. The exhibition showcased paintings of 10 women artists, who learnt the art (methods) of Creative Imagination from Dr Nasser Palangi, a renowned artist, art teacher, author and many other things that relate to Art.

The second group exhibition on 'Methods of Creative Imagination' will run from October 10 to 29, allowing artists and art students to interact with a range of artists and learn from each other's experiences.

Going through the displayed paintings at the exhibition made the visitors believe that Dr Palangi is successful in inculcating a 'pattern' among his students through the lessons on 'Methods of Creative Imagination.' He has also written a book on the subject.

Most of the common visitors were awestruck with the artists' experiments of paint, brush and colours, while those who had any background in art and painting, were in full appreciation of Dr Nasser Palangi, who guides the art students in how to develop 'Creative Imagination'.

An Associate Professor

at the Scientific College of Design in Muscat, Dr Palangi has been teaching Art for more than 40 years. In pursuit of art teaching, he travelled around the world which allowed him to deal with students from different cultural backgrounds.

He is happy to see the birth of "a new artwork" during his interaction with the art students and gets excited over the limitless imagination of people. "No need to control those imaginations but to give them a pattern through the art of creative imagination," he says.

Farideh Zariv is an Iranian-Australian artist and Art Curator at the Cure8 Art Gallery. Her works can be found in private and public collections around the world. She participated in more than 30 group exhibitions in China, Seattle, Mexico City, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur, Toronto and more.

She believes that Art is the greatest and most effective way to influence deep human emotions because it is a tangible language and in today's world, the most challenging thing is to find a platform that hosts and gives opportunities to highly creative artists who can show their culture to the world in a contemporary way.

Through her collaboration with Cure8 Art Gallery, she aims to provide the chance and offer a creative space for local and international professional artists. "This space will turn the spotlight on outstanding works of contemporary Omani artists from all creative fields like painting, printing, sculpture, ceramics and unique handicrafts."

Another important participant at the expo is Sarah Ahmed Farid Al Aulqi, Founder and Director of the Cure8 Art Gallery. Events excite her and she feels

connected if the event has anything to do with art.

For her "time is a concept that fascinates. The extent of this fixation on artistic sensibilities becomes clear when I get life's truest joys by sitting in my father's office, surrounded by his most precious belongings, books and little finds along the way — old-world charms that are from another place, another time."

No wonder artists become philosophers! It reflects in Sarah's walks and talks. She is full of ideas, which according to her "need some Methods of Creative Imagination." She is a keen learner, planner and executor. Work is work for her... she is yet to find the definition of 'hard work'.

Muna Rithie, co-founder of Omani Heritage Gallery, finds the Cure8 Art Gallery's vision is similar to Omani Heritage Gallery, as both support talented artists in their own way.

"The Creative Imagination Group Exhibition proves that the Omani youth only need the right tools and support to compete at the highest levels and give their art a rightful place on both the Omani art scene as well as the international stage creators and provide them with a showcase that allows them to represent Omani heritage to the world," she says.

Among the artists whose paintings are on display at the exhibition are: Afra Talal al Said, Aneesha Basheer Shailza, Aisha Muammar Mohamed, Iman al Maskari, Masha'el Ritchie, Janab Sayyida Mithal al Said, Nusaiba Shukry al Sulaimani, Soni Budhia, Pragma Bhatnagar and Zohreh Sadegh.

Interesting to see the displayed paintings. Seeing is believing for those who have love for art.

