

Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail al Maashani, Adviser at the Diwan of Royal Court, left for Japan to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the official funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to be held in Tokyo on Tuesday. Shaikh Salim is accompanied by Shaikh Dr Al Khattab bin Ghalib al Hinai, Deputy Chairman of the State Council, and Shaikh Mohammed bin Saud Bahwan al Mukhaini, Chairman of Oman-Japan Friendship Association. **SEE P4**



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OMAN FINISH SECOND IN WOMEN'S TENT PEGGING



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OMAN TO TARGET NEW MARKETS FOR WHEAT IMPORTS



P18

CYPRIOT CAROB GROWERS HARVEST THEIR 'BLACK GOLD'



MUSCAT

UNIFIED TENDER FOR GOVT VEHICLES

As part of an integrated procurement policy, the General Secretariat of the Tender Board has announced the launch of the first unified tender for the purchase of government vehicles, in coordination with the relevant authorities. The unified tender is expected to raise the efficiency of government procurement, as government agencies benefiting from the framework will be entitled only to local purchase orders provided they have budgets and needs. There will be no need for the government entity that uses the framework contract to repeat the series of contracting and attrition procedures, as this is guaranteed by the expected framework contract. **DETAILS ON P15**

MANILA

TYPHOON MAKES PHILIPPINE LANDFALL

Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos declared suspension of government work and classes for Monday as a category 3 tropical storm barrelled through the main island Luzon after making landfall northeast of the capital Manila. Nearly 8,400 people were pre-emptively evacuated from the path of Typhoon Noru, which further weakened with sustained winds of 175 km per hour and gusts of up to 290 kph after making landfall, the state weather agency said in its latest advisory. **DETAILS ON P6**



INSIDE



NORTH KOREA FIRES BALLISTIC MISSILE

P6



ITALY'S NEXT GOVERNMENT MUST TACKLE CLIMATE

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UAE President begins state visit on Tuesday

MUSCAT: Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, will pay a two-day state visit to the Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday. This came in a statement issued on Sunday by the Diwan of Royal Court, reading as follows: "In affirmation of the ties of fraternity, kinship, good neighbourliness and historical relations binding the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, leading a high-profile delegation, will pay a two-day state visit to the Sultanate of Oman starting from this Tuesday (September 27). "The visit will explore various areas of common interests that meet aspirations of the two countries towards more prosperous future. May the Almighty Allah bless the two wise leaderships with success for the good of their peoples and the Arab and Muslim nations!" — ONA



Oman-UAE ties based on solid foundations

MUSCAT: The fraternal relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates are based on common and solid foundations. These deep-rooted relations have been further consolidated through cultural, social and economic cooperation. The aspirations of the two countries' brotherly peoples are a model reflecting how best ties of neighbourliness and affinity should be. The two-day visit to Oman by Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the UAE, from Tuesday, and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, assume a great significance. The visit

constitutes a new starting point for more tangible steps, coordination and integration towards the achievement of the shared interests of the two countries. It will motivate more action for the realisation of the prosperity for Omani and UAE peoples in all spheres. The visit will also be an opportunity to exchange views about circumstances and developments of importance in the GCC, Arab and regional entourage. These relations have been distinguished, since the first meeting between late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos and late HH Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan. — ONA **SEE ALSO P2 & 3**

Oman's human rights efforts get global praise

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

The Sultanate of Oman's efforts to promote human rights drew praise from international rights delegates who have gathered in Muscat to discuss the three most prominent international conventions, namely the Convention against Torture, the Protection from Enforced Disappearance, and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The international participants praised Oman citing recent signing of seven

out of nine global agreements of relevance. The Sultanate of Oman has acceded to seven out of nine human rights conventions with a view to making pace with the international community's requirements in accordance with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations to create an international legal system to protect the rights through international agreements and implementation mechanisms. The discussions are under way after the opening of a three-day workshop hosted by the Omani Human Rights Commission. **TURN TO P4**

DOCUMENTARY ON WILDLIFE LAUNCHED



His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said launched a documentary titled 'Oman Under the Microscope' at a celebration held at the Royal Opera House Muscat, on Sunday. The documentary features the stunning environment and wildlife of the Sultanate of Oman and documents the habitats of marine and wild creatures in a bid to protect them from extinction. **SEE ALSO P4**

Four first-recorded fungi in Dhofar

MUSCAT: A joint research team from Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Center (Mawarid) at the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and the Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), has managed to register four major fungal species that have been recorded for the first time worldwide beside seven of common fungus families in Dhofar Governorate. The discoveries were made as part of a project that aims to collect, define and conserve major fungi measuring more than 1 centimetre and are visible to



the naked eye in the Sultanate of Oman. The research team detected two families of plurotoids: Pleurotaceae

and Schizophyllaceae and one family of Jelly fungus: Auriculariaceae. In addition, the Sultanate of Oman has

been registered as a source of all those major fungi for the first time, a scientific breakthrough that was published in internationally reputable scientific journals. The work of the research team resulted in the registration of 32 different types of fungi belonging to 24 genera and 17 families of Agaricomycetes. The project aims to establish Oman's first database dedicated to major fungi as well as preserving fungi at Mawarid's microbial plantations and classifying fungi in terms of phenomenological and molecular description. — ONA

Jupiter will be closest to earth on Monday

VINOD NAIR
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Stargazers worldwide will get a great view of Jupiter on Monday night, Nasa said. "On Monday, Jupiter will be at its closest point to Earth in 59 years, where it will be 367 million miles away from Earth, which is almost the same distance it was in 1963. At its farthest point from Earth, it is about 600 million miles away. On Monday, it can be seen as a big shining star as it rises from 6 pm to 6 am," Oman Astronomical Society said in a statement. The moon will appear with a larger size estimated at about 15 per cent, and with a brightness of about 30 per cent more than it is at the farthest point, due to the full moon at 3:52 pm Oman time and passed at the closest point to the Earth at 11:55 am on Sunday morning. At 357,658 km from Earth, its colour will be reddish or orange because of the dust in the atmosphere around the Earth.



Visit to underpin march of bilateral relations

MUSCAT: Mohammed Sultan al Suwaidi, Ambassador of the United Arab Emirates to the Sultanate of Oman, affirmed that the upcoming visit of HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the UAE, to Oman will have a positive impact on the course of bilateral relations and comes in line with the farsighted vision of the leaderships of the two countries.

Al Suwaidi told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this visit is an evidence of the depth of bilateral relations and cooperation in various political, economic, cultural and social fields.

“The strong fraternal ties between the two leaderships is unique, notably at the economic level, and this reflects mutual confidence and sets relations between their countries apart,” said Al Suwaidi.

He noted that the two countries are keen on forming practical visions about joint future action, adding that “this will reflect positively on economic, investment and social aspects.”

Al Suwaidi laid emphasis on sustained communication among



Mohammed Sultan al Suwaidi, Ambassador of the UAE, to the Sultanate of Oman

The two countries share deep-rooted social relations, as well as strategic interests that are greatly valued by the peoples of the two countries

officials tasked with economic and commercial affairs, in addition to the exchange of visits between delegations of businessmen.

UAE investments in Oman at the end of 2021 stood at RO 1.20 billion, while total investments during the first quarter of 2022 amounted to RO 1.23 billion, said the ambassador.

He pointed out that the UAE is doing its best to achieve maximum exchange of benefits between the two countries when investing in Oman, making use of a diverse portfolio of projects in the country, notably in the converting industries sector, financial services, construction, real estate and tourism.

Al Suwaidi explained that the two countries share deep-rooted social relations, as well as strategic interests that are greatly valued by the peoples of the two countries.

Al Suwaidi reiterated the visit's strategic importance to the two countries. He hoped that the next stage would see more joint efforts on maintaining advanced levels of joint action. — ONA



UAE President's visit to deepen ties, cooperation in all fields

ABU DHABI: Sayyid Ahmed bin Hilal al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Arab Emirates has said that the visit to Oman by HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, will be the first one of its kind, since HH Shaikh Mohammed took the reins of power in his country.

Sayyid Ahmed told Oman News Agency (ONA) that this visit will culminate in a fraternal meeting between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the UAE president and that it will reflect positively on the process of joint action aimed to develop all areas of cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Sayyid Ahmed added that Oman-UAE relations are eminent in every respect and that they are consolidated by fraternal bonds and a strategic approach founded by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the late HH Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan.

He noted that communication between His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan and their constant keenness to deepen relations and cooperation spurred further growth and development in all fields—and we now reap the fruits of such bilateral action.”

The ambassador pointed out that integration between Oman and the UAE lends strong support to promising economic and investment opportunities.

The two countries envisage focusing on future cooperation, highlighting investment opportunities, streamlining



Sayyid Ahmed Hilal al Busaidi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the UAE

procedures for investors in both countries and expanding partnerships in the business sector and investments that could be transformed into economic projects realising the common interests and accelerating the volume of trade exchange, he explained.

Over the past five decades, the UAE came in forefront of Oman's trading partners, said Sayyid Ahmed, noting that Oman is the second largest GCC trading partner of the UAE. “This reinforces our optimistic view of a verdant future of the Oman-UAE economic partnerships,” he observed.

Quoting figures, the ambassador spoke about the value of Oman's total exports to the UAE, which amounted to RO 1.3 billion in 2021, compared to RO 1.2 billion in 2020. Sayyid Ahmed added that Oman's exports to the UAE constitute 7.8 per cent of the general total of Oman's exports in 2021.

Sayyid Ahmed also underscored the significance of coordination between the two countries at the political level through coordination and consultation about various

regional and international issues.

Oman and the UAE share a strategic trade partnership that supports the economies of the two countries and develops investment opportunities between them, with agreements and memoranda of understanding covering financial and real estate activities, as well as in agricultural, fish and animal products, to name a few.

The Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Abu Dhabi has contributed to attracting and exchanging investments between the two countries, based on the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, by launching the national programme on attracting private investments and enhancing the presence of Omani exports in foreign markets.

This programme is one of the accelerators of the first phase of implementation of Oman Vision 2040, which is linked to the economy and development, he said. He furthered that the programme will focus on Omani exports and support their access to foreign markets to become a major tributary of the national economy.

The ambassador also underlined the importance of mutual visits and continuous coordination between officials of the two countries, saying that the process maximises prospects for joint cooperation in various fields and enhances investment opportunities.

He referred to the Oman-UAE Economic Forum held two sessions, in October 2021 and February 2022, which saw fruitful discussions on promotion of trade and investment partnerships.

— ONA



September 2022

FLOATING TENDERS

Oman Airports Company announces the following tenders:

Tender REF.NO	TENDER TITLE	DOC'S FEE OMR	Last date for DOC'S DISTRIBUTION	TENDER SUBMISSION DATE
PC-220913	Supply of Tubs for Muscat International Airport	25	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
PC-220914	Supply and Fabrication of Protection Kick-Rails for Partition Glass at Passenger Boarding Gates at Muscat International Airport	25	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
ITC-220907	Refresh of Control Center Video Wall at Muscat International Airport	100	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
ITC-220908	Supply and Replacement of Tetra Repeaters for Oman Airports	100	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
ITC-220909	Supply of Radio Repeaters and End Devices Spare Parts for Oman Airports	100	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
ITC-220910	Provision of Manpower (Specialized Engineers) for Network Level 3 CCIE Support for Oman Airports	100	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
ITC-220911	Provision of Manpower for Business Support Services at Muscat International Airport	500	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022
PC-220915	Supply of New Year Stationary For Oman Airports (2023)	25	2 nd October 2022	19 th October 2022

Tenders Collection: Specialized companies may obtain Tender Documents/ Specifications from Procurement Department upon receipt of complete payment of tender fees by credit card and receive scanned copy of deposit Receipt along with a copy of Company Commercial Registration Certificate to Email: (financetenders@omanairports.com) provided with company name, tender number & contact person as a mandatory.

OAMC Bank Account Details:

Account Name: Oman Airports Management Co. S.A.O.C.

Account No: 0423010849180012

Name of Bank: BANK MUSCAT

Branch: Corporate Branch, CBD Area, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman

SWIFT Code: BMUSOMRX

Required Bond: All participating Companies must provide a bank guarantee, issued by locally registered bank, for the sum of not less than 1% of the Tender value, addressed to the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, valid for 90 days from the date of submission of the Tenders.

Submission: All Bids shall be submitted as per the instructions mentioned in the Tender documents and late bids will not be entertained.

All Technical Queries shall be sent to:

oamctenders@omanairports.com

The committee is not bound to accept the lowest tender

Any payment received after last date of documents distribution will not be refunded

Headquarter Address:
Muscat International Airport
South Forecourt Building, First Floor
Oman Airports Management S.A.O.C
Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.

Note: All Correspondence / Clarification / Enquiries send an e-mail:
oamctenders@omanairports.com





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Oman-UAE relations a model that responds to peoples' aspirations

MUSCAT: The fraternal relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are based on common and solid foundations. These deep-rooted relations have been further consolidated through cultural, social and economic cooperation. The aspirations of the two countries' brotherly peoples are a model reflecting how best ties of neighbourliness and affinity should be.

The visit to be made to Oman by HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the UAE, on Tuesday, and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, assume a great significance. The visit constitutes a new starting point for more tangible steps, coordination and integration towards the achievement of the shared interests of the two countries. It will motivate more action for the realisation of the prosperity for Omani and UAE peoples in all spheres.

The visit will also be an opportunity to exchange views about circumstances and developments of importance in the GCC, Arab and regional entourage.

These relations have been distinguished, since the first meeting between the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said bin Taimour and the late HH Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan. Oman-UAE relations are compatible in many areas of shared interests that serve the peoples of the two countries over the past decades.

Since its establishment in 1991, the Supreme Joint Committee between the two countries worked hard to embody the aspirations of the two peoples of Oman and the UAE. The panel takes credit for enhancing cooperation in economic, commercial, cultural and educational fields, in addition to connecting electricity and telecommunication networks, coordinating land transport services and investment benefiting both Omani and UAE peoples.

Oman and the UAE have been the first GCC states to endorse the personal identity card in travel in lieu of passports since 1993. The UAE is Oman's prime partner in business, as affirmed by the volume of exports, reexport and import figures.

Statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) show that commercial exchange between the two countries in 2021 stood at more than RO 5.5 billion, compared to RO 5.2 billion in 2020.

UAE investments in Oman, as at the end of 2021, stood at about RO 1.2 billion. By the end of the first quarter in 2022, total UAE investments stood at more than RO 1.23 billion.

UAE companies are among the largest stake takers in Oman due to the ease of transportation of national products and smooth border access. Oman is one of the most important markets for UAE trade. Oman ranked 3rd in the Arab world and 10th globally among the list of UAE trading partners and its business accounts



for 20 per cent of the total UAE trade.

Tourist establishments in the two countries receive many groups of tourists from both countries, which joined hands to forge joint tourism investments that have contributed to attracting more tourists.

The private sectors in the two countries play a vital role in economic development, and they have been the backbone of economic diversification trends. Oman is pressing ahead with measures to encourage local and foreign investments, especially in economic diversification sectors, notably industries, logistics, mining, tourism and fisheries.

Represented by Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) and Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the two countries signed an agreement in 1998 to establish Oman-UAE Businessmen Council. The Council



is tasked with promoting joint cooperation and realising the aspirations of the two countries.

The private sector looks forward to this visit, which caps fraternal relations and opens new vistas for commercial relations and investment.

The two countries worked closely and continuously to enhance cooperation in the sphere of culture by holding joint events and activities. These include the UAE Cultural Week in Oman, first held on December 11, 2006 on the occasion of celebrations marking Muscat as the Capital of Arab Culture in 2006. The event comprised four exhibitions specialised in Arabic calligraphy, coins, modern arts and cultural books and publications.

Represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Information, Oman participates in annual

book fairs in the United Arab Emirates in Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. UAE cultural and media institutions participate in Muscat International Book Fair as well.

The Oman-UAE relations are based on historical ties inherited by the generations who are keen on maintaining the integrity of relations in the purviews of visions that stem from language, religion and kinship.

Omani and UAE peoples are looking forward, with great hopes, that the visit of HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates, to Oman and his meeting with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The visit will elevate the level of joint cooperation in all fields and deepen fraternal ties. It will inspire the two countries in their quest to explore the future with determination and steadfastness.

— ONA

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♦ UAE President's visit will also be an opportunity to exchange views about circumstances and developments of importance in the GCC, Arab and regional entourage.

♦ The meeting between the two leaders constitutes a new starting point for more tangible steps, coordination and integration towards the achievement of the shared interests of the two countries

♦ Commercial exchange between the two countries in 2021 stood at more than RO 5.5 billion, compared to RO 5.2 billion in 2020

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♦ Oman ranked 3rd in the Arab world and 10th globally among the list of UAE trading partners and its business accounts for 20 per cent of the total UAE trade





DOCUMENTARY FEATURING WILD LIFE LAUNCHED



MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said launched a documentary titled Oman Under the Microscope at a celebration held at the Royal Opera House Muscat, on Sunday. The documentary features the stunning environment and wildlife of the Sultanate of Oman and documents the habitats of marine and wild creatures in a bid to protect them from extinction. The film was screened in Al Dimaniyat Islands, Ras Al Jinz Turtle Reserve and the Rock Garden in Duqm. — **ONA**

Qatari delegation briefed on Oman’s environmental conservation efforts



MUSCAT: A delegation from Qatar’s Ministry of Environment and Climate Change explored Oman’s experience in the field of environment preservation. This comes within the framework of the delegation’s several-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman. Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of the Environment

Authority (EA), underscored the importance of environmental cooperation between Oman and Qatar. He pointed out that the two countries have come a long way in developing the environment sector. Al Amri also said that Oman accords a great attention to the environment sector within the framework of Oman Vision

2040. He also reiterated the significance of supporting green economy, circular economy and ecotourism. The Environment Authority gave a presentation on environmental legislations in Oman, as well as control mechanisms and strategies undertaken for environment preservation.

The Qatari delegation toured Mawarid Centre for the preservation of genetic resources. The delegation will also tour some natural reserves in various governorates. Dr Ibrahim Abdullatif al Masalamani, Assistant Under-Secretary for Protection and Natural Reserves Affairs, headed the Qatari delegation. — **ONA**

DELEGATION TO ATTEND SHINZO ABE’S STATE FUNERAL



MUSCAT: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail al Maashani, Adviser at the Diwan of Royal Court left here on Sunday heading for Japan to represent the Sultanate of Oman in the official funeral of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, due to be held in Tokyo on Tuesday. Shaikh Salim is accompanied by Shaikh Dr Al Khattab bin Ghalib al Hinai, Deputy Chairman of the State Council, and Shaikh Mohammed bin Saud Bahwan al Mukhaini, Chairman of Oman-Japan Friendship Association. — **ONA**

Dhofar Municipal Council reviews facilities, projects

SALALAH: The Municipal Council of the Governorate of Dhofar on Sunday discussed a spectrum of topics, namely the recommendation of conducting a case study on completing facilities of Salalah Airport and establishing a comprehensive maintenance workshop, as well as provision of supply services. The council also reviewed project status reports of the Ministry of Health on health centres and hospitals that are under construction in the governorate.

The meeting was chaired by HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar and Chairman of its Municipal Council. The meeting touched on recommendations of the coordination meeting held by the Food Security Committee. Those recommendations include finding solutions to the shortages of animal feed and weeds and the issue of their pricing, as well as holding an annual conference on livestock and environment. — **ONA**

Oman’s human rights efforts draw praise

FROM P1
The workshop opened under the auspices of Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Diplomatic Affair. Shaikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of the Omani Commission for Human Rights, opened the workshop, which seeks to fulfil international community’s initiative in accordance with the principles contained in the Charter of the United Nations, to create an international legal system to protect human rights through international agreements and implementation mechanisms. Shaikh Khalifa al Harthy said that the formation of Omani Human Rights Commission is a clear evidence of the government’s keenness on protecting human rights for citizens and residents alike. “An example of this approach is the signing of seven out of nine global human rights

agreements by the country,” he added. The Sultanate of Oman joined the human rights movement in 2020. Mohammed Ensour, Head of the Middle East and North Africa Division of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, said the country has ratified three international agreements on human rights. He added that the pacts constitute the cornerstone of human rights system. Ensour hailed the step as “a giant stride that reflects the Sultanate of Oman’s political will and its respect for human rights charters. He commended the efforts in updating human rights practices. “The international Human Rights commission welcomes and values the promulgation of the Royal Decree forming Oman Human Rights Commission which states that the commission enjoys integrity and autonomy in practising its duties,” Ensour said.

■ SHABAB OMAN II ARRIVES AT PORT OF LIMASSOL



LIMASSOL: Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) vessel, Shabab Oman II, has arrived at the port of Limassol in the Republic of Cyprus on its way back to Oman as part of its sixth international voyage themed “Oman, Land of Peace”. The vessel, through its voyage, continues introducing visitors to Oman’s maritime history and culture. — **ONA**



Rebranded global aviation meet in December



SAMUEL KUTTY
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The inaugural edition of the Airports Council International's annual global trade show, which is returning in a new format after a two-year hiatus, will be hosted by Oman Airports Management Company.

Branded as Airports Innovate, the new event concept will reflect the rapid advancements of the industry in terms of technology, business and strategy.

"This event will be an opportunity for the global aviation community to meet, learn, inspire and collaborate", Airport Council International (ACI) said in a statement.

Jointly organised by ACI Asia-Pacific, ACI Europe and ACI World, the two-day conference will take place at Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre on December 7 and 8.

The event aims to provide a space to the World Business Partner (WBP) and airport community, as well as the Small and Emerging Airports Seminar (SEAS),

to engage in one-on-one meetings and get updates on the latest trends in the industry through presentations, seminars, and workshops.

Commenting on the event, Shaikh Aimen bin Sultan al Hosni, CEO, Oman Airports, said "Oman Airports is delighted to host for the first time Airports Innovate event in Muscat. We are eager to welcome experts of the aviation community, to reconnect and exchange expertise and to share new trends and opportunities while experiencing our world-class Omani hospitality".

Packed with business, commercial and strategic leads and intelligence, the reimaged event is already set to emerge as one of the premier global aviation conferences.

"The aviation industry has once again proven its resilience, as Airports Innovate will be showcasing the critical role played by air travel to enable social and economic development. We look forward to an unforgettable event", Al Hosni said.

Airports Innovate will provide a

platform for the industry to come together and network with other airports and key partners and stakeholders from Europe, Asia-Pacific, the Middle East and the rest of the world.

The event offers an opportunity for industry associates to showcase their products and services as well as engage with airport members.

According to Olivier Jankovec, Director General of ACI Europe, innovation is now at the very core of the airport business model reset.

"This is about boosting resilience, operational efficiency and quality as much as accelerating decarbonisation — and ultimately enabling a step-change in airport economics. The way in which we foster, celebrate and collaborate in this field will mark our success in years to come. That is why I'm convinced that this event will not only be the gathering of the smartest technologies and the freshest thinking, it will also position us all — globally — for a vibrant and robust future," he said.

Students are integral part of education system

MUSCAT: To ensure students participation in educational process and get their point of view, the academic institutions in the Sultanate of Oman organise elections for Student Advisory Council at the beginning of the academic year.

The University of Nizwa also has a Student Advisory Council and part of the electoral drive, which started in 2008 in the university.

The students' body is a parliamentary process directly associated with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation.

Since its early years, the university treated students as part of the educational process. Students were partners in developing and enhancing university services and academic programmes.

"The student council is a university initiative to provide space for students to share their ideas and to uplift the intellectual, artistic, social and sports university prospect and strengthen the communication between students and officials within the institution," Dr Saleh al Azri, the Dean of Student Affairs and Community Services, said.

In the beginning, the students were selected through their colleges. However, in 2014 when the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation adopted the university parliament experiences in all academic institutions, some modifications were made to the idea. The name was changed to Student Advisory Council and an organisational guide was



issued.

The guide explained the role and responsibilities of each member. Furthermore, it defined the number of members based on the total number of students in the academic institutions. Dr Al Azri mentioned the ministry's effort and said, "The ministry pays great attention to the Students Advisory Council. It organises workshops and meetings with top officials. Several students of our university have participated in those workshops and meetings."

A new Student Advisory Council is elected every year. The candidates need

to meet the rules and conditions to run for membership in the council. Voting is possible on election day when students ask their peers to vote for them. They distribute posters that show their aims of running for the membership and the issues they plan to discuss with the higher management on campus.

The Students Advisory Council has a direct connection to the Chancellor's office. Whenever the Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation visits the institution, the minister meets the council members and discusses their comments and ideas.

Gold prices soften

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Retail gold jewellery prices in the Sultanate of Oman have been softening in line with the recent trends as globally the yellow metal has dropped more than 1.5 per cent to the lowest level since April 2020.

According to retailers, gold prices have dropped by nearly RO 1 per gram of 22 karats since the start of this month.

On Saturday, the retailers were trading gold at RO 20.30 for 22 karats and RO 21.10 for 24 karats. According to market sources.

For many reasons, gold prices have hit low as the US Federal Reserve adopted a tougher stance with the aim of curbing inflation, which has led to the strengthening of the dollar.

And gold fell in spot transactions by 1.6 per cent to \$1,644.04 an ounce, after it fell by 1.8 per cent to \$1,640.20 earlier.

Market analysts said that gold prices are likely to drop further at the international markets in the coming days in the backdrop of inflation, renewed geo-political risks surrounding



the Russia-Ukraine war, while risk-averse sentiments can force people to take to bet on gold as a long-term safety net.

According to one gold retailer in the capital, "The currencies of South Asia have been also weakening against the dollar and even the Omani rial, forcing them to take advantage of the situation and remit money back home. Also, many expatriate communities have just returned from summer vacation, which means there is a liquidity crunch to invest in gold now. If prices continue at current levels, we can expect some demand towards the start of the festival season in India."

Details of 'Oman in Focus' documentary unveiled



MUSCAT: Details of the Omani documentary themed "Oman in Focus" were unveiled on Sunday. The documentary highlights the environment and tourism sectors in the Sultanate of Oman. Maisa bint Fahd al Hootiyah, Executive Director of "Oman in Focus" said that the documentary is the fruit of continuous efforts exerted over two consecutive years despite the challenges posed by the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. She added that the two-hour long documentary is presented in three languages, namely Arabic, English and French. Al Hooti said that the main goal of producing this documentary is to highlight environmental aspects that were away from the spotlight in Oman. The documentary shows the rich diversity in Oman's geography. It focuses on endangered marine life and wildlife, she added. — ONA



Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender No.	Tender Name	Grade	Tender Fees
59/2022/ MHT/HQ-41	FACILITIES MANAGMENET AND MAINTENANACE FOR OMAN BOTIANIC GRADEN	Excellent	30.200 OMR
60/2022/ MHT/HQ-42	REGENERATION OF AL KASFAH TOWER - AL RAMAH FORT, RUSTAQ GOVERNORATE OF SOUTH ALBATINAH	First	25 OMR
61/2022/ MHT/HQ-43	RESTORATION OF JABREEN CASTLE - BAHLA, GOVERNORATE OF AL DAKHILIYAH	First	25 OMR

Tender Document Sales End Date	16/10/2022
Last Date for Bid Submission	6/11/2022
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E.Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by a tender bond from a local bank registered bank in Oman of not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission online.
 - Any bid that does not meet the required tender bond will not be considered.
 - The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids.
- The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@ita.gov.om or 24402200
For further information	Email : sotic@mht.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085



South Korea: North Korea fired ballistic missile towards sea

SEOUL: North Korea fired a ballistic missile towards the sea off its east coast on Sunday, ahead of planned military drills by South Korean and US forces involving an aircraft carrier and a visit to the region by US Vice President Kamala Harris.

South Korea's military said it was a single, short-range ballistic missile fired from near the Taechon area of North Pyongan Province just before 7 am local time and flew about 600 km at an altitude of 60 km and a speed of Mach 5.

"North Korea's launch of a ballistic missile is an act of grave provocation that threatens the peace and security of the Korean peninsula and international community," South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said in a statement.

After the launch, the Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Kim Seung-kyum and the US Forces Korea Commander Paul LaCamera discussed the situation and reaffirmed their readiness to respond to any threat or provocation from North Korea, it added.

South Korea's National Security Council held an emergency meeting to discuss response measures and condemned the launch as an apparent violation of the UN Security Council Resolutions and an unjustifiable act of provocation. South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol, who



People watch a TV broadcasting a news report on North Korea firing a ballistic missile towards the sea off its east coast in Seoul. — Reuters

arrived in Seoul late on Saturday from a trip to Britain, the United States and Canada, was briefed on the launch, the presidential office said.

Japan's Defence Minister Yasukazu Hamada said Japan estimated the missile reached maximum altitude at 50 km and may have flown on an irregular trajectory. Hamada said it fell outside Japan's exclusive economic zone and there were no reports of problems with shipping or air traffic. Many of the short-range missiles tested by North Korea in

Many of the short-range missiles tested by North Korea have been designed to evade missile defences by manoeuvring during flight and flying on a lower, 'depressed' trajectory

recent years have been designed to evade missile defences by

manoeuvring during flight and flying on a lower, "depressed" trajectory, experts have said.

"If you include launches of cruise missiles this is the nineteenth launch, which is an unprecedented pace," Hamada said. "North Korea's action represents a threat to the peace and security of our country, the region and the international community and to do this as the Ukraine invasion unfolds is unforgivable," he said, adding that Japan had delivered a protest through North Korea's embassy in Beijing. — Reuters

Lanka disperses student rally after protest ban

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan police dispersed hundreds of demonstrators on Saturday, a day after severely curtailing protest rights in response to months of unrest sparked by the island nation's sharp economic downturn.

President Ranil Wickremesinghe has taken a tough line against activists who forced his predecessor to flee the country and resign in July at the peak of the country's crisis.

Officers in anti-riot gear blocked the student march hours after the government declared the city centre a "high security zone", outlawing protests in the vicinity.

Police fired tear gas and water cannon to clear out the demonstrators, who were demanding the release of fellow activists detained under draconian anti-terror laws.

Witnesses saw police detain dozens of participants.

Wickremesinghe on Friday ordered a ban on all demonstrations and protests near key institutions, including his office and the homes of military top brass.

Sri Lanka's influential bar association condemned the ban and said it seriously undermined freedom of expression and assembly. The edict "seeks to significantly curtail the liberty of the citizen, without any reasonable or legal basis," it said in a statement.

Sri Lanka endured months of acute food and fuel shortages, extended blackouts and runaway inflation after running out of foreign currency to finance essential imports this year.

At the height of the resulting unrest, thousands of people stormed the residence of then-president Gotabaya Rajapaksa and forced him to flee the country. — AFP



A security personnel falls as police use water cannons to disperse anti-government protesters during a demonstration in Colombo. — AFP

Typhoon makes Philippine landfall, work suspended

MANILA: Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos declared suspension of government work and classes for Monday as a category 3 tropical storm barrelled through the main island Luzon after making landfall northeast of the capital Manila.

Nearly 8,400 people were pre-emptively evacuated from the path of Typhoon Noru, which further weakened with sustained winds of 175 kilometres per hour and gusts of up to 290 kph after making landfall, the state weather agency said in its latest advisory.

Flights were cancelled, ferries halted and bus routes shut as heavy rains and strong winds toppled trees and power lines.

Marcos suspended classes and work in Luzon, which accounts for more than two-thirds of the economy and roughly half of the country's 110 million population.

The energy ministry placed



Volunteers and local officials patrol the neighbourhood to remind residents to evacuate in preparation for Super Typhoon Noru in Manila. — Reuters

The Philippines is regularly ravaged by storms, with scientists warning they are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer because of climate change

on high alert all energy-related facilities in typhoon-affected areas, Marcos said on Facebook.

The Philippine Stock Exchange said trading would be suspended on Monday as heavy to torrential rains drench the capital region and nearby provinces.

"Utility posts fell and homes made of light materials near coastlines were damaged," Nelson Egargue, disaster chief of Aurora province where Noru made

landfall, told DZRH radio station.

Waves whipped up by the category 3 typhoon were battering ports, photos and videos on social media showed, and low-lying areas were flooded.

"The wind is calmer now but it's dark because we have no power supply," Eliseo Ruzol, mayor of coastal General Nakar town adjacent to Noru's landfall location, told DZRH.

The Philippines, an archipelago of more than 7,600 islands, sees an annual average of 20 tropical storms that cause floods and landslides.

In 2013, Typhoon Haiyan, one of the most powerful tropical cyclones ever recorded, killed 6,300 people.

Noru, which is moving westward over rice-producing provinces in Luzon, is likely to emerge over the South China Sea by early Monday. — Reuters

DHAKA

23 dead after boat sinks in Bangladesh

At least 23 people were killed and several dozen more were missing on Sunday after a boat capsized in a river in Bangladesh, police said. "We have recovered 23 bodies. Firefighters and divers are searching for more bodies," local police official Shafiqul Islam said.

The boat was packed with up to 50 Hindu pilgrims, police said.

They were travelling to a centuries-old temple when the vessel suddenly tipped over and sank in the middle of the Karotoa river near the town of Boda in northern Bangladesh.

Another police officer said up to 25 people were still missing.

Local media said at least 10 people were rescued and sent to hospital. — AFP



TOKYO

Tokyo tightens security for slain Abe's funeral

Japan's state funeral for former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Tuesday is under the spotlight as authorities seek to avoid the kind of security blunders exposed in his assassination in July.

Abe was shot from close range by a man with a homemade gun while on the campaign trail in the western city of Nara. Violent crime is rare and dignitaries tend to travel with only modest protection. Japanese authorities - including Prime Minister Fumio Kishida have acknowledged



security flaws. With scores of foreign VIPs among those attending the funeral at Tokyo's Nippon Budokan, they do not appear to be taking any chances. — Reuters

CAIRO

Egypt to apply to host 2036 Olympic Games

Egypt will apply to host the Summer Olympic Games in 2036, the Egyptian youth and sports minister said in a statement, a bid that if successful would make it the first Arab or African nation to host the event.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi gave the green light to apply, Minister Ashraf Sobhi added during a reception for IOC President Thomas Bach in Cairo.

The statement, issued by the Egyptian cabinet, quoted



Bach as saying Egypt's sports infrastructure was capable of hosting the event.

The process of applying for to host the 2036 Olympics has not yet begun. — Reuters



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In brief

■ GRAN CANARIA



FLIGHTS CANCELLED AS STORM HITS CANARY ISLANDS

Flights were cancelled across Spain's Canary Islands, airport operator Aena said, as storm Hermine moved in from over the Atlantic, bringing heavy rains to the popular holiday destination. There had been 141 cancellations by mid-afternoon across many of the islands, including 62 from Tenerife North airport, 23 from La Palma, 20 from El Hierro, eight from Lanzarote and four from La Gomera. Heavy rainfall flooded streets, and some were blocked by fallen trees. Spain's national weather agency, Aemet, has issued a red weather alert. The regional government has closed schools on Monday as a precaution. — AFP

■ ABU DHABI



SCHOLZ SEALS ENERGY DEALS FOR GERMANY

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has concluded his first official visit to the Arabian Peninsula with new energy supplies from the UAE and Saudi Arabia. During his visit to Abu Dhabi on Sunday, German energy company RWE signed a deal for an initial delivery of 137,000 cubic metres of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the UAE, to help reduce Germany's dependence on Russian supplies. The delivery, in December, is set to be the first to reach a new German LNG terminal in Brunsbüttel, near Hamburg. According to RWE, a memorandum has been signed for deliveries over several years from 2023. — dpa

■ MONTREAL



CANADA COUNTS DAMAGE AFTER STORM FIONA

Parts of eastern Canada resembled a "war zone" on Sunday after powerful storm Fiona swept houses into the sea and caused major power outages, as the Caribbean and Florida braced for intensifying Tropical Storm Ian. The storm packed hurricane-force winds of 130 kilometres per hour and brought torrential rain, as well as waves of up to 40 feet which left devastation across the region's coast. Storm surges swept at least 20 homes into the sea in the town of Channel-Port aux Basques, on the southwestern tip of Newfoundland, officials there said. — AFP

Russia holds referendums in occupied Ukrainian areas despite shelling

KYIV: Russia has sought to defend its seven-month old war, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov telling the United Nations that regions of Ukraine where widely-criticised referendums are being held would get Russia's "full protection" if annexed by Moscow.

The votes in four eastern Ukrainian regions, aimed at annexing territory Russia has taken by force since its attack in February, were staged for a third day on Sunday. The Russian parliament could move to formalise the annexation within days.

By incorporating the four areas of Luhansk, Donetsk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia into Russia, Moscow could portray attacks to retake them as an attack on Russia itself, a warning to Kyiv and its Western allies.

The Russian annexations raise the risk of a direct military confrontation between Russia and the Nato military alliance as Western arms are being used by Ukrainian troops.

British Prime Minister Liz Truss said Britain and its allies should not heed threats from Russian President Vladimir Putin who had made what she called a strategic mistake.

"I think he didn't anticipate the strength of reaction from the free world," she told CNN.

"We should not be listening to his sabre-rattling and his bogus threats. Instead, what we need to do is continue to put sanctions on Russia and continue to support the Ukrainians," Truss said in the interview broadcast on Sunday.

Ukraine and its allies have dismissed the referendums



Local residents wait before receiving ballots from members of an electoral commission and casting their votes into a mobile ballot box on the third day of a referendum on the joining of the self-proclaimed Donetsk People's Republic (DPR) to Russia in Mariupol, Ukraine. — Reuters

as a sham designed to justify an escalation of the war and a mobilisation drive by Moscow after recent battlefield losses.

Putin on Wednesday ordered Russia's first military mobilisation since World War Two. The move triggered protests across Russia and sent many men of military age fleeing.

Two of Russia's most senior lawmakers on Sunday addressed a string of complaints about the mobilisation, ordering regional officials to get a handle on the situation and swiftly solve the "excesses" that have stoked public anger.

Third day of voting in referendums on joining Russia as Lavrov says regions would have Russia's 'full protection'

Addressing the UN General Assembly and the world's media in New York on Saturday, Lavrov sought to justify Russia's attack of its neighbour, repeating Moscow's false claims that the elected government in Kyiv was illegitimately installed and filled

with neo-Nazis.

He cast opposition to what Russia calls a "special operation" as limited to the United States and countries under its sway. Nearly three-quarters of states in the assembly voted to reprimand Russia and demand it withdraw its troops.

Lavrov told a news conference after his speech that the regions where votes are underway would be under Moscow's "full protection" if they are annexed by Russia.

Asked if Russia would have grounds for using nuclear weapons to defend the annexed regions, Lavrov said Russian territory,

including territory "further enshrined" in Russia's constitution in the future, "is under the full protection of the state".

Ukraine's foreign minister, Dmytro Kuleba, said Russia's mentions of the possible use of nuclear weapons were "absolutely unacceptable" and Kyiv would not give in to them.

The Duma, Russia's lower house of parliament, may debate bills incorporating the Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine into Russia on Thursday, the state-run TASS news agency said on Saturday, citing an unnamed source. — Reuters

Low voter turnout as Italy elects a new parliament

ROME: Less than 20 per cent of eligible Italian voters cast their ballot in the first hours of parliamentary elections on Sunday, in what looks set to become a new historic low in voter turnout.

Polls opened at 7 am. At 12 pm, turnout stood at 19 per cent, down on figures from the 2018 elections, which saw the lowest turnout ever recorded after World War II with some 73 per cent overall, according to the Interior Ministry in Rome.

Sunday's election might end up even lower than that, with experts predicting a turnout of below 70 per cent. Some 51.5 million people are eligible to vote in the parliamentary elections, with polling closing at 11 pm.

The right-wing alliance led by Giorgia Meloni and her nationalist Brothers of Italy party is expected to win the race and even garner an absolute majority, according to opinion polls, putting Meloni on track to become Italy's first female prime minister.

The midday figure was lower than at the same time in 2018, when Italy recorded its lowest turnout since World War II with some 73 per cent overall, according to the Interior Ministry in Rome. Sunday's election might end up even lower than that, with



Leader of Italian populist Five Star movement, Giuseppe Conte casts his vote at a polling station in central Rome. — AFP

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The bloc also includes the right-wing populist Lega led by Matteo Salvini and the conservative Forza Italia under former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi. — dpa

Swiss narrowly back hiking retirement age for women

GENEVA: Swiss voters on Sunday accepted by a hair a divisive pension reform plan, which will raise women's retirement age to the same as men's, but snubbed a push to ban factory farming.

Final results showed a tiny majority of Swiss approved a government plan to reform the country's pension system for the first time in more than a quarter of a century.

Bern has long argued the need to "stabilise" the country's old-age security system, under pressure as life expectancy rises and the giant baby boomer generation reaches retirement age.

After failing twice to get the approval needed for similar plans, in 2004 and 2017, two separate votes on different aspects of the reform passed on Sunday.

Just 50.57 per cent of Swiss agreed to the most controversial part of the reform, involving hiking women's retirement age by one year.

This means women will need to work until the age of 65 before receiving a full pension, bringing them en par with their male counterparts.

A separate vote on boosting funding for the reform through a sales tax hike meanwhile passed with 55 per cent in favour.

Parliament approved the



Electoral posters ahead of a vote on a pension reform in Switzerland. — AFP

key measures last year, but left-leaning parties and unions decried the reform "on the backs of women" and pushed the issue to a referendum under Switzerland's direct democratic system.

Backers of the reform argued that it was reasonable for men and women to retire at the same age, with Celine Amaudruz, vice president of the populist rightwing Swiss People's Party hailing the vote as "a first step towards permanence" for the old-age insurance system.

But Sunday's decision sparked outrage from the plan's opponents.

The Swiss Socialist Party's

women's group immediately announced a demonstration in Bern on Monday, warning the plan would dramatically cut women's already inferior pension income.

"Women's pension income will be reduced by \$7.1 billion over the next 10 years: a slap in the face of all women," it said in a statement.

Opponents argued that women face significant discrimination and a broad gender pay-gap in Switzerland, and thus receive far smaller pensions than men, demanding such issues be addressed before hiking their retirement age. — AFP

Why so serious? Connect to your inner child more



Hyesha Barrett
@coach_hyesha

The writer is a life coach and neuro-transformational coach

Children laugh on average one hundred times per day, adults around ten.

Since when did we become so serious? As we grow up, our childlike wonder wanders off to some dark place hidden deep within us, fully submerged by the fear of other people’s judgement.

This usually impedes the flourishing of our creativity, playfulness and general desire to live in the moment.

Children don’t care what anyone thinks. Adults are so bogged down by their insecurities and destructive thoughts, which often hinder the person’s capability to let their guard down to show their true self.

These uncertainties mainly stem from repeated incidents

throughout childhood which over time deepened the roots, further fuelling the patterns of negative behaviour and narrowed learnings.

The older we get, the more “responsible” we feel we need to be that we often let our own relaxation and happiness fall by the wayside.

Upon maturing and feeling the consequences of life’s challenges, we become increasingly morose and somehow lose the proficiency to laugh at trivial things.

As much as there are times to be serious, times to be silly are of equal worth, value and importance.

In order to grow, adults need to regain the forgotten joy of childhood through connecting with their inner child. Doing so will redeem our more humorous

NO MATTER WHAT YOU’RE GOING THROUGH AND NO MATTER WHAT YOUR DAY HAS BEEN LIKE, REMEMBER TO INJECT SOME LIGHTHEARTEDNESS INTO YOUR SCHEDULE

and playful side.

Our inner children are the carefree, happy go lucky, fun loving part of us that we so often quash.

Unfortunately, we hardly acknowledge our inner children as for the most part, we have been told while growing up, to ‘stop acting like a child’. Alas, we have developed an unhealthy relationship to our

free spirited side. Upon welcoming your inner child, you will be in pure and raw connection with yourself. This part is very crucial to the sustainable happiness of your overall emotional and mental well-being.

No matter what you’re going through and no matter what your day has been like, remember to inject some lightheartedness into your schedule.

Feeling connected to your inner child, can guarantee the spread to other areas of your life and you will see things through a much more colourful and fun lens.

When we are in a relaxed atmosphere, thoughts are more positive and ideas flow more authentically. We push fun times

aside thinking being serious will allow us to accomplish more. On the contrary, not taking yourself so seriously will reap finer rewards. Do things that made you happy as a child.

Dedicate a specific time just to yourself and enjoy the pastimes of childhood, eg: legos, role-play, dolls, playing ball, making dens, drawing, games, reading, and camping. If you can’t think of any activities that you enjoyed, simply watch funny videos.

Ensure to make regular time for fun and lightheartedness, this will help to rekindle the positive emotions of youth and allow you to enjoy the little things without giving too much attachment to the outcome.

In Canada’s Arctic, Inuit traditions help combat youth depression

ANNE SOPHIE THILL

Filleting a fish, lighting a fire or building an igloo: In Canada’s Arctic, Inuit youth are being encouraged to connect with their culture in an attempt to prevent severe depression and save lives.

A dozen teenagers and young adults gather around instructor Alex Flaherty. They don’t want to miss any of the traditional hunter’s precise gestures as he carves a fish or lights a fire.

“Our culture has changed so much in the last 50 years when people used to live in igloos... the change is happening so fast, (and) we are losing our culture,” he tells.

Flaherty blames the societal shifts for a series of social ills such as violent crime, substance abuse and a high rate of suicide.

Hoping to help remedy these problems, he’s taken hundreds of teenagers hiking, camping and hunting in the vast tundra in the past three years.

In addition to keeping alive Inuit culture, his government-funded Polar Outfitting programme also aims to bolster young people’s mental health and teach them to adapt to a changing climate — in a region that is warming much faster than elsewhere.

Flaherty says he takes mostly youth aged 12 to 20 years old, “because that’s when their lifestyle starts changing (and) when they need help.”

In the summer, they hike across the rocky, windswept lands near the bay city of Iqaluit that is home to some 7,000 residents — and is accessible only by plane most months.

They also learn to make fishing nets to catch Arctic char and to navigate and survive in the pristine but unforgiving environment.

In the dead of winter, when sunlight is reduced to just a few hours per day, they will go out on the ice to fish, and build igloos.

At 22, Annie Kootoo is the oldest in the current class. She gushes with joy after spending 10 days in the wilderness.

“I did a lot of activities that I don’t usually do, and it’s been very helpful for my mental health,” she says. Chris Laisa, a 14-year-old echoes the sentiment. “I feel great,” he says after a lesson.

“It was fun because I learned how to fillet a fish, how to prepare it.”

Flaherty, standing nearby, adds that it’s “not just about fishing. It’s about clearing your mind, being outdoors and sharing with others.”

In the Nunavut territory of northern Canada, where the average age is 28, young people are deeply affected by the isolation and intergenerational traumas caused by past colonial policies. — AFP

After Texas sent him to Washington, one migrant launches a new life



Miriam Jordan

The writer is a national correspondent covering immigration

When Lever Alejos of Venezuela arrived at the southern border penniless in July, he gladly accepted a free bus ride to Washington, DC, courtesy of the state of Texas. He had no family or friends to receive him, and spent one night in the plaza across from Union Station. He soon settled into a homeless shelter.

“I have nothing,” Alejos, 29, said on his third day in the city, “but I have the will to work and succeed.”

Two months later, Alejos is making between \$600 to \$700 a week, saving up to buy a used car and planning to move out of the shelter.

“There is so much opportunity here,” he said on Thursday, at the end of a day’s work. “You just have to take advantage of it.”

Since April, thousands of migrants, most of them Venezuelans, have been coaxed onto buses and planes heading to Washington, New York, Chicago and, last week, Martha’s Vineyard, Massachusetts, after enduring a perilous journey over land from their broken country to make a fresh start in the United States.

The transportation to the Democratic strongholds has been organised by Texas, Florida and Arizona, whose governors are trying to draw attention to a record surge in the number of people crossing the border, which they blame on the Biden administration’s immigration policies.

Last week, Gov Greg Abbott of Texas dropped off two bus loads of migrants near the residence of Vice President Kamala Harris, and more over the weekend.

Florida’s governor, Ron DeSantis, on Wednesday chartered two small planes to fly 50 migrants to Martha’s Vineyard, the upscale vacation island off Massachusetts, which he has derided as a liberal bastion.

Democrats have called the stunts cruel, and many migrants have been left at least temporarily homeless as their new host cities scramble to help them.

But others, like Alejos, have called the free transportation a blessing. They are already employed and achieving some measure of stability. They have found jobs in construction, hospitality,



Lever Alejos, a migrant, shows a picture of the son he left behind in Venezuela in Washington.

MIGRANTS LIKE ALEJOS ARE AT ONCE SYMBOLS OF A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS, PAWNS IN A PARTISAN DEBATE, AND PEOPLE SIMPLY FOLLOWING THE ECONOMICS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND

retail, trucking and other sectors facing worker shortages in an economy still recovering from the impact of the pandemic.

“In most big cities, including the ones where governors are shipping migrants, employers are scrambling to find workers,” said Chris Tilly, a labour economist at UCLA. “They are meeting a need.”

Migrants like Alejos are at once symbols of a humanitarian crisis, pawns in a partisan debate, and people simply following the economics of supply and demand.

Most face an uphill battle to win their asylum cases. But it will be years before the legal process is complete, and those who lose their cases tend to live the rest of their lives in the

shadows, trying to stay employed and out of the grasp of immigration officers tasked with deporting them.

In the meantime, they are both straining the resources of cities trying to provide them social services, and also filling a gap in the nation’s labour market.

While as many as 8 million immigrants are working in the United States without authorisation, asylum applicants eventually receive employment permits while their cases are pending.

Since 2015, Venezuelans fleeing hardship have been pouring into South American countries — Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Chile. All told, nearly 7 million have left the country in that time, more than 1 out of 5 Venezuelans.

As the coronavirus pandemic hobbled those economies, Venezuelans began leaving South American host countries for the United States. Others began migrating directly from Venezuela, as word spread that Venezuelans were being allowed to enter the United States and then apply for asylum.

They represent the fastest-growing group of migrants arriving at the Mexico-US border.

On their 3,000-mile trek to reach that border, they must traverse the Darien Gap, a 60-mile stretch through dense jungle, where migrants said they have fallen prey to bandits, drug traffickers and human smugglers.

— *New York Times*

When mind inspires, soul revives!



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An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

Have you ever had the opportunity to inspire someone to take a positive step forward? Perhaps, you tried to help a friend, a colleague or a brother to make their minds in a certain matter! In contrast, has anyone ever inspired you to overcome a dilemma, a struggle or solve a problem? It could be someone who changed your life in a way or another that made you healthier, happier, successful or even more satisfied?

If you have experienced either of the scenarios, then you definitely realise the impact, which a positive inspiration can make in one's day and life.

Inspiration is defined as the process of being mentally stimulated to do or feel something, especially to do something creative. Simply, it is a deep-rooted passion and motivation to do something impressive. Hence, we all need a spark of inspiration in life to stimulate the mind and revive the soul!

Generally, inspiration is provoked and groomed when interacting with others and making an impact on other's life. Thus, it is not about getting and having, rather it is about giving and being; this is the real meaning of living with others and being a social creature.

That is why inspiration is a necessity in different aspects of people's life. We all need it, regardless who we are and what we do. Inspiration always awakens us to explore new possibilities by allowing us to surpass our ordinary experiences and limitations.

Inspiration drives a person from lack of interest to possible opportunities and it changes the way we perceive our own capabilities.

In fact, it revives our hope in life towards having a better tomorrow! Inspiration is the reason behind keeping us enthused and optimistic; it is a therapy that we all need! However, we should get it from the reliable and insightful source because some sources are just ones of propaganda and show off only.

Inspiration is always powerful and good, but it is not an easy business. It is not every public speaker could be inspiring and effective.

Inspiration has never been an easy art to have or get your hands on as only talented people can be inspiring and role models for others. Some people are real talents of inspirations while others have obtained the skills by learning and experience, so they could master it.

Today, the world's most successful people are renowned and regarded celebrities for the different things that they are good at. Some are famous for their unique skills and talents while others are being distinguished for their courage and strong impact to inspire others.

They become most loved, believed and trusted characters among their families, friends, colleagues and others too. Their talents and professionalism to convince others is their real weapon to steal people's hearts and minds alike.

That is why people are emotionally and mentally attracted to such kind of people who are after nothing, but advising, guiding and helping people to find their ways. The only talent, which they all own is the ability to inspire others, urge them to value their own talents and push them to discover their dreams.

Sometime all what we need is someone to remind us on who we are and what can we achieve. Something important that we don't do is the attempt to discover ourselves and what merits and talents we have.

Here comes the role of those inspiring speakers whom they provoke our emotions and feelings with their magical words. Accordingly, we wake up and start brainstorming to explore the potential and undiscovered talents and abilities of our own.

Thanks to all the inspiring speakers and human development professionals who spare the time and effort to help others find their ways and guide them all the way in the journey of self-discovery.



LADY RIDERS FESTIVAL

Biker Malorie Guedikian, a 44-year-old nurse who travelled on motorcycle around the world during the Covid-19 pandemic, attends the first edition of the "Femmes et Moto" lady riders motorcycle festival on the Le Chevalet aerodrome, near Aspres-sur-Buech, southeastern France. – AFP

Italy's next government must tackle climate security



Luca Bergamaschi

The writer is Co-Founder and Executive Director of International Politics of ECCO, an independent Italian think-tank focusing on climate change

When Italians go to the polls on September 25, they cast their ballots against the backdrop of an unprecedented energy and climate crisis. Winter is fast approaching, and the next government will confront the tough task of protecting citizens and businesses while also setting Italy on a path to strengthen climate resilience and deliver its fair share of emissions reductions.

This summer's extreme weather was just a preview of the climate-driven turmoil that awaits us. Abnormal temperatures, drought, and catastrophic flooding have killed several people and caused massive economic losses and damage. Italians would do well to remember that they reside in what climate scientists call a climate-change "hotspot." With temperatures rising 20 per cent faster than the global average rate, the Mediterranean is one of the world's most climate-affected regions.

Italy itself has already experienced warming of 1.5° Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and the human and economic costs of its past emissions and short-term infrastructure choices are mounting. Between 1980 and 2020, Italy recorded more than 21,000 deaths due to extreme weather events – following only Germany and France in Europe. And in the last 50 years, landslides and flooding have forced more than 320,000 people to evacuate their homes, and eroded some 40 million square meters of beach front. Now, 91 per cent of Italy's cities and 12,000 cultural assets are at risk of landslides and floods.

The future looks ominous. Between now and 2100, Italy's summer temperatures could increase by up to 6°C, and summer rainfall could decrease by up to 40 per cent. Without urgent mitigation, heatwave days per year are expected to increase by an average of 400 per cent by 2050, and by up to 1,100 per

FOR DECADES, ITALIAN GOVERNMENTS AND POLITICAL PARTIES HAVE LARGELY NEGLECTED THE THREAT THAT CLIMATE CHANGE POSES TO THE COUNTRY'S SECURITY AND PROSPERITY. TO AVOID WARMING PATHWAYS THAT WILL EVENTUALLY RENDER LARGE PARTS OF THE COUNTRY UNSAFE FOR HABITATION OR TOURISM, THE NEXT GOVERNMENT MUST MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME

cent by 2080. For a city like Rome, that could mean experiencing up to 28 days of extreme heat every year.

The economic costs will increase exponentially as the temperature rises, primarily affecting the most fragile segments of the population. According to some estimates, climate change could reduce Italy's per capita GDP by 8 per cent by 2100. Infrastructure losses could exceed €15 billion (\$14.8 billion); the costs from rising sea levels and coastal flooding could reach almost €6 billion; agricultural land value could fall by over €160 billion; and the contraction of demand in the tourism sector could cost €52 billion (in part because only 18 per cent of resorts in the Italian Alps will still have natural snow cover suitable for the winter season).

Recent tragedies like the Marmolada glacier collapse and extreme flooding in Marche are emblematic of the new risk environment. They show how the socioeconomic and political consequences of climate change could trigger mass migration and new tensions over water, food, and energy resources.

Obviously, climate change is a major national-security threat for Italy. But one wouldn't know it from following Italian politics. While Italian voters are becoming more aware of the problem and are demanding action, very few options on the ballot channel these views. For decades, Italian governments and political parties have largely neglected the threat that climate change poses to the country's security and prosperity.

The failure to formulate credible plans for the energy transition reflects a broader refusal even to acknowledge the climate implications of Italy's current energy sources. In a country that has long been dominated by the natural-gas industry, both the political establishment and the mainstream media remain unwilling to question the state-controlled gas companies. As a result, only one-third of Italians recognise natural gas as a source of greenhouse-gas pollution, even though it is the country's largest source of emissions.

A new government offers a chance to change course; but the window for action is quickly closing. To avoid warming pathways that will eventually render large parts of the country unsafe for habitation or tourism, the next government must recognise that there is no climate security without the European Union.

The faster the world's major economies decarbonise, the better off Italy will be. The next government must support the EU's climate agenda and do its part to make it a success. It also must support investments in climate resilience around the world, particularly in Africa and the Mediterranean region, where climate-driven events are poised to become a major cause of mass migration.

Moreover, Italy needs major new public investments in decarbonisation; but because it must also abide by the principles of debt sustainability, it also will need innovative policies to mobilise the private sector behind climate action.

At the same time, the next government should recognise that attempting to achieve climate security through simple technological fixes or a top-down, command-and-control approach would inevitably provoke a political backlash. Democracy thrives on its capacity for innovation, accountability, transparency, and inclusion. Italian policymakers can no longer afford to leave the country's energy strategy in the hands of just a few companies, even if they are state-controlled.

Finally, the next government must appreciate the myriad interdependencies between the economy and the environment.



Voters come in and out of a polling station on Sunday in Rome, as the country is voting for the legislative election. – AFP



Oman finish 2nd in women’s tent pegging

OMANI WOMEN CLAIM EIGHT MEDALS, GHANIMA BEST COMPETITOR



WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEP 25

Oman national women’s team for tent pegging clinched the runners-up ‘silver medal’ in the International Women’s Tent Pegging Championship (Grand Prize), at Petra city in Jordan on Sunday.

The Omani women won 8 medals, including two gold, three silver and three bronze medals. Omani rider Ghanima bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah, won the title of best female competitor with the gold medal at the conclusion of competitions which were held during September 21 to 25. The championship featured the participation of 39 contestants from 14 countries -- Oman, Jordan, Sudan, Russia, Belarus, Britain, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Norway, South Africa, India, Pakistan, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia.

Oman team includes Ghanima

bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah, Turkiyah bint Mahmoud al Balushiya and Amal bint Abdullah al Maskariyah. Other members are Mohammed bin Salem al Maliki as the team manager, Hilal bin Hassan al Balushi as team coach and Khamis bin Khadabakhsh al Balushi as an official for the mission.

The first day witnessed the opening ceremony of the tournament, and the competition started of the first round of the tournament of singles of spears, doubles of spears, where Oman national team managed to achieve the bronze medal at the team level with a total of 24 points, while South Africa won the gold medal at the team level with a total of 33 points and Sudan won the silver medal with a total of 31.5 points.

The competitions of the second day, the second round of the tournament, were through single



sword, double sword, where the chances of Oman team were great by obtaining three medals. Oman won the gold in the team level with a total of 24 points, while India occupied the runners-up spot and Pakistan came third.

Also, Oman’s Ghanima bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah won silver in the individual level, and Turkiyah bint Mahmoud al Balushiya took the bronze in the same category.

The third day, the third and final round and the conclusion of the championship through the competitions of slicing and wedge with a spear for the individual, and lemon and wedge with the sword for the individual. Oman’s Ghanima bint Abdullah al Shukailiyah bagged a silver medal in the individual level. In the team section, Oman claimed the bronze medal after South Africa achieved the gold and India won the silver.



Oman bodybuilders succeeded in winning 20 medals, including 7 gold, 6 silver and 7 bronze, at the conclusion of the first edition of ‘Oman Diamond Cup International’ Championship for bodybuilding and physic, at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat, under the patronage of His Highness Sayyid Firas bin Fatik al Said. The event was organised by the Oman Committee for BodyBuilding.

Al Harthy secures front-row start

European Le Mans Series driver Ahmad al Harthy secured a front-row start in the LMGTE class for the Oman Racing team during round five qualifying at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium on Saturday, September 24, and carries high hopes of continuing the momentum in today’s big race.

In an entertaining session at Spa, the Omani racer extracted everything he could from the No.69 Aston Martin Vantage GTE to lap second fastest and give himself, Sam De Haan and Marco Sorensen a great chance of fighting for a return to the ELMS podium at one of Al Harthy’s favourite tracks.

“I’m delighted with qualifying,



I really maximised everything I could and it was the most we could have got out of the session”, said the Omani, “It was a tough second practice earlier in the day, with changing conditions and rain, so to then go straight out into

a short qualifying session on a dry track was very challenging.

“We did a good job, though, and I really am delighted to have qualified the car on the front row. We are looking forward to the race, the Oman Racing Aston Martin feels really good around Spa, so now we hope to take the momentum from qualifying forward into the race and battle for a good result.”

Oman racing concluded the first free practice session on Friday, September 23, sixth quickest in LMGTE before Al Harthy lapped an improved fourth fastest – with a time of 2m19.818 seconds – in the standalone session for the Bronze graded drivers.

RUSSIA'S ALEXANDROVA SHINES IN SEOUL FOR THIRD TITLE

SEOUL: Ekaterina Alexandrova overcame nerves to win the third title of her career as she dismantled injury-hampered top seed Jelena Ostapenko 7-6 (7/4), 6-0 in the final of the Korea Open on Sunday.

The two battled to a lengthy tiebreaker after an evenly matched hour-long first set in front of more than 10,000 spectators, a record for the Seoul event.

But everything changed in the second set as Russia's second-seeded Alexandrova dominated the former French Open champion from Latvia, who required a medical timeout at 3-0 down for a foot problem. "I think it was tough for me to start because I was really nervous and I couldn't find the rhythm in the first couple of games," said

Alexandrova, 27.

"But the longer we played, the better I felt on the court.

"I think maybe somewhere in the end of the first set I finally found the rhythm and I just continued to keep it that way in the second set." The Russian is enjoying the best season of her career, having also won the Libema Open in the Netherlands in June, and is set to rise to a career-high 21 in the world.

"You always want to achieve more," Alexandrova added.

"I want to go higher and maybe end the year top 20 in the best-case scenario."

Ostapenko had advanced to the Korea Open final after former US Open winner Emma Raducanu retired in the third set of their semi-final with injury.

— AFP



In-form Samsonova beats Zheng to claim Tokyo title

TOKYO: Russia's Liudmila Samsonova won her third title in four tournaments by beating China's Zheng Qinwen 7-5, 7-5 in the final of the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Sunday.

The red-hot world number 30 triumphed in Washington and Cleveland in August and she produced a string of giant-killing upsets in the Japanese capital on the way to another title.

Samsonova beat Wimbledon champion Elena Rybakina and two-time Grand Slam winner Garbine Muguruza and did not drop a set all week.

Fast-rising teenager Zheng was appearing in her first WTA final after knocking out top seed Paula Badosa in the second round.

The 19-year-old went toe to toe with Samsonova in a tight match but had her service broken late in the first set to let the Russian take control.



Russia's Liudmila Samsonova poses on the podium after beating Zheng Qinwen of China during the women's singles final of the Pan Pacific Open tennis tournament in Tokyo on September 25, 2022. — AFP

Both players traded breaks midway through the second set but the decisive moment came when Samsonova took a 6-5 lead to serve for the match.

The 23-year-old calmly picked

off her opponent in the final game and sealed the deal when Zheng hit a return wide.

Samsonova's win came after a host of big names made early exits from the tournament. — AFP

Australian Smyth wins first Asian Tour title at Yeangder TPC

TAIPEI: Travis Smyth shot a second successive six-under par 66 to fulfil his ambition of winning an Asian Tour event as he came home two strokes clear of the field at the Yeangder TPC in Taiwan on Sunday.

The Australian, who has been a regular presence high on Asian Tour leaderboards this year, finally registered a victory with a 19-under total of 269.

Smyth finished two shots clear of defending champion and home favourite Lee Chieh-po of Taiwan at Linkou International Golf and Country Club.

Wang Wei-hsuan of Taiwan (67), Malaysia's Nicholas Fung (67), American Berry Henson (68) and Sweden's Bjorn Hellgren (69) were tied for third on 14-under par.

Smyth, 27, came agonisingly close to winning the Asian Tour's



International Series England tournament at Slaley Hall in June when he was pipped by Zimbabwe's Scott Vincent by a single stroke.

But the overnight leader went one better on Sunday after a sparkling round containing eight birdies, with the only blemish

being a double bogey six at the difficult par-four 15th.

Smyth, the 11th first-time winner on the Asian Tour this season, moves to sixth on the Order of Merit after becoming only Australian to win the Yeangder TPC since it began in 2010. — AFP

Portugal cruise to 4-0 win over Czechs in Nations League

PRAGUE: Portugal stormed to a 4-0 win over the Czech Republic in their Nations League A-Group 2 match on Saturday thanks to a Diego Dalot double and strikes by Bruno Fernandes and Diogo Jota.

The victory sets up a crunch clash for the Portuguese on Tuesday at home to Spain, who lost 2-1 to visitors Switzerland, knowing a draw will be enough to reach the final four.

Portugal lead the group on 10 points ahead of Spain on eight after five matches with one game left to play.

"It's a unique feeling to be able to help my country," said Dalot. "We knew it could be a difficult game if we hadn't started with the right attitude.

"We started the game very well,

controlling the ball, and after the goals the spaces started to open up a little... Congratulations to everyone, we really deserved this victory and now it's time to recharge our batteries."

Ronaldo needed treatment early on after a being caught in the face by goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik but soldiered on.

The Portuguese controlled possession and opened the scoring in the 33rd minute when Rafael Leao swung a cross into the area and Dalot fired past goalkeeper Tomas Vaclik.

Ronaldo missed a chance to double the lead before Fernandes put the visitors further ahead in first-half added time when he surged into the box and converted a cross from close range.

Ronaldo then conceded a penalty for handball but Patrik Schick blazed the spot kick over the bar just before the break.

Dalot netted his second goal soon after the interval with Jota rounding out the scoring in the 82nd minute to leave the 2019 winners in pole position to reach the semi-finals.

"The Czechs have a good team, but we were well prepared for them and executed our game plan perfectly. After the third goal the game was done," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

"We were too passive and our pressing was terrible," said Schick. "We should have tried being more active in the game. Portugal were much better and deserved to win."

— Reuters



Portugal's Diogo Dalot celebrates scoring their third goal. — Reuters



Oman to debut at 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup in Kuwait

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

Oman will make their debut at the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup in Kuwait which will begin on Tuesday. The national futsal team, coached by head coach Younis al Fahdi, will look for a promising show as they will commence the campaign with a strong fixture against hosts Kuwait in Group A on Tuesday.

The group also features teams from Iraq and Thailand who will meet on the same day at the Saad Al Abdullah Hall in Kuwait city.

The top 16 Asian teams will battle in order to lift the prestigious title. The teams are distributed into four groups and the first and second placed from all the four groups will advance to the quarterfinals.

The finals will run until October 8 which will unveil the identity of this edition champion. Oman will be making their debut in Kuwait 2022 after they secured slot in the West Zone play-off winners. Despite the challenge and tough competitions, Oman will depend on key players to shine and register top results including Moutaism al Shamsi, Samer al Balushi, Mohammed al Lawati and others. Oman will face Iraq in their second round match on Thursday and then

will conclude their group games against Thailand on October 1.

The Oman team recently concluded their preparatory camp in Thailand. The camp was for a duration of 12 days during September 5 to 17. The external gathering witnessed several friendly games against Thailand clubs. The team managed to register three triumphs while they suffered one defeat.

The Oman futsal team had ended their participation at the West Asian Football Federation (WAFF) men's futsal championship in Kuwait in the semifinals. The team suffered a 4-3 defeat against Saudi Arabia in the semifinal. The Sultanate of Oman had topped Group B by five points with a 4-2 win over the UAE in the opener. Then, the Oman futsal team had registered two draws as they were held to a 2-2 draw against Bahrain before they split points with a 3-3 draw against Lebanon in the concluding group match. Lebanon ended their campaign as runners-up with the same points but with goal difference than Bahrain who finished in third place. The UAE team was positioned in fourth place with no points. Ahead of the WAFF event, Oman took part in the GCC Games in Kuwait but left competition in the group stage.

Kipchoge puts new marathon record down to 'real teamwork'

BERLIN: Kenyan great Eliud Kipchoge has beaten his own world marathon record by 30 seconds, running 2hr 01min 9sec in Berlin on Sunday.

At the halfway point the back-to-back Olympic champion in Rio and Tokyo looked set to become the first to officially run under the elusive two-hour mark.

But despite slowing slightly the 37-year-old held on to best his own record from Berlin in 2018.

After the race, he credited his team for the result.

"I was so happy with my preparation," Kipchoge told German television.

"The world record is because of real teamwork."

Asked if he was already coming back to Berlin to take on the two-hour mark, Kipchoge said he was focused on celebrating his achievement.

"Let us plan it for another day. I need to celebrate this record."

Kenyan Mark Korir finished second behind his countryman with a time of 2:05:58, while Ethiopian Tadu Abate came third with 2:06:28.

Ethiopian Andamlak Belihu, who kept up with Kipchoge for around two thirds of the race, held on for fourth.

In the women's field, Ethiopian Tigist Assefa ran the third fastest time in history, setting a course record of 2:15:37.

Assefa was not among the pre-race favourites and sensationally beat her previous best by 18 minutes.

Kipchoge, who on Friday said his only goal was "to run a good race", burst out of the blocks, clearly aiming not only for a world record but to beat the two-hour mark.

A pod of around seven runners kept up with Kipchoge for the first 10 kilometres, before 2021 winner Guye Adola and Belihu pulled away after 15 kilometres.

Adola was unable to maintain the pace and began to fall back after 18 kilometres, with both Kipchoge and Belihu reaching the half marathon mark in less than an hour.

Kipchoge emerged on his own after 25 kilometres and was still on pace for the sub-two-hour mark, but began to slow slightly despite still keeping the world record in his sights.

Kipchoge became just the



second man to win four Berlin Marathons, joining Ethiopian Haile Gebrselassie who owned the event from 2006 to 2009.

He boasts an unmatched record over the marathon, having now won 15 of his 17 career outings over the event, including not only his two Olympic triumphs but also 10 World Marathon Majors

victories.

The women's field was also one of the fastest in marathon history, with four women beating the two hour and 20 minute mark.

Only one of the women taking part in Berlin, American Kiera D'Amato, had previously run under the landmark time.

Kenyan Rosemary Wanjiru

came second with a time of 2:18:00 in her first ever marathon, making it the second fastest debut time ever recorded by a woman.

Ethiopian Tigist Abayechew came third in 2:18:03, while countrywoman Workenesh Edesa also ran under the 2:20:00 mark.

D'Amato came sixth with a time of 2:21:48. — AFP



MotoGP Japanese Grand Prix winner Ducati Lenovo team rider Jack Miller of Australia celebrates on the podium after winning the MotoGP class race at the Japanese Grand Prix in Motegi, Tochigi prefecture. — AFP

Miller wins Japanese GP as Quartararo extends champs lead

MOTEGI, JAPAN: Ducati's Jack Miller claimed his first win of the season with a blistering display at the Japanese Grand Prix in Motegi on Sunday, while Fabio Quartararo extended his lead atop the world championship standings despite finishing eighth.

Australian Miller finished 3.409 seconds ahead of Red Bull KTM's Brad Binder, who snatched second place from Pramac Ducati's Jorge Martin with a late overtake.

Starting seventh on the grid, Miller overtook early leader

Martin in the third lap, and never looked to be in threat of relinquishing his lead from that point on.

"I can ride a motorcycle sometimes," Miller joked after the win. "I felt amazing all weekend, since I rolled out in the first free practice."

"It's awesome. We've got a home Grand Prix coming up shortly and my wedding coming up in a couple of weeks, so I'm over the moon."

Saturday's qualifying was hampered by rain, but there was

barely a cloud in sight on Sunday as the Japanese Grand Prix made its return after a two-year Covid-19 enforced break.

Yamaha's Quartararo extended his championship lead to 18 points from 10 with four races remaining, as his closest rival Francesco Bagnaia crashed out while attempting to overtake him on the last lap.

Aprilia's Aleix Espargaro, who is third in the overall standings, saw his chances of winning a first championship take a massive blow after he was forced to pit

with a problem before the race even started and finished outside the points in 16th.

Honda's six-times MotoGP champion Marc Marquez claimed his first pole in three years on Saturday but was unable to hold on to his advantage for long and was overtaken on the first lap, eventually finishing fourth.

Yamaha RNF's Darryn Binder and Honda wildcard Tetsuta Nagashima crashed out, while Suzuki's Alex Rins was forced to retire due to a mechanical issue.

— Reuters



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Oman to target new markets for wheat imports

Diversified market base: First shipment of Australian grain to arrive in November: Oman Flour Mills CEO

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 25



Oman Flour Mills (OFM) – part of Oman Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj) – plans to diversify its import base for the procurement of wheat with a view to ensure stability in supplies, as well as competitive prices.

The new strategy comes despite the resumption of wheat imports from Ukraine, which along with Russia, rank among the world's biggest exporters of wheat and other food commodities.

“Yes, we are looking to procure new stocks from overseas,” said Haitham al Fannah (pictured),

CEO – Oman Flour Mills. “We are covered for the foreseeable future and plan our procurements of not just wheat but all commodities well in advance. The markets that we are looking to procure from in the future include Australia, Canada, Black Sea region and in addition to opportunities from India and Pakistan.”

In remarks to the *Observer*, the CEO pointed out that the global wheat supply market has yet to reach normality, following the turbulence unleashed by the start of hostilities between Russia and



Ukraine earlier this year.

“The market is still volatile given the current conflict in Ukraine and further swings can be expected. In addition to the

current geopolitical crisis and logistic bottlenecks, The US-China geopolitics might affect the prices too going forward,” he warned.

But he confirmed that supplies from Ukraine have resumed. “Yes, we have procured a shipment from Ukraine that arrived on the 19th of August 2022 and we will

consider further shipments from Ukraine and the Black Sea region as it is a key region for import at this time of year.”

Significantly, OFM is also gearing up to receive its maiden shipment from Australia under a new initiative launched by the company to help secure is wheat requirements.

In April, Atyab Investments, the investment arm of Oman Flour Mills (OFM), announced that it had set up a new company in Australia, one of the world's biggest grain and livestock farming nations. OMAUS Pty Australia was established with the aim to “contract with growers in Australia”, thereby enabling better procurement terms for the procurement of Australian grain. “Our aim is to secure the shipment in line with the harvest season which will be towards November this year,” Al Fannah added.

Strong operational performance boosts OQ's 2021 revenue

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver



OQ, the global integrated energy group, OQ recorded consolidated revenue of \$22.768 billion at the end of 2021, compared to \$14.006 billion in 2020, an increase of 63 per cent, the group said in its 2021 Sustainability Report. Earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortisation (EBITDA) stood at \$3.699 billion, an increase of 154 per cent as compared to 2020. The net profit amounted to \$1.818 billion.

The Sustainability Report attributed the robust improvement in earnings to a number of factors. The wholly government owned group exhibited strong operational performance across different business units, with markets showing significant recovery, it said.

In its Upstream, oil prices increased significantly compared to last year, as the average Oman Export Blend Crude Oil (OEB) prices increased from \$46/bbl in 2020 to \$64/bbl in 2021. The recovery of the market has also resulted in high prices and demands across the majority of the Downstream business' products, with outstanding performance by its chemicals and trading businesses, it further noted.

Commenting on OQ's 2021 performance, Mulham al Jarf – Chairman of the Board of Directors, said: “At the start of 2021, the challenges of the pandemic continued to test the

business environment; however, and fortunately improved market demand played in favour of the industry as the world began to recover, and demand for energy returned. OQ consequently achieved strong financial and operational performance, focusing on quality services to its customers while maintaining high HSSE standards and realising robust financial performance during 2021 compared to 2020.

The exceptional performance was primarily driven by the improved market environment, as well as consistent operational performance across the business.”

Talal Hamid al Awfi, Group CEO, added: “Financially, we had a very strong and consistent performance throughout the year and ended 2021 with a consolidated EBITDA of \$3.7 billion, 82 per cent above the budget. Moreover, because we recognise the importance of In-country Value (ICV) in sustainable development, OQ spent over \$931 million on goods and services at an increase of 30 per cent compared to 2020, whereas our spend to SMEs

increased by 54 per cent from the previous year, reaching \$165 million.”

OQ's third sustainability report to date highlights the Group's achievements in various fields, as well as its economic progress, in-country value (ICV), social investment, health, safety and environment, digital transformation, and human resources.

The report, issued as part of OQ's efforts to achieve sustainability goals, was developed in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Global Reporting Initiative, which promotes integrity, transparency, and business governance standards. Within its efforts to preserve the environment and natural resources, as well as promote business sustainability, OQ has adopted the decarbonisation policy and given it the necessary priority. Work is currently underway on four major projects in green hydrogen. OQ has also implemented several initiatives to manage water consumption and produce 30 megawatts of renewable energy in 2021.

Sohar International completes rights issue

MUSCAT: Sohar International has announced that it has successfully completed its Rights Issue of 1.6 billion shares at a price of 102 baisa per share. The Bank said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA) that it has obtained approval of the allotment of shares.

“The necessary procedures relating to updating

the listing of the shares in Muscat Clearing and Depository SAOC and Muscat Stock Exchange are currently being processed,” said Ahmed al Musalmi, CEO – Sohar International.

Sohar International's issued share capital following the completion of the procedures will be RO 455.355 million, comprising 4.590 billion shares, he added.

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MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

Bank Muscat signs pact with Galfar for RO 39 million financing facility

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to providing world-class banking services and facilities, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, and Galfar Engineering & Contracting, one of Oman's largest, multi-discipline engineering, contracting and construction companies have signed an agreement for a RO 39 million financing facility.

Through this agreement, the bank will provide Galfar with additional project-specific credit facilities of nearly RO 39 million. Galfar is one of Bank Muscat's largest and oldest corporate customers with a relationship spanning decades.

The landmark agreement was signed by Ahmed bin Faqir al Balushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat and Dr Hamoud al Tobi, CEO, Galfar in the presence of Ilham Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager — Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat and senior officials from both institutions.

Ahmed bin Faqir al Balushi, Chief Banking Officer, Bank Muscat, said: "Bank Muscat is delighted to strengthen the cooperation between the bank and Galfar. We thank the Executive Management of Galfar for their strong confidence in Bank Muscat, which has led to the successful closure of this highly-customised



transaction. The transaction is a testament to Bank Muscat's vision "To serve you better, every day" and our commitment to be a pillar that supports the country's needs across both government and private sectors by financing projects of national importance."

Ahmed bin Faqir al Balushi further explained how Bank Muscat has been playing a major role for the past four decades in providing banking and financing solutions to government and private sector institutions. The bank will continue providing strong support to organisations and businesses of all sizes operating in the Sultanate of Oman to develop different sectors. He added that

the bank has the expertise to understand the financing needs of companies and structure financial solutions that meet their individual requirements.

Dr Hamoud al Tobi, CEO, Galfar said: "We are pleased to further strengthen our partnership with Bank Muscat by concluding this bespoke agreement to facilitate execution of three major projects, which are part of the infrastructure development of our beloved nation. This will also support our further growth and enable Galfar to play an integral role in the sustainable development of Oman in the coming years."

He went on to explain that this agreement reflects the keen

support of Bank Muscat and the banking sector in harnessing their capabilities to play a very active role in supporting corporates and aiding economic growth and development.

Bank Muscat offers a wide range of banking products and services for corporates including loans for project financing, corporate loans and capital financing for project expansion through bilateral as well as syndicated facilities. It is also a leading trade-finance services provider in the region and blends traditional financial solutions with tailor-made packages for operations, ensuring prompt payments, managing liquidity and minimising exchange-rate risks.

Enjoy every drive with the fun-to-own Toyota Corolla



MUSCAT: Toyota Corolla is one of the most popular sedans when it comes to ownership experiences, hassle-free maintenance and overall driving dynamics. The Corolla has always managed to have its vast and loyal fan following.

The Corolla has an attractive exterior that gives it a distinctive look. Powering it to offer amazing driving experiences is a 2.0-litre four-cylinder Dynamic Force engine which produces 168 hp and 20.39 kg-m of torque.

For more immersive driving experiences, the engine is paired to a Direct Shift CVT transmission. Customers looking for a more fuel-efficient option can choose the 1.6-litre four-cylinder engine Corolla that produces 121 hp and 15.7 kg-m of torque. This is paired with a CVT transmission.

The Corolla's interior is impressive and contributes to making every journey comfortable. The interior design adopts a simple yet appealing style, with impressive space and integrated functional parts that combine to create a refined elegance. The ergonomically designed seats feature new cushion material, while the armrest and ample legroom offer superior comfort for the rear-seat passengers.

Offering enhanced experiences on every drive are a range of features, which vary based on the trim level. Occupants also benefit from AC vents for the rear seat, a moonroof, 4.2-inch multi-information display (MID), 8-inch display audio, cruise control, six-speaker sound system, and 60:40 split-folding rear seats.

MC20: A Maserati built to stun

MUSCAT: If you are lucky enough to drive this brilliant engineering and styling masterpiece, you will appreciate that the supercar MC20 has opened a new era for Maserati. Low to the ground, stunning looks and butterfly doors to impress, the car has all the visual panache and drama to validate its supercar positioning. In addition, combining performance, sportiness, and luxury, it is evident that Maserati MC20 can rule the track and also perform exceptionally on the road with excellent drivability, comfort, and safety.

The MC20 astounds with its terrific looks which conceal an uncompromisingly sporty soul. Mind-blowing aerodynamic efficiency largely generated underneath the car, double



wishbone suspension and adaptive damping all-round, and an eight-speed Dual-Clutch gearbox marks a brave new chapter for the legendary Italian brand.

This car is fast and effortlessly runs through its eight gears with lightning blips of the dual-clutch transmission. A pure performance car built around an internal combustion engine and designed to fly over the ground faster than any Maserati before it. Its 630 horsepower V6 Nettuno engine delivers 0-100 km/h acceleration

in less than 2.9 seconds and a top speed of over 325 km/h, lends to the top-notch performance.

A patented, 100% Maserati engine, benefiting from MTC technology, the innovative combustion system developed by the brand, evolved from the pre-chamber technology used in Formula 1 powertrains. MC20 has four driving modes: WET, GT, SPORT and CORSA.

Light, easy and undemanding to drive, this is a wonderful vehicle. Not surprising because it weighs under 1,500 kg and the light weight has been achieved without any sacrifices with regards to comfort. MC20 has all the elements to satisfy a sporty yet sophisticated clientele who look for performance, comfort, and luxury.

ahlibank launches 20% cashback offer

MUSCAT: In a continued effort to offer value-added benefits and services to its customers, ahlibank has once again teamed up with Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman) to provide all its credit card holders with an exciting cashback offer.

Scheduled to run for 5 days each month till the end of the year 2022, the promotion offers all ahlibank credit cardholders 20% cashback when fuelling or shopping in shell Service Stations and Select Shops with a maximum cap of RO 10 per customer.

Muneer al Balushi — AGM — Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, "Our role as one of the Sultanate of Oman's leading banking institutions requires us to develop offers and services that meet customer needs over time. This will enable us to fulfil their intention to utilise their credit cards in the best way possible. Such offers enhance our customers' loyalty and give them added value."

"We are pleased to announce this offer, which will help us strengthen relationships with existing clients and build relationships with new ones. With the launch of the latest promotional offer, ahlibank is



demonstrating its leadership in providing innovative banking reward programmes and solutions that meet the diverse needs of its customers" he added.

The cashback campaign reflects the bank's commitment to its growth strategy by creating products and services that offer value-added benefits to the customers and help consolidate its position in the market as one of Oman's leading and most trusted banks.

Khedmah signs services agreement with Muscat Bay

MUSCAT: To optimally cater to the demands of a rapidly growing economy, Investment and Finance Company (Khedmah), the leading investment and services company in the Sultanate of Oman, has signed an agreement with Muscat Bay to offer billing, collection and debt factoring services for its units.

Saud al Siyabi, the Chief Operating Officer signed on behalf of OIFC Khedmah, whereas Abdullah Ali al Nasser, Vice President — Customer Experience represented Muscat Bay. The signing ceremony took place at OIFC Khedmah's main office.

"Our partnership with Muscat Bay will enable us to provide a wider range of services to our

customers.

Khedmah offers tailor-made solutions to digitalise and streamline other businesses' day-to-day operations with a customer-first approach. Businesses can reduce time, improve efficiency and experience seamless billing and collections by using the Khedmah app and website. The capabilities of our digital products will continue to be enhanced as we develop more features. This will help businesses in their growth journeys," said Al Siyabi.

Under the agreement, Muscat Bay will receive water-reading services from Khedmah, including assessing the condition of various meters, issuing and



distributing bills, collecting debts, disconnecting and reconnecting

services, transferring accounts and calculating water consumption

and losses for all buildings, services and assets.

Furthermore, it will provide water consumption billing services for occupied and unoccupied residential units, project buildings, Muscat Bay offices, utility and service areas, retail areas, hospitality, staff accommodations and all other outlets of water consumption.

Through OIFC's strong network of 68 branches spread throughout the country, its well-equipped kiosks and other digital platforms which include the popular Khedmah app, customers can easily pay their electricity, water and telephone bills, recharge their phones, and also pay their

electricity prepaid meter bills. In addition, customers can make payments to the Public Authority for Social Insurance (PASI) and recharge any entertainment subscription. With features that highlight OIFC's customer service standards, the Khedmah App is easy to download and simple to use, helping to promote the concept of a paperless payment system within the country.

As a unified platform that offers a bouquet of services catering to both nationals and residents, Khedmah has been deploying comprehensive, goal-based plans that promote social inclusivity, drive sustainability and focus on innovation in services.



Oman LNG signs pact to fund Sur Public Park



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

As part of its efforts to preserve the environment's unique biodiversity and transform the coastal landscape of Sur, Oman LNG signed an agreement with South Sharqiyah Governor's Office to fund the Sur Public Park project.

The estimated cost of the second phase is RO 3 million and the park is set to be a public facility, attracting residents and visitors of Sur and South Sharqiyah Governorate in general. It is planned to operate as a self-sustaining enterprise, providing exceptional opportunities for entrepreneurship.

Additionally, the park will boost the tourism sector in this magnificent and historic governorate. The Sur Public Park, a new tourist destination, includes a number of facilities such as children's playground, an amphitheatre, a public library, butterfly garden, sports fields, an event square and a pedestrianised pond.

This project is positioned to tie-in well with Oman 2040 Vision and is aligned with the

"People and Society" pillar of the pivotal Oman 2040 Vision, which aims to develop the health aspect of the society.

Additionally, it addresses the family and community wellbeing and health objectives of this pillar. The latest initiative will also advance the company's effort to boost its environmental performance.

Hamed al Naamany, CEO of Oman LNG, said: "We feel privileged to pursue this project that will provide many opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to invest and grow new businesses and community for recreation. It is, by all means, an environment-friendly project that comes to raise awareness of nature-based carbon offset and enhance the touristic infrastructure in South Sharqiyah."

Since inception, Oman LNG strives to finance different recreational and touristic projects in Oman and South Sharqiyah Governorate in particular.

Recently, Oman LNG inaugurated the Fatah Al Khair Centre in Sur, which helped to preserve the city's ancient maritime history.

Oman's OQ Group plans solar power projects in Liwa, Block 60

Clean energy: 100 MW capacity solar scheme envisioned in Liwa and Solar PV plant at Bisat; Green hydrogen projects make headway

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

OQ, the global integrated energy group of the Sultanate of Oman, says a Final Investment Decision (FID) linked to the development of a 100 MW solar power project, planned at Liwa in North Al Batinah governorate, is anticipated in 2023.

The proposed scheme is part of a raft of clean energy investments being spearheaded for implementation by the wholly government-owned energy group – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – with the goal of decarbonising its operations, as well as supporting Oman's transition to a low carbon economy.

"The OQ Alternative Energy (AE) Unit received formal expressions of interest from various potential equity partners to invest in Liwa Solar project (estimated at 100MWdc), and its Final Investment Decision (FID) is expected to be finalised by 2023," OQ said in its 2021 Sustainability Report issued here on Sunday.

It further added: "The basis for design has been substantially completed. The process of equity partner (co-developers) selection is expected to be finalised in 2022. The Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) tender preparation is ongoing and



planned to be floated in 2022 soon after signing the Joint Development Agreement (JDA) with the selected co-developer(s).

Potential co-developers have been evaluated, the shortlist is complete and financial advisory has been awarded. The preliminary generation and transmission license exemption for self-generation has also been obtained from Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR)."

OQ has refinery and petrochemical investments worth several billions of dollars in operation at the nearby Sohar Port and Freezone, including its flagship Liwa Plastics Industrial Complex. A decarbonisation policy approved in 2021 commits the company to, among other goals, planning and delivering decarbonisation projects based on specific targets through investments in clean energy initiatives, low-carbon

molecules production (hydrogen) and energy efficiency.

Other renewables-based clean energy projects are also under various stages of planning and development at key sites where it operates around Oman. At Sohar Port, currently the hub of its operations, OQ has commenced construction work on its 'Solar Carports' project.

At its Bisat operations within its wholly owned and operated Block 60 concession in central Oman, OQ has decided on a combination of conventional power from the electricity grid supplemented by solar PV generation.

The PV component will be developed by OQ's Alternative Unit through an asset lease agreement to OQ US. Consultancy works for the project development phase will be awarded and launched before the end of this year, it said.

Plans for a wind farm in

Musandam Governorate, where the company's upstream unit owns and operates some offshore oil and gas fields, have been transferred to Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) for its consideration.

But it's in the green molecules space that OQ has lined up an ambitious portfolio of green hydrogen based investments.

It includes Hyport Duqm (1,300 MW of solar PV and turbine generation + 500 MW electrolysis and ammonia plant); Green Energy Oman (GEO) Project (Concept Feasibility Study, Energy Yield Assessment and Environment Social Impact Assessment have commenced); H2Oman (for which a JDA has been signed with ACWA Power and Air Products to develop a green hydrogen project in Dhofar); and Salalah H2 (prefeasibility work has commenced following the signing of a JDA project partners).

Madayn's Samail Industrial City signs investment agreement



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) Samail Industrial City has signed an investment agreement with Sanabel for Food Industries and Investment Company.

In a statement, Madayn said "Madayn's Samail Industrial City has signed an investment pact with Sanabel for Food Industries and Investment Company to establish a project for the manufacture of bread and bakery products. The project will cover an area of 5,000 sqm at an investment value touching RO 400,000."

Oman launches first unified tender for purchase of government vehicles

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

As part of an integrated procurement policy, the General Secretariat of the Tender Board (GSTB) has announced the launch of the first unified tender for the purchase of government vehicles, in coordination with the relevant authorities.

The unified tender is expected to raise the efficiency of government procurement, as government agencies benefiting from the framework will be entitled only to local purchase orders provided they have budgets and needs. There will be no need for the government entity that uses the framework contract to repeat the series of contracting and attrition procedures, as this is guaranteed by the expected framework contract.

This will allow better management of purchasing operation for this category of needs.

The contract will be based on a framework contract/s valid for an agreed period. The General Secretariat of the Tender Board



and the supplier/s will sign the contract, after coordination with the relevant authorities, where there will be a continuous review by the General Secretariat of the Tender Board represented by the General Directorate.

The work of the Governmental Procurement Directorate is based on the principle of "quantum economy" so that data is collected electronically for the relevant needs and the similar nature received from various civil government agencies for the purpose of procurement. The directorate's competencies are represented in activating the unified procurement

management, benefiting from quantitative economies, and reducing the volume of current expenditures on government procurement.

The directorate is concerned with the strategic role of unified government procurement for the categories (vehicles, utilities and IT) as a first stage by conducting research and studies, setting policies, procedures and systems and transferring knowledge that ensures achieving the best purchasing results and practices at the national level, in addition to reviewing the annual plans for government agencies procurement.

Forum to discuss impact of natural calamities on insurance industry

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

The Capital Market Authority of the Sultanate of Oman and the Supervisory Authority of Insurance and Social Welfare of the Kingdom of Morocco will jointly host the MENA regional seminar on 'Supervision of Climate Risk Insurance Protection Gap', which opens here on Tuesday, September 27.

The event will be held within the framework of the MoU signed by the insurance sector regulators Oman and Morocco earlier this year.

The two-day seminar will be conducted in collaboration with the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Access to Insurance Initiative (A2ii) and Sustainable Insurance Forum (SIF).

The seminar targets insurance supervisors in the MENA region and insurance industry specialists and professional and will discuss issues related to management of natural calamities to explore a road map prepared by the IAIS on climate risk and the opinions of the regulators on the challenges facing insurance markets in the region as well as the issues



facing the insurance regulators in the region in addition to the activities of A2ii and SIF on closing the climate risk insurance protection gap.

The seminar will contribute to increasing the awareness on the importance of setting up hedging programmes and policies and enhancing the insurance's industry's ability to face the challenges caused by climate change.

In recent years, Oman has witnessed a number of exceptional climate conditions that can be described as natural calamities caused by climate change. The most recent was Cyclone Shaheen. Climate change is one of the most importance issues in our era with consequences on weather patterns, food production, sea level rise and catastrophic floods.

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1. INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEER - 1 No.

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- Should have worked with MOTC, Municipalities, Madayan and other related Govt. Bodies.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be willing to lead team of qualified engineers.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with qualifications in Mechanical Engineering will be an added advantage.
- Should have 25 years of work experience.

2. PROJECT ENGINEER - 1 No.

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- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
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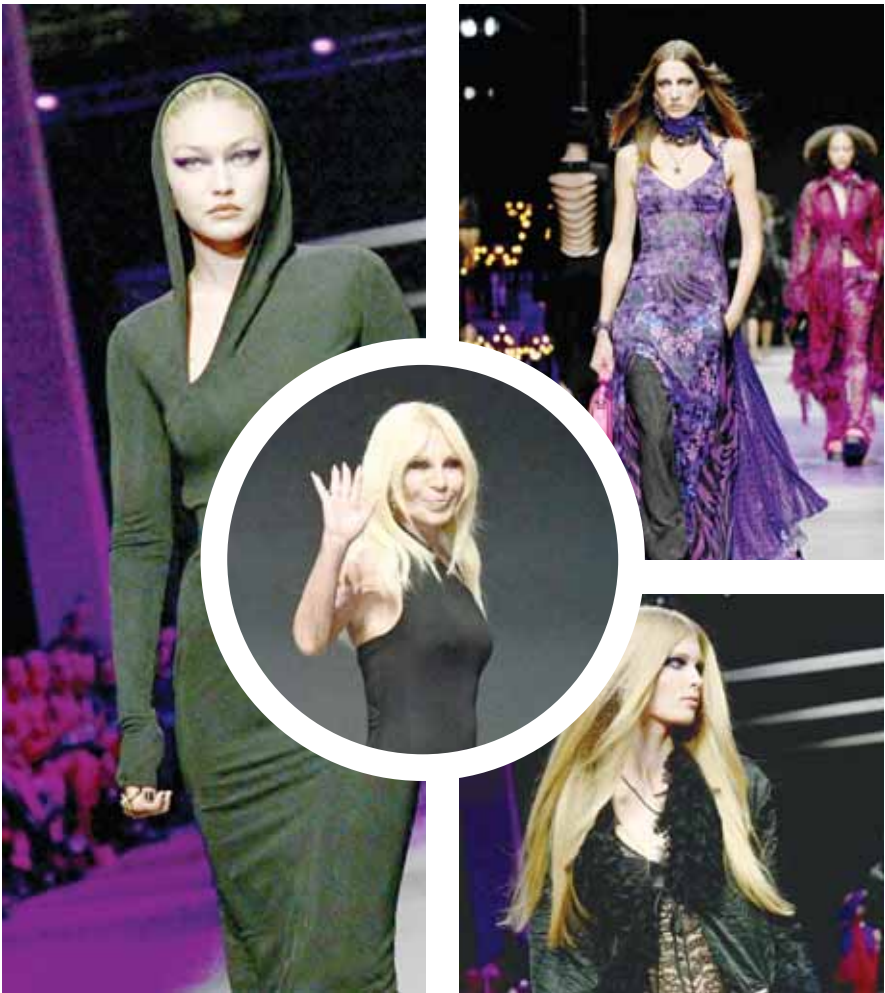
Muscat-based abstract artiste Tarini Agarwal was privileged to exhibit 25 of her paintings at the iconic Jehangir Art Gallery, Mumbai. This colourful exhibition was sort of a long felt realisation of dreams and a very 'special and personal,' moment for her. She recalls how having walked to the Gallery as a child with her mother she was able to brush shoulders with some great masters of Indian art... **P20**

Versace offers 'goddess gone grunge' at Milan Fashion Week

ITALIAN LUXURY label Versace mixed tiaras and studs for its latest womenswear creations at Milan Fashion Week, offering a collection it called "a goddess gone grunge" for next spring. Designer Donatella Versace opened the show late on Friday with all black looks, including tight-fitting dresses slashed at different angles. Black biker jackets and leather trousers had fringes or metal studs.

Pink and purple designs followed, including long dresses with deep cowl necklines, flared trousers and long zebra print chiffon shirts. "I have always loved a rebel. A woman who is confident, smart and a little bit of a diva," Donatella Versace said in a statement. "She wears leather, studs and frayed denim and she has enough attitude to mix them with chiffon, jersey, and a tiara! She is a strong

liberated woman; she is gorgeous; she knows it. She is the Goddess of Freedom." The last looks included short and long lace-trimmed dresses in purple, pink and lime, accessorised with veils in the same colour. US reality television star Paris Hilton closed the show in a short pink crystal mesh bridal dress with lace trims, accessorised with a pink veil and tiara. — Reuters

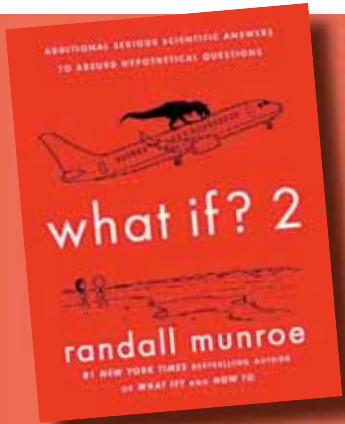


READ

WHAT IF? 2

BY RANDALL MUNROE

The creator of the web comic "xkcd" and former Nasa roboticist looks into hypothetical and oddball scenarios.



THE SCRIBE

The sculpture "Scribe Accroupi" (Seated Scribe), a masterpiece of the 4th dynasty from ancient Egypt on loan for 11 months from the Louvre Museum, installed in the exhibition "Champollion, La Voie des Hieroglyphes" (Champollion, The way of the Hieroglyphs) at the Louvre-Lens museum in Lens, northern France. On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of the decipherment of hieroglyphs by Jean-Francois Champollion, and to celebrate its 10th anniversary, the museum Louvre-Lens is organising a major exhibition dedicated to one of the most fascinating symbols of Egyptian civilisation: the hieroglyphs. — AFP



TRENDS

A DJ in The Nest club, performs during the Vogue Nights Jozi Ball, an event dedicated to the gender culture in Marshalltown, Johannesburg. — AFP





Cypriot carob growers harvest their ‘black gold’

CHRISTOS CHARALAMBOUS might be 79 but he is several metres up a carob tree, harvesting a fruit known as ‘black gold’ on the island of Cyprus as his grandson works below.

For some, carob has long been relegated to the status of a less appealing substitute for chocolate.

But in Cyprus, its thick brown pods are also eaten raw or ground up to make sweet syrups, spreads, toffees, drinks and as a sweetener, while its seeds have industrial uses.

“It’s one of the fruits that you use up entirely,” Charalambous said from his field in Asgata.

Branches rustle and sway as he and his grandson, Theophanis Christou, 20, hit the pods loose with long sticks, sending carob raining to the ground.

The pair have been working for about three weeks in the late summer heat, collecting about three tonnes of carob by early September.

Christou, a shipping and finance student, is keen to join in his grandfather’s labours.

It’s “hard to do”, Christou said, but it’s “work that can keep the family together”.

EXTRA INCOME

In the nearby coastal village Zygi, individual growers bring bulging sacks of pods into a carob mill.

Zygi “started as a carob village” and its name refers to the weigh scale used for the fruit, said community representative Christos Konstantinou.

In Zygi and elsewhere across the eastern Mediterranean island where the carob tree is native, disused or repurposed carob facilities are reminders of the industry’s heyday last century.

“Carob has been known as the black gold of Cyprus because many farmers used to have carob... it was the main occupation of the villagers,” said Stavros Glafkou Charalambous, from the Cooperative Carob Marketing Federation.

The federation, which runs the Zygi mill and other facilities, said it works with around 1,500-2,000 small producers, most of them harvesting carob for “extra income”.

George Pattichis, 75, from Vavla, said he has been coming to the Zygi mill for more than half a century.

The former forester said some of his carob trees were planted by his grandfather.

“I am the last generation — my children have other jobs,” said Pattichis.

INCREASING AGAIN

In 2019, when the growers’ price was around 35 euro cents (now 34 US cents) per kilogramme, carob represented less than 1.5 per cent of the Republic of Cyprus’s crop production value, according to statistics provided by the agriculture ministry.

This year, carob farmers said the price was nearing one euro per kilogram (2.2 pounds).

“I will sell to whoever offers me the



best price,” said Anastasis Daniel, 65, in Choirokoitia village.

Bags of harvested carob were stacked by his house ready for the mill, though he said he would also keep some for animal feed.

Global demand for the seeds’ locust bean gum (LBG) — used as a food thickening agent — drives the carob price, said Marios Kyriacou from Cyprus’s Agricultural Research Institute.

Cypriot carob pod and seed exports were worth almost eight million euros last year, according to the official statistics. Egypt was the biggest taker of the pods fit for human consumption, and Italy of the seeds.

Cyprus had been ranked as the world’s third-biggest producer of carob in the 1960s, Agriculture Minister Costas Kadis said.

Production then declined, he said, “but now it is increasing again”.

- ‘DROUGHT-RESISTANT’ -

Carob “is very important for Cyprus because it needs little insecticides, fertilisers and water — and this is important when we talk about climate change,” the minister said.

In late 2017, a University of Cyprus project planted almost 5,000 carob saplings and subsequently gave around 28,500 more to interested farmers, project scientist Chrysi Tomouzou said.

Researcher Kyriacou said carob was “a very drought-resistant tree species” that has been used as a crop in Cyprus “for at least the past 3,000 years”.

“The carob pod is rich in sugars” and dietary fibres, Kyriacou said. It also contains a “rare type of sugar-alcohol” that is “recognised as an anti-diabetic agent”, he said, noting this was “of interest for further clinical research”.

Kyriacou and his team have been studying genetic and other variations in Cypriot carob.

They say their work could be crucial if Cyprus decides to ramp up production and processing.

But for now, both often remain a low-scale affair.

At a festival in Anogyra, where stalls sold everything from carob sweets to ice cream, Andreas Andreou from Polyxenis Carob Products said carob syrup was his family firm’s most popular product.

Despoula Georgiou, 61, demonstrated how to make pasteli — a kind of carob toffee that her village is known for.

It’s “only (made with) carob juice, no sugar at all”, she said.

“I’ve been doing it for 50 years,” she said. “I learned it from my mother and aunt.” — **AFP**

A LOOK INTO THE ACADEME



Dr Zainab al Ajmi
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Looking Beyond ‘Lesson’ Plans

VETERAN TEACHERS are still keen and committed to their students, looking to develop their practical and effective teaching strategies. Pons (2001, p5) stated that there are “two major contexts in which instructions take place: the curricular context and the programmatic context.

The difference between the two is important as it determines the way in which instruction is planned and carried out”. That is, learning is divided into two paths: theoretical and practical. Consequently, valuable teaching bridges the gap between theory and practice. Thus far, for teachers, looking beyond their teaching provides students with adequate life skills, as well as students, learn about the reality of life during their learning journey.

In an accurately plane and organised education, teachers wonder if they needed to be rigid or restricted in their strategies, do they have to adopt different taxonomy to structure lessons and develop levels of learning: (grouping and individual)? Or did they had better to be ideals as a means for values that have a bit more impact?

Preparing or directing students toward a well-planned study is crucial for learning programmes to be effective. Teachers spend time planning and preparing lessons, rather, they should realise the levels, attitudes of their students, and ways of thinking. Therefore, teachers can be successful in their planning of education if they are aware of the students’ views.

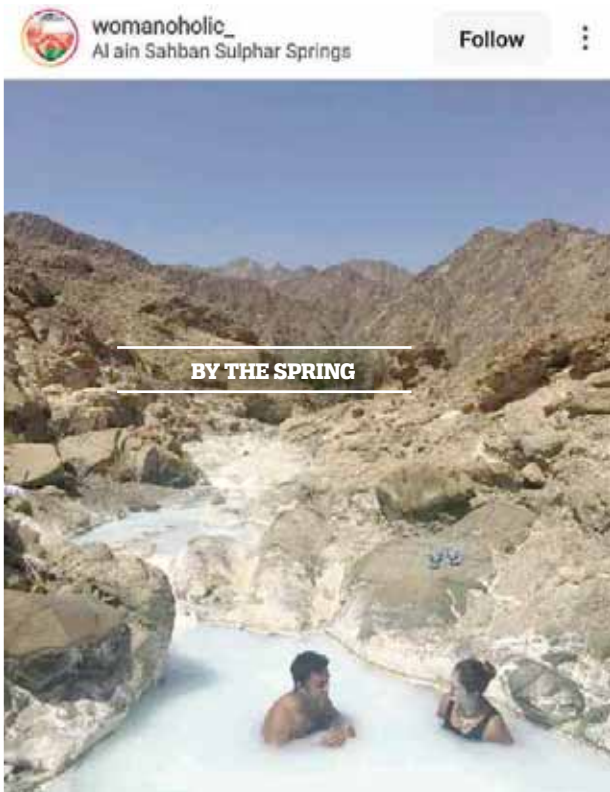
According to Leblance (2010), good teaching required number of aspects as follow: 1. Motivating students not only to learn, but teaching them how to learn, and doing so in a manner that is relevant meaningful, and memorable. 2. Treat students as consumers of knowledge, doing their best to keep on top. Reading sources inside and outside of the areas of expertise. 3. Listening, questioning, and being responsive. In addition, eliciting responses, developing the oral communication skills of quiet students, pushing students to excel, and being human, respectful, and professional in spite of everything. 4. Flexible, fluid, experimenting, and confident to react and adjust to changing circumstances. Furthermore, preparing to deviate from the course syllabus schedule easily when there is new and better learning elsewhere. 5. The style, should excellent teaching be entertaining? Does this mean that it lacks substance? Effective teaching is a teacher’s job to develop skills and make strategies come out into real life for students as a coherent whole and ensure that all students experienced shallow to deep learning. 6. Importantly, self-deprecating and making innocuous jokes, so that the ice breaks and students learn in a more relaxed atmosphere. 7. Caring, nurturing, and developing mind and talent. Devoting time to every student, and thankless hours of grading, designing, or redesigning courses, and preparing materials to enhance instructions. 8. Mentoring between senior and junior faculty, teamwork, and being recognised and promoted by one’s peers. Effective teaching should be rewarded, and poor teaching needs to be remedied through training and development programmes.

To conclude, building a strong foundation of knowledge and real-world experiences is key to effective teaching linking passion and reasons, thoughts and character being formed. Veteran teachers “practice their craft, not for the money or because they have to, but since they truly enjoy it and because they want to. Creative teachers couldn’t imagine doing anything else” (Leblance, 2010).



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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Cuban zoo helps deaf visitors experience the wild



THE RHINOS, GIRAFFES and lions that populate Cuba's national zoo have long been a wonder for all, but for deaf Cubans like Tatiana Romero, tours of the sprawling facility outside Havana have recently become a lot more welcoming.

Earlier this year, sign language interpreters began accompanying groups of deaf visitors aboard the bus and trails that take them across an enclosed plain designed to imitate the African savannah.

"When I was a child I used to visit the park. But many years have passed," said Romero, 35, who lost her hearing in the womb. "The interpreter was a great surprise, now I can understand everything."

The tours are one among several innovative programmes the state-run and operated zoo offers for people with disabilities, including animal therapy for children with Down's syndrome, autism and other special needs.

"Previously, very few (deaf) people visited



the zoo because they could only see the animals," said Yoandra Oliva López, an interpreter and educator with the zoo. "Now many more are visiting."

The zoo's environmental educators, who trained in a three-month programme to learn sign language, now coordinate with local municipalities to facilitate tours for people with disabilities. Zoo officials said they were also working to begin similar tours specifically for deaf children.

As the zoo's bus made its way around the mock savannah, the interpreter used sign language to describe to nine participants on a tour earlier this week the 13 species of animals that wander the plains, as well as their biology and eating habits.

"It is wonderful to see their satisfaction... in receiving all the information," said Oliva López. "Each guided tour that I give with them is an extraordinary experience."

Cuba's National Zoo is a favourite attraction for Cubans, with 1,473 specimens of more than 120 species of animals. — Reuters

ENTERTAINMENT

Metallica, Biden and Mariah Carey come together against poverty



METALLICA AND Mariah Carey on Saturday led an A-list of musicians, and President Joe Biden made a surprise video appearance, as the Global Citizen Festival sought to mobilise action against poverty and climate change.

Marking its 10th year, the six-hour festival brought thousands to New York's Central Park and featured a sister show in Ghana's capital Accra, where performers included American R&B great Usher and British grime icon Stormzy.

Global Citizen awards tickets to fans in exchange for their commitment to take action to eradicate extreme poverty — such as contacting elected representatives to encourage foreign aid — and coincides with the annual UN General Assembly in hopes of raising pressure on world leaders.

"We're inspired and grateful for all the work you've done and want you to know — your fight is our fight," First Lady Jill Biden said in a video appearance next to her husband.

President Biden — along with top Senate and House Democrats Chuck Schumer and Nancy Pelosi, who both appeared in person — highlighted a new climate package that is the most far-reaching legislation ever in the United States to spur clean energy.

But Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley of Barbados warned that action against climate change cannot come quickly enough for islands such as hers.

"Yes, my friends, our time is running out," she said.

Thrash metal legends Metallica got the crowd

headbanging with eight songs including a version of "Nothing Else Matters" featuring vocalist Mickey Guyton, who has been outspoken about her experi-

European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen, appearing on stage, said, "We have to take care of our girls and our women. They deserve it."



ences as one of the most prominent Black women in country music.

Guests sought to raise awareness on an array of issues including women's rights, especially in light of major protests in Iran following the death of Mahsa Amini, who was allegedly beaten to death after her arrest by morality police who enforce clerical rulers' dress codes on women.

"I have seen my sisters forced to flee abuse, oppression and femicide globally, women like Mahsa Jina Amini," said Anuscheh Amir-Khalili, a refugee advocate in Berlin of Iranian descent.

"We must speak up for oppressed women. I stand here for them," she told the crowd.

She highlighted recent pledges by Europe including 600 million euros for food security in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific amid rising hunger in much of the world worsened by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Mariah Carey was introduced by leading ballerina Misty Copeland, who called the singer with her famed vocal range an inspiration, and was accompanied by a choreographed dance for her classic song "Hero."

Other performers included Maneskin, the new-generation Italian glam rockers who put on an energetic set, Spanish pop star Rosalía, and the Jonas Brothers, with Nick Jonas' wife, Indian screen star Priyanka Chopra, serving as master of ceremonies. — AFP

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

The Visit

WHEN MY aunt announced that she's coming for a short visit to Muscat along with her husband the artist — a man with no pet experience and innate hate for cats- it was the time for an urgent meeting with my indoor felines, to set rules and behaviour code around the guest.

The meeting took place in my room on my bed with cats spread all over the place: Naeemo sitting on top of pillows where she usually slept, Duja stretching on the blanket, Mansoor with his fat backside facing us — his way of letting us know what he really thinks of the whole meeting — and Kiki the blind at her usual spot on the ironing board sniffing the air to gauge what's happening in her territory.

Sinan had to join us via Zoom as he was too terrorised to be around Kiki the little Minotaur. Cross-eyed Poppy sent her apologies earlier claiming that she rarely left her territory-Mom's room- so she won't be a nuisance to the guest (not to mention being afraid of bumping into Kiki). With my hair slightly smelling of cat urine — thanks to Kiki whose been busy spraying the room including the scarves' rack the minute I mentioned the words 'possible meeting in my room' — I declared the meeting opened.

I started by mentioning the points that we'll be discussing in the meeting especially the 'no contact' policy with the guest. Naeemo lifted her head as she was concerned about what's exactly meant by 'no contact'?

Does it include sitting next to the guest instead of jumping on his lap as per her lady-like manners? Before I could reply, Kiki intervened and asked if it includes sitting a few metres away from the guest and staring at him as she did whenever my friend Dalia came visiting? "Dalia thinks it's cute!" She added nonchalantly.

I warned both that I'd prefer if they'd leave the guest alone and avoid any

sort of contact with him- especially Kiki's eyeless stares that constantly freaked out our visitors. I added that this would also include dirty looks- Mansoor's specialty. Mansoor wagged his tail to indicate that he was listening but wouldn't bother to answer as he was busy watching Mujahid — an outdoor cat who keeps barging into my room to clean up any cat food leftovers. Naeemo asked if it was okay to welcome the guest at the doorstep and walk him up to his room the way she did with my brother before he moved out?

As I pondered the question, Kiki wondered if she could still practice her acrobatic acts when chasing and catching flies around the house? I decided to ignore both and moved to the most important item on the agenda: spraying.

I addressed the screen where Sinan was and suggested that he stops spraying plastic items — including bags, boxes, and chairs — as we won't have much time to clean up after him. Sinan kept staring at us with his half good eye rarely blinking, pretending that the screen had frozen.

Eyeing Kiki, I added that this would also include daily marking of territories and breaking into senseless chasings and fights with Sinan. Again, she chose to ignore me.

I urged Duja gently to stay in my room as he was looking awful with his mouth dripping of bloody saliva due to his Stomatitis condition and the scabbed hairless skin that made him look like he'd just came out from the municipality bin, and he consented hesitantly. The cats were obviously unhappy with these firm decisions and I called the meeting adjourned. (To be continued...)

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art & life

Local Scene

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Art gamble that paid off

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Tarini Agarwal loves to paint and when she does she starts with a few colours without overthinking the expected result.

This choice is mostly intuitive but sometimes accidental. The texture and viscosity are a tactile stimulus for her which shows up in most of her works.

Says Tarini, "The Sultanate of Oman has nurtured my love for art and has given my creative voice." I am almost always lost in the creative process, time and space become intangible and immaterial and they recede into the background," says this long time resident in Oman.

Recently, one of her life's dreams came true when she hosted 'Vibrations,' a week-long art exhibition at the iconic Jehangir Art Gallery, Kala Ghoda, Fort, Mumbai.

For an artist of her caliber it was an exciting time as the Jehangir Art Gallery has a big role to play in nurturing her love for Modern Indian Art.

Her connection with the Gallery goes back to 1972 and for her, the exhibition here meant to be very "special and personal."

She has a very long connection with modern Indian art and has been buying them since 1994. Modern Indian art typically shows the influence of Western styles, but is often inspired by Indian themes and images.

Tarini exhibited 25 of her paintings of various sizes ranging from 100x100 cm to 20x20cm.

As always, the inspiration for her abstract comes from the physical landscape, as she tries to capture her emotional response to the landscape. These paintings make an emotional connection with the viewer.

Some of her works on mixed media that were exhibited include works namely 'Avinhna,' 'Vipula,' 'Joyful Harsh,' 'Soul Song' and others. For 'Avinhna', a mixed media though Tarini rarely works in red, she began to think about painting and working for the show, this bright colour showed up. "My mind wanted to tone it down, paint over it but the painting insisted on being red. Who am I to question, so I did the next best thing to surrender to the process and let the paint-

ing lead," she reflects.

For 'Joyful/Harsh', she had a mind of her own and then finally settled down into a beautiful joyful blue lilac. A beautifully worked surface with a lot of colours showing through. She feels in

Jehangir as her home is still a walking distance.

She mentions how great Indian masters like M F Hussain, Ram Kumar and V S Gaitonde exhibited their works there. Late M F Hussain's last show was in



this work, joy has found its roots and is here to stay.

Several key art world personalities visited the gallery to see her art and appreciated her well received works.

Dr Saryu Vinod Doshi an art scholar, art historian, academic and curator and founder director of the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Mumbai, said her work was an 'intriguing abstract with sensitive rendering and colour qualities.'

The art fair happened to her rather luckily. The lead-time to do exhibit at the Jehangir Art Gallery is usually 8-10 years and the present show was booked during the pre-Covid days but the group dissipated. An artist unknown to Tarini reached out to her to participate and she went in without knowing anyone.

Tarini was happy to have participated, as anyone from Mumbai knows how difficult it is to get a show going at the Jehangir Art Gallery. The process is tedious and the waiting takes many years.

Tarini recalls as a child how her mother took her to the gallery in 1972. Even though she has been a resident in Muscat for more than 32 years, she visits the gallery back every single time.

She has almost always stayed walking distance from the



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