

HM greets King of Spain

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to King Felipe VI of Spain on his country's National Day anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan wished the Spanish monarch good health and happiness. He also wished the people of Spain further progress and prosperity. – **ONA**



NEW LABOUR LAW TO BOOST ECONOMY

HIS MAJESTY PRESIDES OVER COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Barakah Palace on Tuesday.

At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the riches and stability with which He has endowed Oman. He prayed to the Almighty Allah to protect Oman, its citizens and residents, perpetuate bounties on them and grant success to all in their benign endeavours.

Then, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed domestic, regional and international circumstances.

His Majesty the Sultan expressed his Royal attention to all matters of significance to citizens, notably economic and social aspects.

His Majesty the Sultan listened to a briefing about the executive programme citing progress made in the National Employment Programme and related initiatives. His Majesty the Sultan expressed his satisfaction with the efforts exerted in this regard and gave directives to maximise the positive action.

His Majesty the Sultan pointed out that the draft of the new Labour Law, which was finalised by the government and will be issued shortly, would encourage investment, strike a balance between the interests of workers and employers and provide enough guarantees for both parties in a manner that augments productivity and encourages job-seekers to join the private sector. **TURN TO P2**



- ROYAL ATTENTION TO MATTERS OF SIGNIFICANCE TO CITIZENS
- SATISFACTION WITH NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME
- YEAR 2050 SET AS A DATE FOR NET ZERO CARBON EMISSIONS
- STEPS TAKEN TO CUT DOWN PUBLIC DEBT APPRECIATED
- DIRECTIVES TO BRING DOWN PUBLIC DEBT WITHIN SAFE LIMITS

President of Zanzibar arrives



Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, and his spouse arrived in Muscat on Tuesday, on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman lasting several days. HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, led the welcoming party at Muscat International Airport for the guest and his accompanying delegation. **DETAILS ON P3**

NATO WARNS RUSSIA AGAINST ANY INFRASTRUCTURE ATTACKS

BRUSSELS: Nato told Moscow on Tuesday it would meet attacks on allies' critical infrastructure with a "united and determined response" and was monitoring Russia's nuclear forces closely as the country was "losing on the battlefield" in Ukraine.

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said ahead of a two-day meeting of the Western alliance's defence ministers in Brussels that it had not seen any changes in Russia's nuclear posture, but was "vigilant".

Stoltenberg described Russia's missile strikes on civilians in Ukraine on Monday as a sign of weakness.

"Russia is actually losing on the battlefield," he told a news conference, saying it was responding with "indiscriminate attacks" to Ukrainian advances.



Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg holds a press in Brussels on Tuesday. – **AFP**

That view was echoed by US ambassador to Nato Julianne Smith.

The alliance will proceed with its annual nuclear preparedness exercise "Steadfast Noon" next week, in which Nato air forces practise the use of US nuclear bombs

based in Europe with training flights, without live weapons.

Cancelling the drills because of the war in Ukraine would send a "very wrong signal", Stoltenberg said.

Russia has made veiled threats of using nuclear weapons against Ukraine.

"It's an exercise to ensure that our nuclear deterrent remains safe, secure and effective," he said.

Nato's military strength, he said, was the best way to prevent any escalation of tensions. Stoltenberg also pledged to boost the protection of critical infrastructure in response to the attack on the Nord Stream gas pipelines, saying Nato had already doubled its presence in the Baltic and the North Seas to over 30 ships supported by aircraft and undersea activities.

SEE ALSO P7



HM CHAIRS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MEETING



As part of Royal attention to improve environment performance and alleviate the impacts of climate change, the year 2050 has been set as a date for net zero-carbon emissions



His Majesty reviewed the Sultanate of Oman's bilateral relations with Arab and friendly countries. His Majesty the Sultan affirmed keenness on maintaining cooperation with all countries to maintain Oman's interests with all



His Majesty affirmed the new draft labour law, finalised by the government, would encourage investment, and achieve a balance between the interests of workers and employers, and encouraging job-seekers to join the private sector



His Majesty the Sultan expressed his appreciation for the steps taken by the government to reduce public debt and diminish its risks to the national economy

NEW LABOUR LAW TO BOOST ECONOMY

FROM PAGE 1

About financial and economic aspects, His Majesty the Sultan looked into the results of implementation of the State Budget 2022 as at August, as well as the prospects of fiscal performance till the end of the year. In this respect, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his appreciation for the steps taken by the government to cut down public debt and diminish its risks to the national economy. He also valued the efforts exerted by government establishments to accomplish balanced spending rates that kept pace with estimates endorsed since the beginning of 2022.

His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to continue maintaining these efforts in order to reduce the state's public debt and bring it within safe limits - due to the economic benefits that could be generated on the medium and long terms.

DRAFT BUDGET

In the same context, the draft of the state's general budget for the year 2023 and its objectives and programmes were reviewed. The review covered the government's plans to maintain financial stability and measures to achieve target economic growth rates approved in the 10th Five-Year Plan.

In his follow-up of the efforts of the unit for measuring the performance of government institutions, His Majesty the Sultan took note of the performance of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus during the first half of 2022. He expressed his satisfaction over the results of the assessment of those departments. He reiterated the significance of pursuing efforts to improve performance and provide the best services that keep abreast of the latest developments and meet the public interest.

ZERO EMISSIONS

As part of Royal attention to improve environment performance and alleviate the impacts of climate change, the year 2050 has been set as a date for net zero carbon emissions. A



national plan has been drafted to achieve this goal, along with the setting up of Oman Sustainability Centre to undertake the supervision and follow up of zero carbon emission plans and programmes. His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to all units of the State's Administrative Apparatus to cooperate to ensure the success of the aforementioned national plan.

In consolidation of the modern trend on local, decentralised administration aimed to achieve sustainable development, it has been stated that the new Governorates System seeks to boost the role of governors by defining specific specialisations that authorise them to draft Governorates' Budgets and Development Plans of their respective governorates through direct coordination with the departments concerned. The system also grants the governors direct executive powers where it pertains to economic development and the reinforcement of sources of the governorates' own income - enhancing their competitiveness and encouraging investments in a manner that realises the aspiration and needs of citizens.

In this regard, His Majesty the Sultan gave directives to coordinate and secure full integration among units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and the governorates to help streamline procedures, facilitate transactions, develop government services and improve their quality and to address the existing challenges.

REGIONAL ASPECTS

About the regional and international aspects, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed Sultanate of Oman's bilateral relations with Arab and friendly countries. His Majesty the Sultan affirmed keenness on maintaining cooperation with all countries to maintain Oman's interests with all.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan touched on various other aspects of concern to citizens and residents. He wished all success in realising bounty and prosperity for the dear homeland. — ONA



His Majesty reiterated the significance of pursuing efforts to improve the performance of units of the State's Administrative Apparatus and provide the best services that keep abreast of the latest developments and meet the public interest

In consolidation of the modern trend on local, decentralised administration aimed to achieve sustainable development, it has been stated that the new Governorates System seeks to boost the role of governors by defining specific specialisations that authorise them to draft Governorates' Budgets and Development Plans





Warm welcome for President of Zanzibar

MUSCAT: Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, and his spouse arrived here on Tuesday, on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman lasting several days.

His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, and Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, led the welcoming party at Muscat International Airport for the guest and his accompanying delegation.

The President of Zanzibar was accorded an official reception. When the jet touched ground at the airport, HH Sayyid Asaad met the guest and his spouse at the foot of the ramp, welcoming them and wishing them a fruitful visit and a pleasant stay.

The President was also received by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister.

After that, the President introduced members of his accompanying delegation to HH Sayyid Asaad.

Then, HH Sayyid Asaad accompanied President of Zanzibar to the Dais of Honour where the Royal Oman Police guard of honour saluted them and played the National Anthem of Tanzania and the Royal Anthem of Oman.

After that, the commandant of the guard of honour proceeded to the dais asking the President and HH Sayyid Asaad to inspect the front row of the squad.

Then, Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, shook hands with senior members of the welcoming party. The officials included Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Abdulsalam bin Mohammed al



Murshidi, Chairman of Oman Investment Authority, Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Dr Mohammed bin Said al Ma'amari, Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Tariq al Hussaisan, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to the Sultanate of Oman (Dean of

the diplomatic corps), Nasr bin Khamis al Sawa'ee, Attorney-General, Eng Ibrahim bin Said al Kharousi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for Heritage, Dr Khalid bin Said al Jaradi, Head of the Protocols Department at the Foreign Ministry, Mohammed bin Nasser al Wahaibi, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry

for Administrative and Financial Affairs (Head of the Mission of Honour), Saud bin Hilal al Shaithani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Republic of Tanzania, Said bin Salim al Harthy, Consul-General of the Sultanate of Oman to Zanzibar, members of the mission of honour, senior officers at the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and

the Royal Oman Police (ROP), as well as members of the Tanzanian Embassy in Muscat.

The President of Zanzibar is accompanied during the visit by an official delegation comprising Shaikh Saleh Omar Kaabi, Grand Mufti of Zanzibar, Saada Mkuya, Minister of Finance and Planning, Dr Khalid Salum Mohammed, Minister of

Infrastructure, Communications and Transport, Mbarouk Nassoro Mbarouk, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation, Dr Mwinyi Talib, Attorney-General, Masoud Abdallah Balozi, Secretary in the President's Office and Abdallah Abasi Kilima, Ambassador of the United Republic of Tanzania to the Sultanate of Oman. — ONA



Historic visit to bolster bilateral bonds

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The historic visit of Dr Hussein Ali Mwinyi, President of Zanzibar, to the Sultanate of Oman is expected to explore various areas of common interest and mark a milestone in the strong bilateral relations of the two friendly countries.

During the visit, many memorandum of understandings are expected to be signed aiming at further cementing the relations between these two countries.

The visit that is pursuant to the successful visit to Oman by Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, aims to promote and further consolidate the special bilateral bonding and cooperation between Zanzibar in particular and Tanzania in general with Oman.

“The high-level visit aims to provide an opportunity for the premiers of both countries to hold consultations with each other on issues of common interests related to bilateral, regional and international affairs. It is the platform to bring Zanzibar and Oman relations to greater heights,” a highly placed source told the Observer.

There will be negotiations to attract investments from Omani investors, promote business engagement in general to Zanzibar, notably, in the domains of the Blue Economy (Logistics, Maritime transport, Fisheries, Tourism).

There will be efforts to enhance cooperation in the areas of archives and records keeping, management of heritage sites, education and oil and gas sectors and ways of promoting trade between Oman and Zanzibar.

OMAN-ZANZIBAR RELATIONS

Oman and Zanzibar enjoy the well-established longtime historical and blood relations given the long interface of the two peoples for centuries. Oman is the only country outside Africa where Swahili is widely spoken as first language in most Omani households as well as in public life.

Over the years there have been numerous exchanges of visits at ministerial and official levels.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Oman investments in Zanzibar have been mainly in tourism and hospitality, construction, finance and insurance, wholesale and retail trade, logistics, accommodation and food services, manufacturing, commercial building and services. Until July 2022, a total of 22 Omani projects have been registered in Zanzibar valued at \$213,019,298

employing about 900 people.

The government of Zanzibar and Oman Investment Authority have signed a number of MoUs for construction of a modern port in Mangapwani, Malindi, and development of a waterfront city in Malindi.

Oman Vision 2040 puts more emphasis on food security, with the private sector taking a major role in the economy, economic diversification, infrastructure development and logistics business.

Based on the above priorities, Zanzibar has a lot to offer as far as investment is concerned as a gateway to Southern Africa, Zanzibar being a few miles away from Mainland Tanzania, is well positioned for market access of over 450 million people. Zanzibar can offer investment opportunities in Blue Economy -- marine and water sport, aquaculture, tourism, high class hotels and lodges,

underwater restaurants, water sports, conventional centres, airlines, seaweed farming and value addition.

Other areas of investment opportunities in Zanzibar include agriculture, oil and gas, energy, manufacturing, free economic zones, fisheries value chain, real estate development, health and pharmaceuticals.

On the side of Oman, there are investment opportunities which can be exploited by the private sector from Zanzibar, these opportunities include investing in Oman's Special Economic Zones.

OMAN'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE TO ZANZIBAR

Over the years, Oman has extended various development assistance to Zanzibar. This assistance covered many sectors including education.

RESTORATION OF HERITAGE SITES, NATIONAL ARCHIVES

There are also various memorandum of understandings that have been signed including agreements and MoUs to provide a legal environment and framework for strengthening bilateral cooperation between Zanzibar and Oman.

In the light of above, Oman and Zanzibar have signed a numbers of MoUs in various fields, this include MoUs in higher education, in records and archives, MoU between Zanzibar Investment Authority and Oman Investment Authority on cooperation on investment matters, memorandum of understanding in modernisation and rehabilitation of Malindi Port and memorandum of understanding in the field of fisheries and marine exploration.



Oman participate in 145th IPU Assembly in Rwanda

KIGALI: The Council of Oman is taking part in the 145th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly and its related meetings and the 210th Session of the IPU Governing Council, being held in Kigali, Rwanda, from October 11 to 15.

The delegation of the Sultanate of Oman, headed by Shaikh Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura, took part in the inaugural ceremony held under the auspices of President Paul Kagame of the Republic of Rwanda in the presence of representatives, speakers and deputy speakers of regional and international parliaments.

The Assembly will elect the president and deputies for the



145th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly. It will look into requests to include the emergency item on the

agenda of the General Assembly. This is in addition to general discussions on the parliamentary momentum required for accelerating the development process in countries with high-level of migration.

The Assembly will debate parliamentary action that needs to be taken on international migration and human-trafficking issues. Other issues under consideration include environmental degradation and its effects on the proliferation of terrorism; the impact of war and atrocity on civilian populations; war and climate change as triggers of global food insecurity; and the situation of the human rights of parliamentarians. — **ONA**

Amad Duqm 22 details unveiled

MAI AL GHADDANIYAH
MUSCAT, OCT 11

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, disclosed details of the upcoming youth activity titled Amad Duqm 22 which will be held in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

It was revealed at a press conference that the 9-day event, to be held next month, will include over 30 activities in various fields such as innovation, technology, sustainability, recreation, culture and sports. Over 20,000 young Omanis are expected to take part in the event.

Dr Said bin Khalifa al Tueirshi, head of the supervisory committee of the event, said that the event was designed to be consistent with the aspirations of the youth to create an innovative pattern in the organisation of events. The event comes on the backdrop of the steady development taking place in the Special Economic Zone at

Duqm under the great attention accorded by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to the youth sector.

The Amad Duqm 22 event comes as a mini-experimental laboratory for the aspirations of the Omani youth for the future of the Sultanate of Oman. The designing and implementation processes will be assigned to a select group of Omani youth to create a vision that combines science, technology, art and entertainment in a modern form. The event will be held in Duqm as home to a multitude of opportunities and economic potentials and seeks to become a model in job, housing and lifestyle. Duqm is also one of the most important engines of economic development.

The activities will be held on a 500,000 sq metre area. The venue's design mimics an integrated residential village. The first season will centre on the themes of innovation, technology, future and entertainment.

— *Picture by Khalfan al Ruzaiqi*

Committee to combat human trafficking holds meeting

MUSCAT: The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking held a regular meeting on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs and Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting followed up the



progress of work on implementing the national action plan on combating human trafficking in the Sultanate of Oman for the period 2021-2023. It also reviewed the efforts and activities it undertakes to reinforce awareness about the importance of addressing the crime of human trafficking. — **ONA**

LIMITED-RELEASE OCEANFRONT ULTRA-PREMIUM HOMES

AL MOUJ MUSCAT LAUNCHES PHASE 2 OF ZUNAIRAH MANSIONS



MUSCAT: Citizens and residents of Oman can now own the luxury homes of their dreams at Al Mouj Muscat's Zunairah. The limited collection of spectacular oceanfront and beachside freehold residences set in an exclusive private access precinct are one of a kind with bespoke finishes envisioned and realized by an internationally acclaimed team of architects and leading interior designers.

Reimagining luxury and redefining sophisticated living, the phase 2 of the extraordinary Zunairah mansions are

tailored for each home-owner. From the design of the villa to material selections, a specially curated suite of customization options for finishes, materials and equipment allows home-owners to tailor the aesthetic of their Zunairah home to their own unique individual taste.

Harmonizing bold concepts with intricate details, the internal layouts were devised to accommodate informal and formal family spaces and reflect modest tastes, blending unique style with ultimate comfort and balancing family space with intimate areas.

The homes are also equipped with an innovative integrated network of future-forward smart features to elevate everyday experiences and add enjoyment to life.

The new phase of the mansions come in various types and feature six luxurious bedrooms with a 933sqm built up area, a garage and shaded parking for up to six vehicles and generous staff accommodation. Located in the Shatti District, it is one of the four vibrant districts of Al Mouj Muscat.

"We now live in a day and age

where re-assessing priorities and re-connecting with what we love and value the most takes precedence," said Nasser bin Masoud Al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat. "The home has become the center of our world, a hub from which we relax, work, learn, exercise and entertain. Buying a home, and especially a luxury home, is one of the biggest decisions we make in our lives and our team of first-class experts have ensured that no detail is overlooked to bring your Zunairah dream home to life so that you can own your very own slice of paradise."

"The launch of the Zunairah show villa gives our potential home buyers the feeling of what it means to be living an inspired lifestyle and enjoying a taste of paradise to everyday life."

Al Mouj Muscat is the most desirable integrated lifestyle destination in Oman that is already home to 8,000 residents from more than 85 countries. Bridging people and culture in a world-class oceanfront community, it opens up a multitude of premium opportunities for leisure and relaxation all within easy walking distance.



Govt units to have ‘Vision Offices’ to follow up implementation

MUSCAT: The Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit is joining hands with the departments concerned to carry out the Royal directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to set up special offices in government units to enable these departments to play their role in achieving the objectives of the vision.

Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Chairman of the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that the Royal directives to establish the Vision's Implementation Follow-up Offices were aimed at ensuring that all the departments concerned would shoulder their responsibility in realising the vision.

Al Jabri added that several meetings were held by the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit in cooperation with the departments concerned to establish and activate the "Vision Offices" at government establishments. The offices will ensure precise follow-up of executive plans necessary for the realisation of the Vision's performance indicators at government departments, manage



follow-up mechanisms, analyse and address the challenges.

Earlier, the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit worked in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour to develop a model for the "Vision Offices" and their systems of functioning as they embark on transferring knowledge, developing necessary programmes and addressing the common challenges.

The Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit also held workshops on knowledge transfer at the "Vision Offices" at government departments, in addition to launching capacity building and

skills development programme. The workshops covered the preparation of grounds of action at the departments concerned to help activate those offices.

Other matters discussed during the workshops included consensus on the mechanisms of follow-up and programmes support. This is in addition to augmenting the levels of readiness at government departments concerned through training on methodologies and the model of initiatives, determining targets and developing performance indicators. The workshops were attended by the staff of 40 government departments, from a

total of 59 target units.

The "Vision Offices" will make the planning departments in the units concerned to be more attached to the Vision Indicators, its objectives and national programmes. It will build a working team that is capable of shouldering the missions of planning and coordinating with the institutions concerned to secure performance quality. The offices will constitute a link between the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit and the government departments. They will also add speed, accuracy and support to the whole process.

— ONA

Survey on disease vectors to begin on October 16

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health will conduct a three-month comprehensive survey of disease vectors, with effect from October 16.

The survey seeks to enhance and protect individuals and society against the spread of agent-based transfer of diseases. It will build a

database on disease vectors, their areas of breeding and ways of detecting them and eradicate them.

The survey will cover all governorates of Oman, including areas frequented by tourists, workplaces and any other places where human activity is common.

— ONA



RAO COMMANDER RECEIVES PALESTINIAN MILITARY OFFICIAL

MUSCAT: Maj Gen Matar bin Salim al Balushi, Commander of the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Tuesday Maj Gen Said Khalid Najjar, Director of the Supply Authority of the State of Palestine. The two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Braik bin Mohammed al Ghafri, Director of Supplies and Logistics, and several senior RAO officers.

— ONA



Drill to enhance cyber defences



MUSCAT: The 8th National Cybersecurity Exercise was launched on Tuesday. The drill was organised by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, represented by the Oman National Computer Emergency Readiness Team (OCERT) via video call.

More than 20 government establishments participated in the exercise held under the theme of "Discovering Internal Threats".

The two-day exercise seeks to enhance readiness and preparedness to deal with electronic risks and threats, as well as ideal ways of addressing

security incidents. It also covers coordination and cooperation between the OCERT and different government establishments. It aims to raise awareness among government establishments about the mechanisms and standard procedures in handling electronic risks and threats. — ONA

Expanding business beyond boundaries

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While this month saw the Yemen truce expire and the UN continuing talks for broader deals, the business must continue for Khalid Mohammed Abdullah Mashaiba, who imports rice and cooking oil to his country.

Khalid is carrying the family business started by his father through challenging times but has successfully imported essential goods while exporting and marketing honey.

He imports rice from India, the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates and palm oil from Malaysia.

"Oman is our neighbouring country, and commercial procedures are not difficult and, in fact, encouraging to invest in projects," said Khalid, who has been focusing on potential projects in Oman for the last five years.

"In the past, we used to take goods, but now since the Sultanate of Oman has made 'Invest Easy' we are looking forward to start import and export company in the country," he pointed out.

For the last 15 years, he has been in the rice business importing

Basmati from Punjab and Haryana, and exporting Yemeni honey to international markets.

"We receive a large number of orders from France, and we proceed through dealers operating in the GCC countries," said Khalid, hailing from Aden, Yemen.

The mode of transport used is shipping, so Sohar Port is highly significant for his business.

His rice brand is known as Al Waheed, (the only one), but now he is in the midst of importing a product from the Sultanate of Oman — Sahara.

"We will be the agent for Sahara juice in Yemen. The opportunities are many, and this is the time to act," Khalid explained.

Sidr honey and flower honey from Yemen have found a global niche market.

"Yes, honey from Yemen is well known in the world. Important sources of Yemeni honey are Shabwah, Hadramout and other places.

Honey is used for medical purposes and, of course, as part of the daily diet consumed with bread. Yemeni honey is also used for the preservation of cooked meat. Honey is also popular for skin care," Khalid concluded.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT



Nama Shared Service LLC (a member of Nama Group) invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NSS/2022/05	Privileged Access Management Solution Implementation	19 October 2022	01 November 2022	25/- Plus VAT Amount 1.25/- (OMR) Total 26.25/-OMR (Non-Refundable)

- Interested parties may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om/ar/new-tenders). The supplier user guide is available to be downloaded on the same page.
- Payment of the tender fees is to be done online through the link available on the website. The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 12.00 pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through the I-supplier portal before 01.00 pm time of the Sultanate on Tuesday 01 November 2022.
- Each bid should be accompanied by temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Shared Service reception area.
- NSS is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



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‘Historic’ maritime border deal signed with Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanon and Israel have reached a historic agreement demarcating a disputed maritime border between them following years of US-mediated negotiations, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid said on Tuesday.

While limited in scope, a deal would mark a significant compromise between states with a history of war and hostility, opening the way for offshore energy exploration and easing a source of recent tensions.

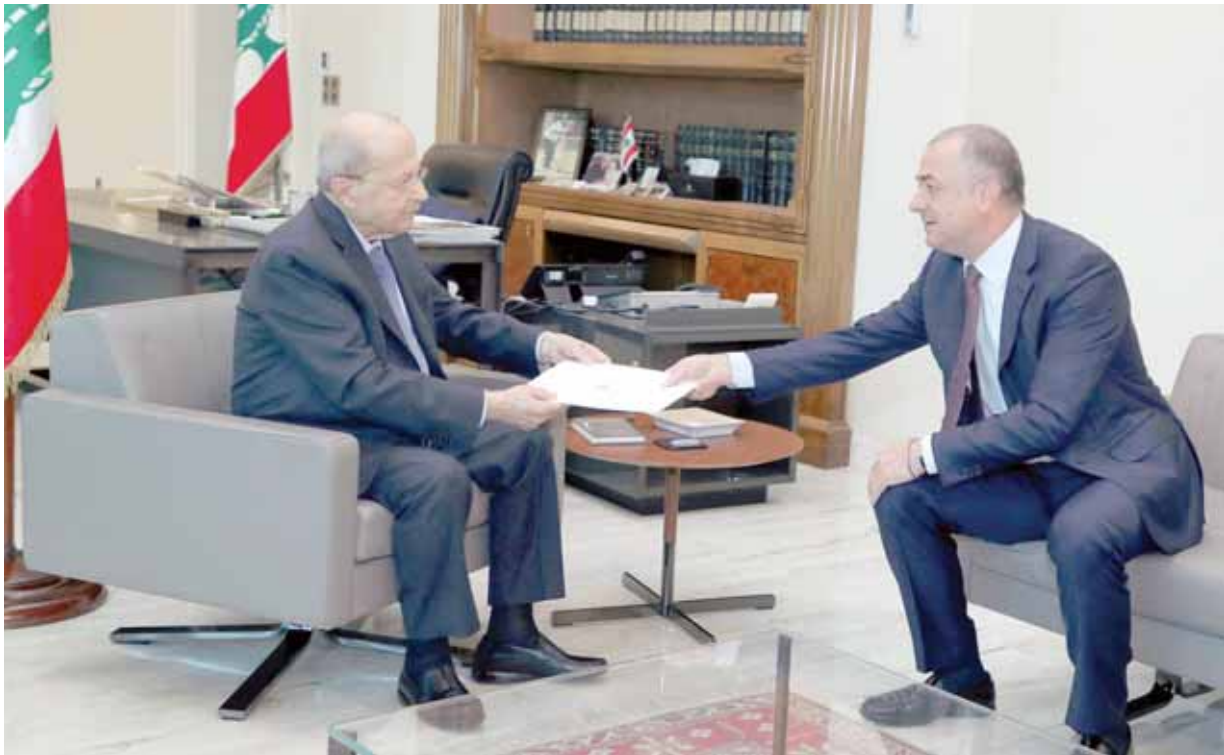
“This is a historic achievement that will strengthen Israel’s security, inject billions into Israel’s economy and ensure the stability of our northern border,” Lapid said in a statement.

In Lebanon, President Michel Aoun said the terms of the final US proposal were satisfactory and he hoped the deal would be announced as soon as possible.

The agreement is meant to resolve a territorial dispute in the eastern Mediterranean sea in an area where Lebanon aims to explore for natural gas.

Israel is already producing natural gas at fields nearby.

It sets a border between Lebanese and Israeli waters for the first time and also establishes



Lebanese President Michel Aoun with Deputy Parliament Speaker Elias Bou Saab at the presidential palace in Baabda, Lebanon. – Reuters

a mechanism for both countries to get royalties from an offshore gas field that straddles the boundary.

Lebanese negotiator Elias Bou Saab said that the latest draft “takes into consideration all of Lebanon’s requirements and we believe that the other side should feel the same.” It was also endorsed by the heavily armed, Hizbullah, which

US envoy has been holding indirect contacts to seal deal as this would allow for energy exploration, ease source of tension

until recently has threatened to attack Israeli gas facilities, according to two officials.

A senior Lebanese government official and an official close to Hizbullah said the group had agreed to the terms of the deal and considered negotiations “over.” Hizbullah has yet to formally comment. While Israel has moved



A UN peacekeeper vehicle drives in Khiam near the border with Israel in southern Lebanon. – Reuters

ahead with production and export of natural gas, Lebanon’s efforts have been hamstrung by political dysfunction.

A gas find would be a major boon for Lebanon, which has been mired in financial crisis since 2019, and could fix Lebanon’s long-standing failure to produce adequate electricity for its

population.

Lapid, who faces a November 1 election, plans to seek approval on Wednesday for the deal from his security cabinet and then the government, before it is reviewed by parliament.

An Israeli official said final approval was expected within the next three weeks. —Reuters

Parliament in Iraq vows to elect new president on Thursday

BAGHDAD: Iraq’s parliament will meet on Thursday to “elect the president,” speaker Mohammed al Halbussi’s office said, in a surprise move seen at trying to end months of political impasse.

The oil-rich but troubled country has already made three failed attempts this year to elect a new head of state, between February 7 and March 30.

More than a year after the last general election, Halbussi’s office said that the parliamentary session two days later would have “a single item on the agenda, the election of the President of the Republic”.

Iraqis last voted on October 10, 2021 in a general election brought forward by a wave of mass protests against endemic corruption, rampant unemployment and decaying infrastructure.

Ahead of Halbussi’s announcement, the United Nations mission had urged political factions to end the deadlock, warning that “Iraq is running out of time”.

The country has yet to form a



new government after last year’s election, leaving caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi in charge.

Rival factions in parliament have been vying for influence and the right to select a new premier and government.

The stand-off has seen both sides set up protest camps recently and at times sparked deadly street clashes in Baghdad.

On August 30, current President Barham Saleh had urged “new, early elections in accordance with a national consensus”, saying these could provide “an exit from the stifling

The country has yet to form a new government after last year’s election, leaving caretaker Prime Minister Mustafa al Kadhemi in charge

crisis”. The post generally goes to the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK), while the Kurdistan Democratic Party of Kurdistan (KDP) keeps control over the affairs of autonomous Kurdistan in northern Iraq.

But the KDP is also eyeing the presidency and will present its own candidate on Thursday.

There are currently two obvious candidates: the PUK’s Saleh, the incumbent, and current Kurdistan Interior Minister Rebar Ahmed of the KDP.

Once parliament elects a new president, that person must then designate a prime minister, who is chosen by the largest coalition in parliament.

This has been the focus of deadlock between the two main factions on Iraq’s political scene.

On the one hand is Moqtada Sadr, who wants parliament

dissolved and new elections.

On the other sits the Coordination Framework, an alliance of factions including former paramilitaries, that wants a new government before fresh elections are held.

Tensions last boiled over on August 29 when more than 30 Sadr supporters were killed in clashes with factions and the army in Baghdad’s Green Zone, the capital’s fortified government and diplomatic district.

Iraq has raked in huge revenues from energy exports this year, and the central bank is holding a colossal \$87 billion in foreign exchange reserves.

However, the money remains locked up because Kadhemi is not authorised to submit an annual state budget to parliament in his capacity as caretaker prime minister. — AFP



India-UN Development Fund setting new benchmarks: Minister

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

V Muraleedharan, Indian Minister of State for External Affairs (MEA), has lauded the India-UN Development Partnership Fund’s success as “collective, collaborative efforts setting new benchmarks for South-South cooperation.”

The minister was speaking at the 5th-anniversary of the Fund in New York as he mentioned about South-South peace diplomacy getting the right impetus after India’s push for cooperation over conflicts.

“India-UN Development Partnership Fund was established in 2017. The \$150-million fund is supported and led by India and implemented in collaboration with the United Nations system.

The fund supports Southern-owned and led, demand-driven and transformational sustainable

development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and small Island developing States,” a statement from the MEA said.

In his interaction with the delegates, Muraleedharan said: “Over the years India’s development partnership has evolved organically to become a complete and comprehensive framework touching upon the full spectrum of human endeavour.”

“In the past five years, the fund and the footprint of its activities have grown by leaps and bounds.

Today, India and the UN in their collective collaborative efforts through these funds are setting new benchmarks for South-South cooperation. India has prioritised cooperation over conflict, coexistence over convictions, sharing over receiving, plurality over hegemony,” news agency ANI reported the Indian minister as saying.

SHORT TAKES

TUNIS

Long petrol queues in Tunisia stir anger

Frustrated motorists queued in long lines outside Tunisian petrol stations even after the energy minister had said a shortage would end on Monday with a new delivery of fuel.

Many petrol stations started running out of fuel over the weekend as imports slowed and national supplies dropped, leading to lines of cars stretching kilometres in some places, causing bad traffic in Tunisian cities.

“I didn’t go to work today,” said



Mohamed Neji, who had been waiting for an hour and a half in the Ariana district of Tunis.

“We’ve become like refugees in our own country,” he added. — Reuters

MANILA

Philippines’ Nobel laureate to fight conviction

Philippine Nobel laureate Maria Ressa plans to appeal her cyber libel conviction at the country’s Supreme Court, her lawyer said after losing her legal battle and having months added to her sentence.

The appeals court in its October 10 decision upheld its earlier ruling that affirmed a lower court’s conviction, and added eight months to her six-year jail sentence.

Ressa remains free during her appeals process. Lawyer



Theodore Te called the outcome “disappointing.” Ressa along with former Rappler researcher and writer, Reynaldo Santos, were convicted in June 2020 in a cyber libel case. — Reuters

WELLINGTON

Pilot whales dead after N Zealand mass strandings

About 500 pilot whales have died in mass strandings on New Zealand’s remote Chatham Islands, the government said after ruling out a rescue effort in the area’s shark-filled waters.

Two “super pods” of the dolphin-related cetaceans beached on two islands in the remote chain and survivors were euthanised, according to the Department of Conservation.

On Friday, 250 beached pilot whales were found at Chatham Island, and then three days later



another 240 were reported on Pitt Island, the government said.

The locations — far from the New Zealand mainland — made a rescue operation impossible, authorities said. — AFP



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In brief

■ MOSCOW



NAVALNY SAYS HE IS BACK IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

Jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny said he had been placed in solitary confinement for 14 days for refusing to wash a fence. In a message posted on Twitter via his lawyer, Navalny said he had been sent back to a cramped isolation cell where he has served repeated spells for minor infringements of prison rules. “I just did 12 days there, and now I’m doing 14 again,” he said. “I understand painting a fence and feeling like Tom Sawyer is fun. But washing a fence, in my opinion, is totally insane.” Navalny is serving 11-1/2 years after being found guilty of parole violations and fraud and contempt of court charges.

— Reuters

■ N'DJAMENA



CHAD PM RESIGNS TO PAVE WAY FOR NEW GOVERNMENT

Chad’s Prime Minister Albert Pahimi Padacke has resigned in order to pave the way for a new government after the Central African country decided to push back elections by two years, the president’s office said. Padacke, a civilian politician, was named prime minister of a transitional military government last year after President Mahamat Idriss Deby seized power in the wake of his father’s death. The military council led by Deby was originally meant to rule for 18 months, but this month the country announced it would push back democratic elections until around October 2024. Deby was sworn in on Monday as president. — Reuters

■ LONDON



HEATHROW TARGETS PRE-COVID TRAFFIC DESPITE HEADWINDS

London’s Heathrow Airport expressed hope of a return to pre-pandemic traffic, while cautioning over resurgent Covid infections, Ukraine fallout and recession threats. Almost 5.8 million passengers passed through the hub in September, down 15 per cent from the same month in 2019, or six months before Covid-19 took hold worldwide. “Our focus over the next 12 months is to get capacity, service levels and resilience back to the high levels that they were before the pandemic,” Heathrow said. The “demand outlook remains uncertain, with growing economic headwinds,” it added.

— AFP

G7 leaders discuss Russia’s assault on Ukraine

KYIV: US-led Nato said on Tuesday its member states were boosting security around key installations as Russia escalated its attacks on Ukraine and stepped up threats against the West.

Russian missiles pounded Ukraine for a second day, after dozens of air raids across the country on Monday that killed 19 people, wounded more than 100 and knocked out power supplies.

Moscow has annexed new tracts of Ukraine, mobilised hundreds of thousands of Russians to fight and repeatedly threatened to use nuclear arms in recent weeks, spreading alarm in the West.

A European diplomat said Nato was considering convening a virtual summit of the Western defence alliance to consider its response.

Nato was closely monitoring Russia’s nuclear forces, but had not seen any change in its nuclear posture, Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels.

The allies were increasing security around critical infrastructure after attacks on gas pipelines running under the Baltic Sea and any deliberate attack would be met with a “united and determined response”, he said.



Local residents check their car, destroyed by the previous day’s Russian military strike, as Russia’s attack on Ukraine continues in central Kyiv. — Reuters

More missile strikes killed at least one person in the southeastern Ukrainian town of Zaporizhzhia and left part of the western city of Lviv without power, local officials said.

Air raid sirens earlier wailed across Ukraine for a second day.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, under domestic pressure to ramp up the seven-month war, said he had ordered the strikes as

Nato warns against attack on its members’ infrastructure as G7 reviews Kyiv’s request for air defence systems

revenge for a blast that damaged Russia’s bridge to annexed Crimea.

Kyiv and its allies have condemned the attacks, which mainly hit civil infrastructure

such as power stations but also landed in parks, tourist sites and busy rush hour streets.

The White House said US President Joe Biden and other G7 leaders met virtually on Tuesday to discuss what more they could do to support Ukraine and they listened to President Zelenskyy, who has called air defence systems his “number 1 priority”. — Reuters

Unesco protection for Odessa urged

PARIS: Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday officially requested that Unesco add the historic port city of Odessa to its World Heritage List in a bid to protect it from Russian air strikes.

“We must provide a clear signal that the world will not turn a blind eye to the destruction of our common history, our common culture, our common heritage,” the president told the 58 member states of the UN’s cultural watchdog in a pre-recorded video.

“One of the steps for this should be the preservation of the historical centre of Odessa — a beautiful city, an important port of the Black Sea and a source of culture for millions of people in different countries.”

Known as the pearl of the Black Sea, Odessa blossomed after empress Catherine the Great decreed in the late 18th century that it would be Russia’s modern maritime gateway. — AFP

Scholz tells Germans to unite over energy

BERLIN: Germany can weather a winter gas shortage caused by Russia’s war on Ukraine provided companies and households pull together, the German chancellor said on Tuesday ahead of a meeting of EU ministers divided over the best response to the energy crisis.

EU energy ministers will gather in Prague ahead of a meeting on Wednesday to seek progress on a price cap and other measures in response to the sharp reduction of Russian supplies that once provided Europe with about 40 per cent of its gas needs.

Talks have failed to produce agreement on the proposed cap, with Germany, Europe’s largest economy, and other wealthier European Union states fearing it could make it harder to source supplies.

Germany’s planned heavy spending to shield its citizens from the full impact of rising energy prices has also caused unease among some countries in the 27-nation EU that say it is more than poorer members can afford.

Germany suggested EU states could use money from the \$778 billion “Next Generation” pandemic recovery fund to help tackle crises such as the energy crisis, a government spokesperson said.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz said the country could not expect energy deliveries from Russia for the foreseeable future but that the situation could be managed.

“If we all continue to adapt to the changed situation - the citizens, the companies and the



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz applauds State Premier and leader of SPD in Lower Saxony Stephan Weil after the Lower Saxony regional elections in Berlin. — AFP

Germany’s planned heavy spending to shield its citizens from the full impact of rising energy prices has also caused unease among some countries in the 27-nation EU

politicians - then we will get safely through this winter,” Scholz told an engineering conference here on Tuesday.

There have already been signs of demand picking up in Germany on cooler days despite the need to curb consumption.

Across Europe, analysts have put the gas shortfall at almost 15 per cent of average demand in winter and said Germany needs to cut energy consumption by around a fifth, with worrying

implications for Europe’s biggest economy whose industry has relied on abundant, affordable energy supplies.

The energy crisis has had knock-on effects across Europe as businesses have passed on extra costs and consumers have less to spend.

Industry forecaster S&P Global Mobility said that, in a worst case scenario, Europe’s energy crisis could cut its car production by close to 40 per cent, or more than 1 million vehicles, per quarter through the end of 2023.

The auto industry is widely regarded as a gauge of economic health.

Rather than splashing out on new cars, market research released on Tuesday showed Britons are stocking up on electric blankets, candles and energy-efficient slow cookers to try cut fuel bills and prepare for any power outages. — AFP

Find your ‘reason of being’ for inner happiness



Hyesha Barrett
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The writer is a master life coach and NLP practitioner

Life is all about choices. Any direction you decide to take will bring about different outcomes. Do you consciously take the time to find the answers to your burning questions or spend time in solitude figuring out your purpose in life? Do you grab direction by the horns or do you let yourself be taken by the currents? The majority of us often take the easier way as it's the known and familiar path which also coincides as being that of the least resistant. This coupled with the resignation to remain in our comfort zone often gives the feeling that we simply are not capable to accomplish more. In order to break the mould and shatter the protective shell we have

created and somehow “enriched” ourselves in, we need to take a long hard objective look at ourselves, where we currently are and where we wish to be. To beat the dreaded feeling of unworthiness, stop playing the comparison game and start focusing on what you want. So many of us know what we don't want. Yet, do you really know what you do want? Do you know what will bring you true happiness and fulfilment? Take the time to figure out what lights you up and churns the fire in your belly. The Japanese call it Ikigai, which means your ‘reason for being’, your life's purpose. Having a North Star as your

UNLESS YOU FIND YOUR PURPOSE, YOU WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE YOUR LIFE ON AUTOPILOT. FOLLOWING YOUR DREAMS NEEDS TO BE AT THE TOP OF THE LIST

guide is key to keeping you on track. This means having clarity with the vision on where you are headed, even without knowing the steps to reach there. Allow the discovery of the unearthing of your true heart's desire to envelop the passion, drive and commitment towards your fulfilment.

It's about unlearning what's been learnt. It's about returning to basics and truly understanding yourself at the core. After knowing what you would like to do, be and feel, then make the required concise and concrete decisions in order to attain them. It's far easier to work towards something, an end goal, even if we haven't figured out the steps required in order to achieve it. Behind every successful person is clarity of purpose. We all have those sacred 24 hours in a day. “I don't have time” is the easiest (and poorest) excuse one can use. We always have and make time for the things we prioritise.

Unless you find your purpose, you will continue to live your life on autopilot. So I invite you to delve deep into your priorities. Following your dreams needs to be at the top of the list. Identifying and honouring your ikigai is the foundation of a well-rounded life. It requires some courage because it opens up questions and ideas that might cause discomfort. However, acknowledging and moving through them will gain you purposefulness and provide you with an inner compass that will guide every decision and lead you to the experiences that will light up your soul and guide you down the path of inner happiness.

UK’s court mulls legal basis for new Scottish independence referendum

ANNA MALPAS AND HELEN ROWE

The UK Supreme Court was on Tuesday urged to rule on the legality of Scottish moves to hold a new referendum on independence next year without the consent of the government in London. First Minister Nicola Sturgeon's nationalist government in Edinburgh wants a fresh vote on the question: “Should Scotland be an independent country?” Her SNP ran in the 2021 Scottish parliamentary elections on a promise to hold a legally valid referendum after the Covid crisis subsided. It now wants to go ahead but the UK government, which has to give approval under the Scotland Act 1998, has not given permission. Opening the court proceedings, Lord Advocate Dorothy Bain, Scotland's top law officer, said the issue of Scottish independence was a “live and significant one in Scottish electoral politics.” “The question of whether such a poll is within the competence of the Scottish parliament... is an issue that I invite this court to finally resolve,” she said. On Monday, Sturgeon told her Scottish National Party's annual conference the hearing would not have been necessary if the UK government in Westminster respected Scottish democracy. “But Westminster has no such respect. That means this issue was always destined to end up in court sooner or later — better, in my view, that it is sooner,” she said. “If the court decides in the way we hope it does, on 19th October next year there will be an independence referendum.” The Supreme Court hearings will see senior lawyers wrangle over the powers of the devolved parliament in Edinburgh versus Westminster. New UK Prime Minister Liz Truss in a television interview this month reiterated her view that the last referendum in 2014 was a once-in-a-generation event. “I'm very clear there shouldn't be another referendum before that generation is up,” she added. UK Scottish Secretary Alister Jack told a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday that “people in Scotland want their governments to be working together on the issues that affect them, rather than focusing on another referendum”, Truss's spokesman said. Opinion polls now indicate that voters in Scotland are near evenly divided over the question of independence. — AFP



Andrew E Kramer

The writer is a reporter covering the countries of the former Soviet Union

In southern Ukraine, signs of low Russian morale amid retreat

As Ukrainian soldiers patrolled the streets of a small village they had retaken from the Russian army just days earlier, they found messages scrawled on walls and fences so dark and cryptic they pointed at least to poor morale, and possibly more serious mental stress. “Give us back our people killed by witches,” one note painted on a wall said. Another message read, “Whatever we do we won't leave this life alive.” Nearby there were more tangible signs of a Russian army under assault: a blown-up bridge on the edge of town, and the obliterated remains of an armoured personnel carrier littered the street, its chunks of metal scattered about and burned to a rich orange colour. The Russian military pulled out of Velyka Oleksandrivka, one of 29 towns and villages Ukraine has reclaimed in the southern Kherson region, last week; the few remaining older residents emerged from basements to greet Ukrainian soldiers. Ukraine may gain more advantage in the region if the strike on the bridge to Crimea on Saturday seriously disrupts the supply line to Russian forces. Their situation was already tenuous enough that Russian commanders had requested pulling back from the city of Kherson. US officials have said, but Russian President Vladimir Putin

UKRAINE MAY GAIN MORE ADVANTAGE IN THE REGION IF THE STRIKE ON THE BRIDGE TO CRIMEA SERIOUSLY DISRUPTS THE SUPPLY LINE TO RUSSIAN FORCES

denied it. On Monday, Russia launched a series of missile strikes across Ukraine in what appeared to be retaliatory attacks for the blast that damaged the bridge to Crimea. The Kherson region is one of two where Ukraine is pressing counteroffensives against the Russians. The other, moving more swiftly, is in the northeast and east. But there are distinct differences between the two theatres of war. In the north, the Russian retreat was unplanned and chaotic, as soldiers fled the Ukrainian advance, fleeing on stolen bicycles and leaving behind documents, laundry and, more chillingly, dead comrades on the side of the road. Ukraine's forces met little resistance. In the south, Russian soldiers are



A view shows an office building of a car retailer destroyed during a Russian missile attack in Zaporizhzhia. — Reuters

dug in more securely, and while there are signs of low morale, there are also indications of a determination to fight. In one spot in Velyka Oleksandrivka, Ukrainian troops discovered that Russian soldiers had fired anti-tank missiles, leaving a heap of about 20 empty launch tubes under a birch tree. And when retreats became the only option, they were apparently planned and much more orderly than in the north. “It's a different tempo here,” said Col Roman Kostenko, the commander of a unit fighting in the south and chair of the defence and intelligence committee in the Ukrainian parliament, or Rada. “The front did not crumble. They are retreating step-by-step into new defensive positions.” In a pale fall sunshine of late afternoon, Kostenko drove past several of these steps on a journey into the reclaimed areas to inspect what the Russians had left behind, bumping over dirt roads. Outside one abandoned village, the summer's harvest of grain burned in a warehouse, sending tendrils of smoke wafting over the road. Along the route, he zigzagged past acacia trees knocked onto the road by artillery explosions — and an unexploded Grad rocket, which looked like a fence post hammered into the asphalt near the road's centreline. Because the road bridge was blown up, Velyka Oleksandrivka is accessible now from the west only by foot, requiring a scramble over a damaged footbridge crossing the Inhulets River. The Russian army had used the village as a staging ground for tanks to reinforce a nearby town, Davydiv Brid. But when it fell to the Ukrainians last week, the rationale for remaining apparently disappeared. They drove the tanks out before the Ukrainian soldiers arrived on Tuesday. They fired the anti-tank missiles at Ukrainian troops across the river. The Ukrainians dismounted, fanned out and entered the village on foot. The Russian soldiers who remained retreated after a brief gunfight, soldiers in Kostenko's unit said. While it marked a retreat, it did not convey fear and desperation like in the north, he said. — New York Times

Need to nip the media ‘fakes’

Life today revolves around the Internet with a global system of social interactions including status updates, news feeds, comment chains, reviews, rankings and ratings. However, misinformation and hoaxes have gathered pace and negatively impacted people’s lives.

Fake news is not new to the world. Its history arguably dates back to the ancient Roman Empire during a civil war between Octavian, the adopted son of the great general Julius Caesar, and Mark Antony, a trusted commander of the general. To get public backing, Octavian launched a ‘fake news’ war against Antony claiming that he had an affair with Queen Cleopatra. Octavian also said Antony was unfit to hold office because he was always drunk. The campaign included “short, sharp slogans written upon coins in the style of archaic Tweets.”

Octavian eventually won the war and became the first Emperor of Rome. Although false news and misinformation have always been spread throughout history, the term “fake news” was first used in the 1890s to describe sensational information that is not well-researched but instead strived to be eye-catching to sell more newspapers.

Nevertheless, the phrase does not have a fixed definition and has been applied broadly to any type of false information. In recent years, especially after the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, there has been an explosion of fake news with the sharing of false stories and manipulated figures, widely on social media without being fact-checked. A report from the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism states, “Even before the coronavirus crisis hit, more than half of the global sample said they were concerned about what is true or false on the internet when it comes to news”.

Misinformation and fake news are now seeping into the mainstream



Samuel Kutty
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The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

IN RECENT YEARS, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE OUTBREAK OF COVID-19, THERE HAS BEEN AN EXPLOSION OF FAKE NEWS WITH THE SHARING OF FALSE STORIES AND MANIPULATED FIGURES, WIDELY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

media. In late 2016, Oxford Dictionaries selected “post-truth” as the word of the year, defining it as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotion and personal belief.”

In 2017, ‘fake news’ became Collins Dictionary’s word of the year and it’s remained in the headlines ever since.

In fact, a 2018 survey from the Pew Research Center indicated that 68 per cent of adults get their news from social media. This number is up from 49 per cent in 2012. Social media, like Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, YouTube, etc., have become one-stop shops for sharing content, interacting with others, and, you guessed it, getting the news. A new WHO review defines misinformation as false or inaccurate information deliberately intended to deceive, while disinformation also included misleading or biased information, manipulated narratives or facts, and propaganda.

“Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram are critical in disseminating the rapid and far-reaching spread of information,” the review explains. The repercussions of misinformation on social media include such negative effects as “an increase in erroneous interpretation of scientific knowledge, opinion polarisation, escalating fear and panic or decreased access to healthcare”.

However, the question still remains as to how much responsibility companies like Google, Facebook and Twitter should have when trying to target the spread of fake news. In 2016, Facebook launched its reporting and flagging tools after receiving an increasing amount of criticism regarding fake news being shared on its platform.

Of course, local, national and international efforts are required to counter the production of fake news and misinformation!

A BIRTHDAY SPECIAL



Fans wearing mask of Bollywood actor Amitabh Bachchan arrive outside his house on the occasion of his 80th birthday in Mumbai, India, on Tuesday. – AFP

The COP of no return...

Some fear that this year’s United Nations Climate Change Conference — to be held here on November 6-18 — will be an unintended casualty of the geopolitical tensions and economic challenges the world is facing. I believe the opposite: COP27 represents a unique and timely opportunity for the world to come together, recognise our common interests, and restore multilateral cooperation.

The human cost of climate change is making headlines almost daily. Global warming is no longer a distant or theoretical threat, but an immediate material one — a phenomenon that affects each of us, our families, and our neighbours. No society has been left unscathed by more frequent and intense droughts, wildfires, storms, and floods. Millions of people are already battling for survival.

And that is with temperatures having risen by just 1.1° Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels. As the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made clear, every additional tenth of a degree makes matters worse. Yet the changes needed to avert catastrophe are not being made, at least not fast enough, and the developing world is increasingly frustrated with rich countries’ refusal to pay their fair share for a crisis for which they bear overwhelming responsibility. But there is reason for hope. In my discussions with delegations around the world, I see their determination to make COP27 a success. Already, societies are starting to act.

Climate adaptation and new forms of collaboration are gaining traction,



SAMEH SHOUKRY

The writer is COP27 President-Designate and Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs

THE HUMAN COST OF CLIMATE CHANGE IS MAKING HEADLINES ALMOST DAILY. IN A WORLD OF RISING GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS, HOW CAN WE SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY

and investment in climate tech is booming. This includes new carbon-removal technologies, electric transport solutions, and renewable energies.

As a result, clean-energy prices continue to fall: almost two-thirds of renewable power added in G20 countries in 2021 cost less than the cheapest coal-fired options. My country, Egypt, is on track to produce 42 per cent of its energy from renewable resources by 2035. At the same time, civil society is devising mechanisms for holding companies and governments to account, guarding against greenwashing, and ensuring a just transition. There is a new focus on restoring nature. More ambition, scale, and speed are needed, and the rules remain unclear or contested. But a process is under way, and there

is no going back.

Even in countries that might seem to be wavering in their commitments — say, by investing in fossil-fuel infrastructure — officials insist that stopgap measures necessitated by immediate challenges should not be mistaken for long-term strategies. No one doubts the greener road ahead.

The question for those of us who will participate in COP27 is straightforward: How can we seize the opportunity the conference offers to create a sense of common endeavour, prevent backsliding, and inspire an approach based on science, trust, justice, and equity?

At its heart, climate action is a bargain. Developing countries have agreed in good faith to help tackle a crisis they did not

cause, on the understanding that support — particularly financial support — would be provided to complement their own efforts, which are often limited due to their scarce resources and competing development needs. Developed countries must uphold their end of that bargain, by supporting both mitigation and adaptation, thus fulfilling their envisaged responsibilities in the Paris agreement.

On the mitigation front, we must move from rhetoric to action in cutting our greenhouse-gas emissions and removing carbon from our atmosphere. All countries must embrace more ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions, and then translate those pledges into programmes. We must act now to ensure appropriate resources are

available to developing countries to unlock their potential.

At the same time, we must craft a transformative adaptation agenda, so that communities — especially in climate-vulnerable regions — can protect themselves from the effects that are already unavoidable. The bill for this agenda must be divided fairly.

To date, a disproportionate share of climate finance has been directed toward mitigation, leaving developing countries largely to fend for themselves in financing adaptation investment. But even the finance provided for mitigation is far from sufficient and has not been delivered with the appropriate instruments.

In 2009, developed countries pledged to provide \$100 billion annually for climate action in the developing world by 2020.

This is only a small portion of the more than \$5.8 trillion that is needed (up until 2030), according to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change’s Standing Committee on Finance. And yet this amount has not been delivered. We need an increase in the scale of finance pledges — especially for adaptation — at COP27, compared to those made at COP26 in Glasgow.

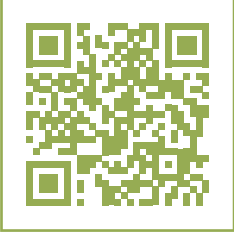
Developed countries must also honour the pledge they made last year to double adaptation finance by 2025, and they should provide the assurances needed for the Green Climate Fund’s new replenishment.



Global warming is no longer a distant or theoretical threat, but an immediate material one.

sport

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Ahli Sidab champions.

PICS BY ABDUL WAHID AL HAMADANI



Ahli Sidab's Pardeep Singh emerged top-scorer of the OHL.



Ibrahim al Hosni of Ahli Sidab was adjudged the best goalkeeper.



Seeb's Mohammed al Lawati claimed the best player award.

Ahli Sidab bag seventh OHL crown

S E E B F I N I S H R U N N E R S - U P , S O H A R T A K E T H I R D S P O T

ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, OCT 11

Oman hockey giants Ahli Sidab outclassed Seeb 4-1 to clinch their seventh Oman Hockey League (OHL) title at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Monday night. Shaikh Ayman bin Ahmed al Hosni, CEO of Oman Airports Company, was the chief guest for the final in presence of Oman Hockey Association (OHA) Chairman Dr Marwan bin Juma al Juma, former OHA chief Talib al Wahaibi, officials from OHA, Oman Olympic Committee and Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and representatives of the clubs. Sohar finished third in the league after edging Al Nasr in the third place play-off earlier. Sohar and Al Nasr were one-all at full time and in the ensuing penalty shoot-out the defending His Majesty Cup hockey champions prevailed 3-0. In the semifinals, Ahli Sidab thrashed Sohar 6-0 while Seeb edged Al Nasr 2-1 on Sunday. In the final, Ahli Sidab controlled the match from the start and

made some good moves towards the end of the first quarter. Seeb defended well and had to wait until the 11th minute to make their first organised attack. In the 13th minute, Mohammed bin Hassan al Balushi's firm shot just went wide as Ahli Sidab threatened the Seeb goal. The opening quarter ended goalless. Three minutes into the second quarter, Asaad bin Ali al Qasimi struck the opening goal for Ahli Sidab after a nice move through the right flank. Ahli Sidab pressed hard after the goal and their efforts bore fruit in the 25th minute when Akram al Muaini netted the second goal to make it 2-0 at the half-time. The third quarter also began with Ahli Sidab taking control to earn their first penalty corner of the match. Though Seeb defended the penalty corner well they had no answer for a brilliant strike from Salah al Saadi in the 28th minute as Ahli Sidab cushioned their lead to 3-0. The third goal awakened the Seeb unit and they earned back-to-back penalty corners in the 40th

minute. Muhammad Ateeq almost pulled one back for Seeb but with a dangerous move inside the D but the Ahli defence and goalkeeper thwarted the goal. In the next moment, Indian recruit Pratap Lakra found a way through Ahli defence to score the first goal for Seeb with a strong left-hand shot. Buoyed by the goal, Seeb put more pressure on the Ahli Sidab defence and goalkeeper but were unable to change the scoreline. In a counter-attack, Ahli Sidab threatened the Seeb defence but the goalkeeper stood firm.

his second goal in the process to confirm the title for Ahli Sidab.

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Kuldeep shines as India crush SA to clinch ODI series

NEW DELHI: Spinner Kuldeep Yadav's 4-18 shone during a superb Indian bowling attack that clinched their one-day series against South Africa with a crushing seven-wicket win on Tuesday.

The hosts skittled South Africa for 99 in 27.1 overs in the third-match decider, after electing to bowl on a pitch dampened by days of rain in New Delhi.

Shubman Gill made 49 as India chased down their target in 19.1 overs, winning the series 2-1 with a second-string side after Rohit Sharma and team departed for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia.

Kuldeep, a left-arm wrist spinner, came into the attack with South Africa five down and wiped off the tail, striking twice on successive balls before ending the innings with the wicket of Marco Jansen.

Once a regular in the Twenty20 side, Kuldeep was not picked for the World Cup starting October 16, but the 27-year-old said he was "not disappointed".

"I am not disappointed at all. I am concentrating on my process and looking to get better with every match," the man of the match told reporters. "The players who have been selected are the best and my best wishes are with them."

Spinner Washington Sundar, who bowled the first over and returned with two wickets, helped set up the second straight win for the hosts.



Sundar was handed the new ball and the lanky off-spinner struck in his second over to send back Quinton de Kock, caught at short third man for six.

Pace bowler Mohammed Siraj rattled the top order with the wickets of Janneman Malan, for 15, and Reeza Hendricks, for three, to put South Africa on the back foot.

'FATIGUED' SOUTH AFRICA

The Proteas slipped further to 43-4 after Aiden Markram's departure as the batsman fell caught behind off left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed for nine.

Heinrich Klaasen, who top-scored with 34, attempted to rebuild with David Miller, who was making his captaincy debut with regular skipper Temba Bavuma and Keshav Maharaj both unwell.

But Sundar bowled the left-handed Miller for seven and the rest of the batting quickly caved in. Shahbaz, who made his ODI debut in the previous match, bowled Klaasen before — in between the change of batsmen — a dog walked on the field, providing some light relief to the crowd.

It was South Africa's fourth-lowest total in 50-over matches, after their 69 all out in Sydney and then twice being bowled out for 83.

"In hindsight, the kind of schedule that we have had... we saw the benefits of

that as the Indian side, which we played against, were fresh. Our guys were maybe a little bit fatigued," South African coach Mark Boucher said.

"No excuses for that though. It's quite difficult because we don't have the depth that India has in their cricket. We are also under pressure to win every game in the one-dayers to qualify (directly) for the World Cup."

The defeat leaves South Africa on the brink of missing a direct qualification for next year's ODI World Cup in India.

They languish at 11th in the Super League table. Only the top eight teams (seven and hosts India) earn direct qualification to the 2023 tournament.

India had little trouble in reply, despite skipper Shikhar Dhawan getting run out on eight and Ishan Kishan falling for 10 off left-arm spinner Bjorn Fortuin.

Gill, who started the chase with a string of boundaries, kept up the attack with previous-match centurion Shreyas Iyer, who hit an unbeaten 28 and the winning six. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES

South Africa 99 all out, 27.1 overs (Heinrich Klaasen 34; Kuldeep Yadav 4-18) v India 105-3, 19.1 overs (Shubman Gill 49, Shreyas Iyer 28 not out; Bjorn Fortuin 1-20, Lungi Ngidi 1-21)
Result: India win by seven wickets
Series: India win 2-1

Pakistan get Shaheen Afridi fitness boost

KARACHI: Pakistan's spearhead Shaheen Shah Afridi will be fit and available for the Twenty20 World Cup in Australia, three months after injuring his right knee, the country's cricket board said on Tuesday.

The 22-year-old injured his knee during the first Test against Sri Lanka at Galle in July and was forced to miss the Asia Cup (August-September) and the following seven-match T20I home series against England.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Shaheen has completed his rehab in UK.



"Shaheen will join the national squad for the ICC men's T20 World Cup in Brisbane as per schedule on 15 October, after undergoing rehab," said a PCB release.

Pakistan had included Shaheen in the 15-man squad for the World Cup subject to fitness.

Pakistan play two warm-up games, first against England on October 17 and against Afghanistan two days later, both in Brisbane.

The lanky left-arm pacer will be available for the warm-up games, said the PCB.

"I am super excited at the prospect of rejoining the national side for the T20 World Cup and playing my part in our Australia campaign," Shaheen is quoted in the release. — AFP

Majan Electricity Company Launches "Turn it off" Campaign to Raise Awareness on Electricity Consumption

Majan Electricity Company has launched a campaign by the name "Turn it off" in efforts to raise awareness regarding conserving electricity which started in July. The purpose of this campaign is to build a society that is well aware of the importance of sustaining energy sources. The campaign has up to now showed high engagement among the customers and the general public. The campaign included a description on high quality electrical appliances and the role they play in the reduction of the amount of monthly electrical consumption which in turn reduces the monthly bill. The reason behind the campaign is to help people in the society conserve electricity by changing their behavior towards electricity consumption and involving them in the shared responsibility of reserving the national wealth. Another aim of this campaign is to help preserve the environment. This can be done by reducing the emission of toxic gases from power generating fuels and reducing the loads on power stations. This is to ensure continuity of electrical services without the risk of power outages during peak hours. This will also help reduce global warming. Additionally, the company sought to raise awareness on the tangible benefits of raising energy efficiency and present

the best methods for achieving energy efficiency and provide customers with the necessary knowledge and tools for energy consumption. The campaign specifically focused on sending messages to raise awareness on the excessive use of electricity in the form of a video and a series of tips that were posted on social media in September in order to consolidate the concept of sustainability in the environmental, social and economical fields. In addition, Majan Electricity Company offered several workshops to educate its employees on saving electricity and paper within their offices. Furthermore, Majan Electricity company in corporation with the Ministry of Education offered lectures to raise awareness about the conservation of electricity and electricity hazards in schools that are under the services of the company in order to educate future generations on the importance of electrical safety. It is worth noting that Majan Electricity Company is a member of Nama Group and is the electricity company licensed for distribution in Al Batinah North Governorate, Al Dahirah Governorate, Al Buraimi Governorate and Musandam Governorate. The campaign launched last July as part of a campaign the company runs on a yearly basis during summer.



Messi to headline Maradona 'match for peace' homage



ROME: Lionel Messi will headline a star-studded line-up for a 'match for peace' in tribute to fellow Argentina soccer great Diego Maradona on November 14 at the Olympic Stadium in Rome, organisers announced on Monday.

In addition to Messi, former Brazilian star Ronaldinho, Italian World Cup winner Gianluigi Buffon and Roma's Portuguese coach Jose Mourinho confirmed their presence in a video published by the WEPLAYFORPEACE platform for the third edition of the "match for peace" organised by a Foundation created by Pope Francis.

The video was uploaded on October 10, to signify 10/10, in tribute to the number 10 jersey worn by Maradona during his career. His nickname was 'el ultimo Diez' (the last 10). — AFP



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New Zealand's Finn Allen plays a shot against Pakistan during the Twenty20 tri-series at Hagley Oval in Christchurch. – AFP

Allen in sixer-mode as Kiwis power past Pakistan in tri-series

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand: Finn Allen showed his form ahead of the Twenty20 World Cup by top-scoring for New Zealand with a disciplined batting display in their nine-wicket romp over Pakistan in Christchurch on Tuesday in the tri-series.

Allen blasted six sixes in his 62 off 42 balls as the Black Caps chased down their target of 131 with ease at Hagley Oval.

The victory leaves the hosts and Pakistan each with two wins and one defeat before the Black Caps next face Bangladesh on Wednesday, also in Christchurch.

The three nations are using the week-long tournament to fine tune for the T20 World Cup in

Australia which begins later this month.

An improved bowling performance saw Pakistan restricted to 130 for seven in their 20 overs before Allen and Devon Conway's rapid opening partnership of 117 set up a comfortable victory.

After Allen was stumped by Mohammad Rizwan, captain Kane Williamson saw New Zealand home with three overs and five balls to spare.

"It was an improvement again from the last game," said Williamson, referring to New Zealand's eight-wicket win over Bangladesh on Sunday.

"The condition weren't easy, but

we were nice and clinical with the ball.

"Finn really broke the back of the chase by being super aggressive and Devon complemented him nicely."

Following his unbeaten 70 against Bangladesh, Conway struck five fours in compiling 49 not out off 46 balls.

"We need to discuss our mistakes ahead of the next match," said Pakistan captain Babar Azam, whose side play Bangladesh on Thursday.

"We had a bad day, we just weren't up to the mark with our batting."

New Zealand bowler Michael Bracewell was named man-of-

the-match after removing prolific opening pair Rizwan, for 16, and captain Babar Azam, for 21, in his superb two for 11 from four overs.

"I was a bit fortunate in that first over with a couple of short, wide ones which went straight to fielders," said Bracewell.

"It was pretty nerve-wracking, bowling to some world-class players, but I was happy with the way it came out."

Ifthikhar Ahmed top scored for Pakistan with 27, including three fours.

Tim Southee removed Ifthikhar and Mohammad Nawaz with the first two deliveries of the final over, but Mohammad Wasim survived the hat-trick ball. — AFP

Griezmann pays homage to fans after joining Atletico

MADRID: Antoine Griezmann on Monday welcomed the confirmation that his loan from Barcelona had become a permanent move as he signed a contract with Atletico Madrid until 2026.

The striker has been back at the Metropolitano since arriving on loan in August 2021 after a difficult spell at Camp Nou, following his 120 million euro (116.5 million dollar) move from Atletico in 2019.

"I'm very happy because it's what I wanted since I returned," Griezmann said in a video published by Atletico on their social networks.

"To stay at Atletico, enjoy being at the club, with the coach, my team-mates, the stadium, the fans, I did everything possible to stay here."

"When I saw there was the chance to stay for many years, I spoke with the club. I knew what they wanted from me, I didn't think much. I didn't care what I had to do. The one thing I wanted was to stay here."

Reports in Spain say the 31-year-old agreed to reduce the salary he was earning at Barcelona in order to make his stay permanent.

"I will give everything for my club, the trust of the coach, the fans, Atletico," continued Griezmann. "I'll give everything for the badge. I could miss chances, or passes, but I will give

everything until the last second, as much as I can. I want that to be seen and felt.

"The fans make the effort of having their season ticket, of coming, of supporting us from the stands. This is my homage to the fans."

KEY FIGURE

The 2018 World Cup winner was a key figure in coach Diego Simeone's plans last season but has largely been reduced to substitute appearances in the current campaign as Atletico tried to escape paying a reported 40 million euro purchase fee if he played over a certain number of games. With the World Cup approaching and Griezmann keen to feature more, Atletico and Barcelona negotiated a new deal, with Barcelona president Joan Laporta confirming the fee during the club's members assembly on Sunday.

"It is for 20 million euros plus four more in variables," said Laporta.

"There is another clause in the deal to sell the player, which is that if Atletico decide to sell him in the future they will have to pay us the difference that remains, up to the value of the 40 million which was agreed before."

Atletico did not disclose the value of the new agreement. Griezmann has played 303 times for the club, scoring 144 goals, across his two stints in the capital. — AFP



Atletico Madrid's French forward Antoine Griezmann smiles during a training session at the club's training ground in Majadahonda. – AFP



300 participants at Oman Sailing Festival 2022 in Suhar

MUSCAT: The first leg of the Oman Sailing Festival wrapped up in Suhar this weekend with more than 268 visitors learning to try sailing by taking part in free Try Sailing, Try Windsurfing and Try Kitesurfing sessions under the supervision of professional instructors from Oman Sail over the weekend, October 6-8, 2022.

Held at the Silver Jubilee Garden, 50 volunteers also joined Oman Sail representatives in removing litter from the beach and from the sea, helping to preserve the natural environment for future generations and native marine life.

There was also an SME activation featuring 13 local businesses and craftspeople showcasing local products ranging from food, clothing and household items to souvenirs and traditional art.

Musab al Balushi, Oman Sailing



Festival Project Manager, said, "This was a great start to the Oman Sailing Festival 2022. We were very impressed with how many people took the opportunity to learn how to sail, windsurf and kitesurf. Oman has a long and storied maritime heritage, and these sessions help to introduce the next

generation to the sport, allowing them to take on a new challenge or discover a new hobby.

"The Oman Sailing Festival will travel the length and breadth of the country to share the potential of sailing, windsurfing and kitesurfing, and have a positive impact on the local environment

by raising awareness of the need to care for the beaches and native wildlife our beautiful country is blessed with," he added.

The next stop will be Musannah from October 12-14 as part of the Arab Sailing Championships taking place at the same time at the Barceló Mussanah Resort with sessions in the RS Venture adaptable dinghy on offer. From there, the festival moves to Al Mouj Muscat on October 17 to celebrate Omani Women's Day, and Sur Al Hadeed in Seeb from October 20-22.

The Oman Sailing Festival is proudly supported by the Barceló Resort Mussanah, Oman Air, National University of Science and (International Maritime College), National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), and environmental partner the Environment Society of Oman

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Omani, Saudi firms sign pacts to invest in ICT sector

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 11

Several agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed at the headquarters of ITHCA Group in Knowledge Oasis – Muscat yesterday between Omani and Saudi firms to invest in the telecommunications and information technology (ITC) sector within the framework of the visit of the Saudi delegation headed by Eng Abdullah bin Amer al Sawaha, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, in the presence of HH Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd al Said, Chairman of the Board of Directors of ITHCA Group.

The first agreement was signed between Oman's ITHCA Group and Saudi Arabia's digital solutions firm Thiqa to enhance cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of implementing the product



conformity, standardisation and legal calibration system.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was also signed between Thiqa and Rihl with the aim of cooperating between the parties to develop and implement joint works in electronic services and information technology, in order

to invest the ICV to achieve the general interests of the target parties. The agreement was signed by Ayman bin Abdullah al Fallaj, CEO of Thiqa and Azzan bin Qais al Kindi, CEO and co-founder of Rihl. A memorandum of understanding was signed between an Omani firm TMDone and the Saudi firm Jahez Intl Co to study

and evaluate ways of cooperation in the areas of delivery services. The memorandum was signed by Ghasab bin Salman al Mandeel, CEO of Jahez and Yasser bin Saeed al Barami, CEO of TMDone.

Eng Said bin Abdullah al Mandhari, CEO of ITHCA Group, said that this joint cooperation with the brothers in the Kingdom

THE JOINT COOPERATION COMES WITH THE AIM OF EXPANDING IN ONE OF THE LARGEST REGIONAL MARKETS IN THE FIELD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SYSTEM, POINTING TO THE IMPORTANCE OF EXPANSION IN THE FIELD OF CLOUD TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS, ENHANCING GULF COOPERATION AND EXCHANGING EXPERIENCES AND EXPERTISE.

Abdullah al Fallaj, CEO of Thiqa, said this cooperation is a unique opportunity for the company to expand at the level of the Arabian Gulf as a starting point that paves the way for technical linkage at the international level, with the support of the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organisation and the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Al Fallaj stressed that the desire of the two parties for joint cooperation has boosted the move towards work in the field of product conformity to reach conformity assessment bodies around the world, with the aim of raising the level of safe products, reducing time and speeding up procedures for clearing products from the Sultanate of Oman to cooperation with the GCC countries. Cooperation for the Arab Gulf states with the aim of achieving electronic integration and consolidating permanent Gulf cooperation in the growth of digital business services.

Fiscal reform and debt sustainability to underpin Oman's macroeconomic policy: MoF

PRUDENT PLANNING: 'It is important to point out that the fiscal adjustments from expenditure efficiencies and rationalisations includes wage bill restraint, subsidy reform, and budget control': Official

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 11

Having garnered multiple outlook upgrades from international ratings agencies, as well as upbeat assessments from multilateral institutions, the Sultanate of Oman says it will continue to be guided by fiscal policies that have successfully helped pivot the country on the path to economic recovery. That commitment was reaffirmed by a key executive of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) who noted that the Omani government will continue to stay the course in maintaining fiscal discipline and public finance reform as stipulated in its Medium Term Fiscal Plan.

The Plan enshrines, among other things, a primary goal to achieve a balanced budget by 2025. "In the coming years, we remain firmly committed to our fiscal consolidation and reform strategies and the progress made on the global economic recovery," said Shaima al Habsi, Investor Relations & Credit Ratings

Agencies – Debt Management Office, Ministry of Finance. "Oman's own national vaccination progress and reopening of the country gives us the confidence in both our medium and long term growth prospects. Our vision for the upcoming years is supported by our enhanced governance and commitment to transparency.

We are committed to building upon fiscal reforms achieved to reducing our debt and to ensuring a stable and predictable macroeconomic environment."

Speaking at an investor roadshow held in Muscat recently, Shaima said a multi-pronged reform agenda being implemented by the government is underpinned by a commitment to fiscal sustainability and prudent debt management, a comprehensive plan to diversify the economy, a robust external position, and a stable political environment.

These objectives, she said, are supported by, among other factors, a favourable geographic location and higher oil prices – "pillars of strength" that have been positively recognised by international credit rating agencies in recent months.

"These (outlook) statements recognise Oman's reform momentum towards expectations for a surplus and an improved macroeconomic backdrop," said Shaima. "Fitch recently upgraded Oman's credit rating to BB from BB- - the first upgrade since 2017,



A multi-pronged reform agenda being implemented by the government is underpinned by a commitment to fiscal sustainability and prudent debt management, a comprehensive plan to diversify the economy, a robust external position, and a stable political environment.

SHAIMA AL HABSI
Investor Relations & Credit Ratings
Agencies – Debt Management
Office, Ministry of Finance

reflecting significant improvements in Oman's fiscal metrics, a decrease in external financing pressures and ongoing efforts to public finance reforms," she said.

Just earlier, S&P upgraded Oman's ratings to BB- from B+ citing higher oil prices, rising

hydrocarbon production and implementation of a reform programme as factors that are improving Oman's fiscal and external trajectory. These updated rating opinions validate the seriousness of the reform programme underway and the results already achieved, the official noted.

The primary objective of Oman's fiscal consolidation measures, Shaima pointed out, is to achieve an overall primary balance by 2025 and steer general government debt on a steady downward path.

"It is important to point out that the fiscal adjustments from expenditure efficiencies and rationalisations includes wage bill restraint, subsidy reform, and budget control," she stressed.

Commenting on revenue growth, the official referred to the government's continued efforts to boost non-oil earnings. "We now have a meaningful contribution from VAT collections and are looking at options for increasing the effectiveness of tax collection.

While oil revenues have been the main driver of Oman's fiscal revenue for years, it has been increasingly oriented towards diversifying its sources of revenue and boosting non-oil revenues. This will be supported by the government's efforts to diversify the economy, which we believe will lead to an increase in tax and fees collection."

With regard to fiscal discipline, Shaima cited the example of the public wage bill, which has been contained, resulting in a lower allocation for this item in the 2022 budget than it was in 2015.

Reforms targeting electricity and water subsidies will proceed across a 10-year horizon, which the official described as a "the right balance between responding to global inflationary pressures with the ultimate objective of better targeted social spending".

Reviewing Oman's growth prospects, the official said that Oman's suggestion pandemic mitigation strategy has enabled economic activity to return to near full normality.

Total expenditures, on the other hand, increased by around 9 per cent year on year as of June-end 2022, according to Shaima. Civil expenditures increased by around 31 per cent, largely on the back of an increase in subsidies and transfers and upstream gas operations.

Meanwhile, civil ministries remain somewhat stable year on year owing to expenditure control efforts as per the government's reform programme. In comparison, total revenues increased by around 54 per cent by the end of June 2022, as compared to the previous year with increases seen in each of the line items, but largely supported by an increase in oil and gas revenues, she added.

OETC completes construction of 220kV power plant in Ibri



JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) – a member of Nama Group – announces the completion of the construction of a solar energy transmission station in the Wilayat of Ibri.

The solar energy transmission station, a 220kv grid station with a construction cost of about RO 7.5 million, is the first grid station connected to solar power plant in Ibri.

The project is in line with Oman Vision 2040 which focuses on moving towards renewable energy sources and contributing to the reduction of carbon emissions.

The grid is characterised by the absence of transformers comparing to the rest of the grid station where the produced energy is transferred to the main network through ground cables with the 220 kv feeding the GIS and it transfers energy to the main network of the company by overhead lines.

NBO
holds HSE
awareness
session



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) conducted a Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) awareness session at its head office for all staff. Led by medical professionals from NMC Hospital, the session aimed to educate employees on essential lifesaving techniques and medical treatments that can be performed in unexpected situations in the workplace and equip them with the knowledge to identify, anticipate and respond in an emergency.

The interactive session showed how to perform CPR and gave NBO employees the chance to practice, as well as how to react in cases of choking, head injuries, ingestion of hazardous material and even a fire.

Building the capacity of NBO employees will empower them to take the lead in emergencies, allowing them to create, follow and implement HSE standards, as well as assist with the review of common workplace incidents to ensure workplace safety becomes the responsibility of everyone in the organisation.

Lulu launches ‘Discover America 2022’

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket launched on October 11 its seventh edition of the ‘Discover America’ campaign, an annual event that enables shoppers to explore the wide range of American products available in Oman. At selected Lulu outlets in Oman from October 11 to 17, Lulu will showcase a wide range of products specially flown in from the United States for Lulu shoppers.

The promotion includes food as well as health and beauty products from the United States, enabling Lulu shoppers to experience the quality and value of American products at attractive prices.

US Ambassador to Oman, Leslie M Tsou, inaugurated the event at Lulu Hypermarket, Bausher, on October 11 in the presence of Lulu management, staff members and customers.

Speaking on the promotion, Ambassador Tsou said, “Discover America celebrates the strong commercial partnership between Oman and the United States. This



event is a testament to the growing demand for US products among Omani shoppers. We thank Lulu for our seventh year of partnership in promoting Discover America.”

From fresh and frozen foods to confectionery, baked goods and

organic grocery products, Lulu has stacked its shelves with the best US brands for the promotion, many of which are on special offer. Customers can sample some of the best American delicacies on sale at special counters throughout the

store.

The promotion will feature popular brands like Bob’s Red Mill, Del Monte, Betty Crocker, Kellogg’s, McCain, Jell-O, Folgers, Smucker’s, Quaker, Gatorade, Pringles, Sunsweet, Hunt’s,

M&M, Hershey’s, Kraft, Dole, Heinz, Jif, and many more. Commenting on the promotion, Shabeer K A, Regional Director of Lulu Oman, said, “The Discover America promotion is an exceptional opportunity for customers to explore and experiment with the culinary delights and lifestyles of the United States.

“Our customers have always shown their loyalty and support towards making all our seasonal promotions and campaigns successful. They play a pivotal role in our progress, and we would like to thank them for their continued patronage and trust in us.”

A symbol of quality and trust, Lulu has become a part of everyday life for shoppers in Oman. Lulu’s unrelenting commitment towards customer satisfaction has been the reason behind its success. With 235 outlets across the world, Lulu has become the preferred shopping destination for customers seeking a whole new shopping experience.

Chevrolet Tahoe Z71 epitomises power, performance and technology

MUSCAT: The wraps have finally come off the all-new Chevrolet Tahoe Z71 – a favourite of full-size SUV lovers with a penchant for muscular styling, brute strength and unmatched off-road capabilities – with or without a heavy load in tow.

As with its siblings across the Chevrolet line-up, the all-new Z71, an adventure-packed standalone trim from the legendary Tahoe line-up, benefits from a styling reboot, best-in-class interior, superior performance and advanced technology.

It has been engineered and equipped to tackle some of the Middle East’s most rugged outdoors, including its towering sand-dunes, rock-strewn water channels and expansive gravel plains. With a best-in-class



approach angle of up to 34.0 degrees, the Z71 is capable of handling all kinds of natural landscapes.

Powering the all-new Z71 is a 5.3L V8 engine mated to an advanced 10-speed automatic transmission. Delivering a

substantial 355 horsepower and 519 Nm of torque, it packs enough power to tow heavy loads of up to 3,800 kg with hardly a murmur.

Helping balance efficiency with performance is the Tahoe’s Dynamic Fuel Management system that optimises engine

efficiency across a broad range of driving conditions.

An attention-grabber in its own right, the all-new Tahoe Z71 encapsulates the ‘bigger, bolder, better’ signature styling of the legendary Chevrolet brand. The interior is equally striking. Every seat is designed for maximum comfort amid an exceptionally spacious cabin. Its refreshed design allows for 66 per cent more cargo space behind the third row, adding to its appeal as the most practical full-size SUV in the segment.

Advanced technology is an overarching feature of the Tahoe Z71, as exemplified by its class-leading 360 camera with nine views, including HD Surround Vision and Rear Camera Mirror. Cutting-edge safety features

abound as well, notably the Chevy Safety Assist which encompasses active safety features such as Lane Keep Assist with Lane Departure Warning, Automatic Emergency Braking, Front Pedestrian Braking, Forward Collision Alert, Following Distance Indicator and IntelliBeam auto high beams.

A key feature of the Z71 is the Electronic Limited Slip Differential (eLSD) system, which draws on sports car DNA to deliver improved driving performance. If wheel slip is detected on either side of the vehicle, eLSD reacts instantly to shift power to the wheel with better traction. That additional traction can contribute to increased driver confidence in difficult types of terrain and weather conditions.

Anil Kapoor to inaugurate Malabar Gold & Diamonds renovated Oman Avenues Mall showroom

MUSCAT: With an impressive network of over 285 outlets spread across 10 countries, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally, is all set for the grand relaunch of its renovated and restyled showroom in Oman Avenues Mall, Bausher. The showroom will be inaugurated by popular Indian film actor Anil Kapoor on Friday, October 14, at 6.30 pm.

The revamped showroom will showcase a wide variety of jewellery collections across Malabar Gold & Diamonds’ various sub brands such as Mine, Era, Viraaaz, Ethnix and Precia. Comprising of traditional jewellery, modern jewellery, daily wear jewellery and much more, the design in gold, diamond and precious gems have been curated from over 20 countries.

“It gives us great joy to present the renovated showroom at Oman Avenues Mall to our customers.



We have made every effort to turn the showroom into a place for an exceptional shopping experience for our customers in Oman, who have accepted Malabar Gold & Diamonds with open arms. Our 18 showrooms in the Sultanate of Oman have turned our brand

into one of the largest jewellery retailers in the country,” said Najeeb K, Regional Head, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, Oman.

With the inaugural offers that Malabar Gold & Diamonds have offered, customers can get assured gold coins on gold and diamond jewellery purchase.

For every diamond or precious gem jewellery purchase worth RO 500, customer will get 1 gramme gold coin and for diamond and precious gem jewellery purchase worth RO 300, they will be eligible for ½ g gold coin. The offer will be valid until October 23.

Embracing the spirit of the season, the Festive jewellery collection that the brand has unveiled puts forward an exquisite collection of gold and diamond jewellery designed to enthrall jewellery lovers.

The special design has been made available across a wide range of sub-brands such as Mine,

Era, Precia, Viraaaz, Ethnix and Divine, comprising of 22k gold, diamonds and precious gem jewellery. Elegant designs crafted in contemporary fashion have also been introduced in the 18K gold category.

With the tastes and preferences of the local Omani population in mind, the brand has launched ‘Brides of Oman’ campaign, showcasing both traditional bridal jewellery in 21K gold as well as contemporary designs in diamond jewellery.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also launched the pay 10 per cent advance campaign, where customers can block the gold rate by paying 10 per cent of the total amount as an advance, valid until October 23. At the time of purchase, if the gold rate increases, customers can purchase at the booked rate and in case it reduces, customers can purchase for the lower gold rate.

BankDhofar supports Omani Association for the Hearing Impaired

MUSCAT: Reaffirming its keenness to intensify its social involvement and community outreach, BankDhofar recently supported Omani Association for the Hearing Impaired by providing hearing aid devices. Being an integral part of society, BankDhofar’s contribution to the association will contribute to making a positive impact on the lives of this vital segment of society.

Commenting on the support, Aziz bin Sulaiman al Harrasi, Head of Marketing and Corporate Communications at BankDhofar, said: “At BankDhofar, we are always keen to serve the community through various CSR initiatives. Our collaboration with the Omani Association for the Hearing Impaired comes within our intentions to make a positive change in the lives of people with hearing impairment. We are glad for this cooperation and look forward to further meaningful initiatives.”

Corporate Social Respon-



sibility is an essential pillar of BankDhofar’s operations; environment element, community development and social engagement have always been among the priorities and interests of the Bank. BankDhofar continues to deliver on its commitment by innovating strategic sustainable CSR programmes, initiatives, activities and potential investment opportunities; ensuring lasting positive benefits aimed at strengthening ties with the local community.

The Bank provides support to a number of charitable organisations and social activities and initiatives.

US high-tech chip curb risks lower-tech blowback

Washington's sweeping technology curbs on China today will have ripple effects across global supply chains tomorrow. The export controls unveiled by the US Department of Commerce on Friday will effectively block the People's Republic from developing its own advanced semiconductors needed for supercomputers and the like.

But the ban may prompt Chinese chipmakers to hasten their progress in the commoditised parts of the market, embedding firms like Semiconductor Manufacturing International in global supply chains.

The measures mark a huge escalation in President Joe Biden's efforts to hobble Beijing's chip advances.

Essentially, any company that uses American equipment will be restricted from selling relatively high-tech semiconductors or tools to Chinese firms.

And because nearly every factory relies on crucial hardware and software from US suppliers like

But the ban may prompt chipmakers to hasten their progress in the commoditised parts of the market, embedding firms like Semiconductor Manufacturing International in global supply chains.

Lam Research and Applied Materials, the latest move potentially sets back Chinese chipmakers by years, if not decades.

Yet this need not be the end of the \$23 billion SMIC and its compatriots. In fact, most are quietly thriving by churning out low-tech chips that are seen as less politically sensitive.

Notably, while the new US rules target specific types of leading-edge memory and logic components to be restricted, so-called trailing-edge products, such as analog or discrete semiconductors commonly used in computers, gadgets and cars, fall under a grey area. They may not be as lucrative as processors or memory units, but those chips are still a huge market to play for. Analog sales alone jumped by more than a third last year, to \$74 billion, outpacing growth for logic and memory, according to the Semiconductor Industry Association. And even for lower-tech processors, demand is still strong in China. First-half revenue at SMIC jumped 53 per cent year-on-year to \$3.7 billion, despite the company being put on Washington's so-called Entity List in 2020. — Reuters



NEW ZEALAND TAXES GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS FROM FARM ANIMALS

A farmer feeds calves on a dairy farm near Cambridge in New Zealand's Waikato region. New Zealand on Tuesday unveiled plans to tax the greenhouse gas emissions from farm animals, in a controversial proposal designed to tackle climate change. The scheme would see farmers pay for gas emissions from their animals, such as methane gas from cows, and nitrous oxide in the urine of livestock.

— AFP

Lack of diversity in private equity sector



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

ANALYSIS OF MORE THAN 1,000 PRIVATE EQUITY AND VENTURE CAPITAL FIRMS ACROSS CONTINENTAL EUROPE HAS FOUND THAT ONLY 20 PER CENT OF INVESTMENT PROFESSIONALS ARE WOMEN.

At a time when there is an increased push towards diversity in all sectors of industry, a new report shows private equity's lack of gender diversity, a clear dearth of women in senior investment roles and an increase of all-male investment teams.

Analysis of more than 1,000 private equity and venture capital firms across continental Europe has found that only 20 per cent of investment professionals are women, with the figure falling to 10 per cent at the senior level.

At a senior level, all countries apart from Ireland had representation at or below 15 per cent, according to the findings shared with Private Equity News by Level 20, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving diversity in private equity.

Germany had the lowest proportion of women in senior investment roles at 4 per cent. Spain and France were above the average with 13 per cent and 15 per cent respectively. The UK is in the middle with 10 per cent representation, according to a report.

Level 20 warned that all-male firms are a challenge for the sector in Europe, with 38 per cent of firms on average having all-male investment teams.

In Denmark and the Netherlands, 65 per

cent and 58 per cent of investment teams respectively are all men. Only France has below 20 per cent all-male investment teams, at 18 per cent.

Signs of progress appeared at the junior level, where women represent 34 per cent of investment professionals, indicating that diversity levels could rise in the future if the sector continues to take steps to encourage the retention and promotion of women in investment teams.

Junior female representation was highest in Sweden and Norway at 43 per cent, while the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and Switzerland all came in lowest with less than 30 per cent representation.

"The important number for me is the number of junior investment professionals. If that number is low, then it's difficult to fix the other numbers. In some territories where they haven't got the attraction right, if (the junior level representation) is under 30 per cent, we need to help them to make private equity an attractive career for different people," said Pam Jackson, Level 20's chief executive.

She added: "The issue is looking at what this younger generation wants, and making your firm inclusive and culturally attractive to a very different group of people to the ones who set up private equity firms in the 1980s."

The analysis spans 13 European countries and includes data from more than one thousand private equity and VC firms employing more than 9,000 investment professionals in 2022, rising to 14,000 when combined with UK data that was collected in 2021.

VC firms have a higher proportion of female investment professionals than PE firms (22 per cent and 18 per cent, respectively), except in Finland (15 per cent and 21 per cent respectively).

Having established a baseline for gender diversity across Europe, Level 20 said that it plans to use it to identify areas where debate, discussion and potentially intervention might assist in achieving improved gender diversity across the industry.

"We all know PE likes a bit of benchmarking. I'm hoping that GPs (general partners) will pick it up and ask where they fit and how they are doing. The other debate is how LPs (limited partners) pick it up, and ask how they measure people against this," said Jackson.

She added: "We don't want people bashing firms, especially as they often have very slow turnover of staff. But it is just having a dialogue about why a firm is where it is, and if it's behind the curve, what are it's plans to attract, retain and promote."

Why de-globalisation makes US inflation worse



DAMBISA MOYO

The writer, an international economist, is the author of four New York Times bestselling books, including "Edge of Chaos: Why Democracy Is Failing to Deliver Economic Growth, and How to Fix It" (Basic Books, 2018).

It is now widely accepted that de-globalisation, the retrenchment of global trade, unwinding of capital flows, new barriers to migration, and declining influence of multilateral institutions, is well underway.

But policymakers have yet to acknowledge its contribution to global inflation. To rein in surging price growth, the Federal Reserve (Fed) and other central banks must adjust to the challenges of a rapidly de-globalising world.

Globalisation acted as a deflationary force by reducing labour and production costs. Likewise, the main features of de-globalisation, higher tariffs and other trade barriers, together with a shift from global to regional trade flows, are known drivers of inflation.

It is no surprise, then, that core goods inflation in the United States has increased sharply, from less than 2 per cent at the start of 2021 to 6 per cent in mid-2022.

I recently argued that US inflation is headed for a decline because the American economy is uniquely equipped to mitigate the impact of surging prices. But deglobalisation will likely contribute to inflationary pressures by increasing companies' operating costs, thereby keeping US inflation higher than the 1-2 per cent range recorded over most of the past decade and hovering near the Fed's 2 per cent target rate.

For decades, US corporations have benefited tremendously from globalisation's deflationary effects. Now, however, ongoing supply-chain constraints related to China's strict zero-Covid policy and Russia's war in Ukraine are expected to continue to raise the prices of food, fuel, and manufactured goods over the short and medium term.

More broadly, heightened geopolitical tensions threaten to make higher input costs a fixture of a de-globalising world. While the

cross-border movement of goods, capital, and people characterised the globalised economy of the past three decades, the growing Sino-American rivalry could be a harbinger of an era marked by a widening ideological divide and a balkanised global economy.

Barriers to migration would make it harder for US companies to attract top global talent and drive up labour costs. As interest rates rise and supply chains remain vulnerable, US companies are favouring resilience over low production costs, leading to massive capital repatriation.

According to the Yale School of Management's tracker, more than 1,000 companies, many of them American, have voluntarily curtailed their Russian operations beyond what international sanctions require.

In a de-globalising economy, more investment capital would flow back to the US, leading to a higher volume of dollars chasing US assets and putting more

upward pressure on prices.

Finally, the notable absence of monetary-policy coordination, particularly among developed economies, may exacerbate global price increases. Unlike the coordinated monetary response to the 2008 global financial crisis, policymakers in the world's major economies seem to believe that every country must fend for itself in the fight against today's inflationary surge.

While G-7 leaders have pledged to monitor global inflation, they have not announced measures to combat soaring prices in a coordinated manner. On the contrary, the one recent coordinated policy action G-7 countries undertook, sanctions against Russia, has arguably worsened inflationary pressures, by increasing supply-chain interruptions and spurring a spike in fuel prices.

The absence of global cooperation hurts many of the world's most vulnerable

countries the most. When major central banks hike interest rates, they export inflation to smaller countries.

Aggressive monetary tightening in the US has already led the dollar to rise against the pound, breach parity with the euro, and reach a 20-year high against the yen, propelling higher import-led inflation in countries whose currencies have weakened.

Tackling inflation in the US and globally requires a coordinated multilateral response. At a minimum, such a response would benefit the US by reducing its long-term exposure to rising import costs. Conversely, diplomatic fragmentation, a defining characteristic of our current age of de-globalisation, increases the likelihood of tit-for-tat measures, which have led to the erection of multiple trade barriers in recent years, most notably between the US and China and between the United Kingdom and Europe.

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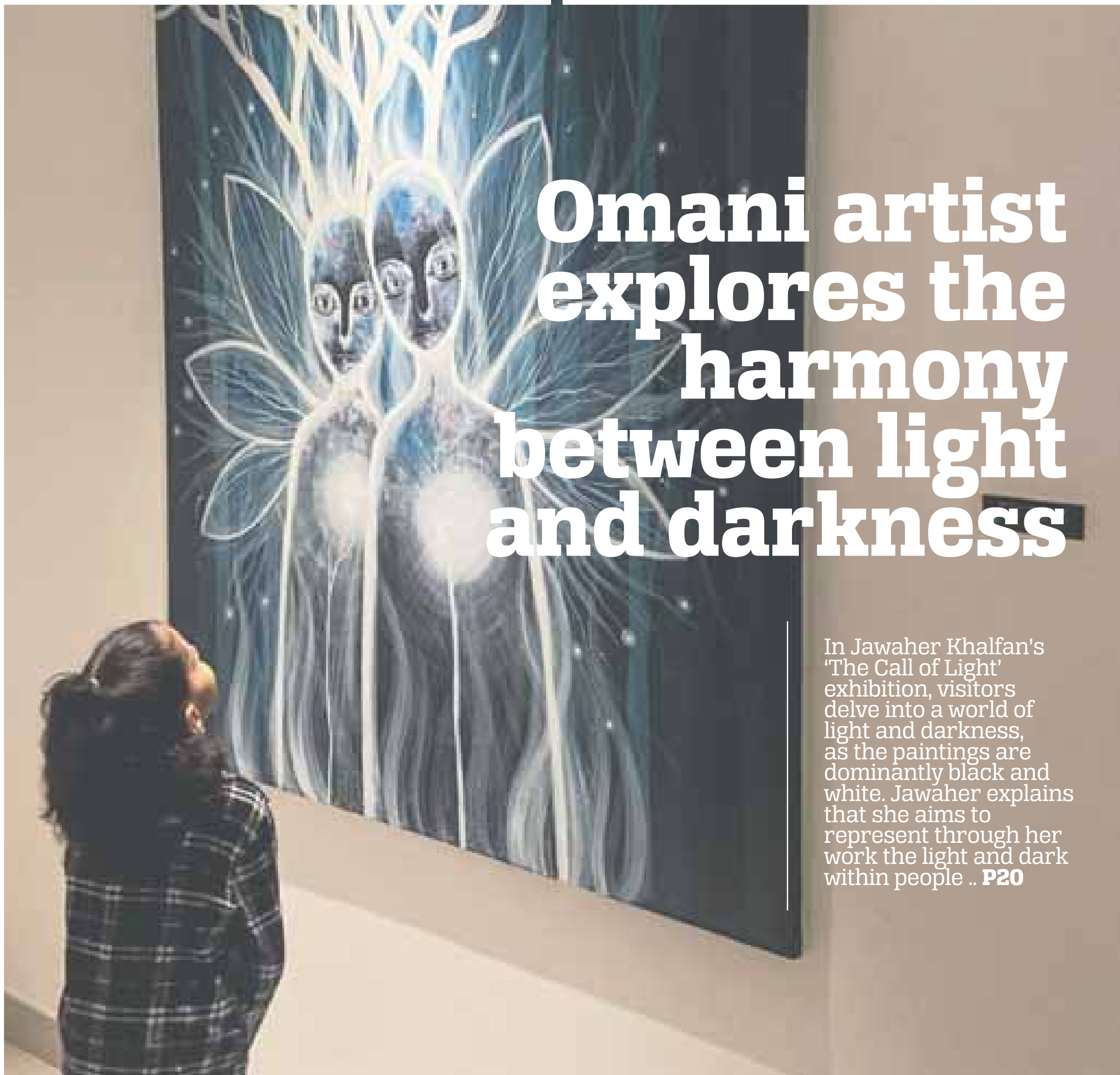
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Omani artist explores the harmony between light and darkness

In Jawaher Khalfan's 'The Call of Light' exhibition, visitors delve into a world of light and darkness, as the paintings are dominantly black and white. Jawaher explains that she aims to represent through her work the light and dark within people .. **P20**

Kadim Alsahir to perform for a three-night concert at ROHM



THE ROYAL OPERA House Muscat is delighted to present three special nights in concert with the much-loved star Kadim Al Sahir.

Iraqi-born Kadim Al Sahir has established himself as the biggest singer in the Middle East, having sold more than 30 million albums since the start of his career. Ranging from big romantic ballads to more political work, from pop to Arab classical, he's covered the spectrum of music with the kind of success not seen since the heyday of Umm Kalthum.

After an unconventional start, he was accepted into the Baghdad Music Academy at the age of 21. His first hit was Ladghat El Hayya (The Snake Bite), which was broadcast on Iraqi television in 1987. He began giving concerts all over the Gulf and recording for labels in Kuwait. His concert will feature a selection of songs

including Obart Al Shat (I Crossed the Ocean), La Ya Sadiki (No, My Friend), and hits from his collaboration with the poet Nizar Qabbani.

Al Sahir continues to release albums and tour, having become the biggest name in Middle Eastern music. His ballads have grown bigger and more romantic, but he also writes classically influenced works. He won a Unicef award for his song Tathakkar, which he performed in the US for Congress and the United Nations. The following year, he recorded a tribute to the Pope with the Italian Symphony Orchestra.

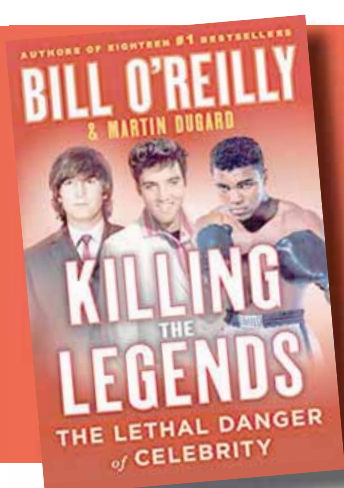
The performance will take place at the Royal Opera House Muscat over three nights on October 13, 14 & 15, at 7 pm. For details on events are taking place at the opera house, visit the ROHM box office, website or app.

READ

KILLING THE LEGENDS

BY BILL O'REILLY
AND MARTIN DUGARD

The conservative commentator's Killing series profiles Elvis Presley, John Lennon and Muhammad Ali.



FASHION TREND

Models present creations by Italy's iconic fashion house Stefano Ricci at the temple of the Ancient Egyptian Pharaoh Hatshepsut on the west bank of the Nile river, off Egypt's southern city of Luxor. — AFP



DINING

A waiter takes a plate to bring it to the jury during the 'oeuf en meurette' 4th world championship, at the Chateau du Clos de Vougeot, eastern France. — AFP





Lost Cubist painting by Leger found on back of another canvas

ART EXPERTS IN THE Netherlands said on Thursday they had discovered an important painting by the French Cubist Fernand Leger that had been hidden for more than a century on the back of another canvas.

The unknown work "Smoke over the Rooftops", believed to date from 1911-12, was on the flip-side of "Bastille Day", made a year later, according to conservation specialists Studio Redivivus.

Partially damaged and covered with a hard glue-like layer during its lost years, it has now been painstakingly restored and reveals a "turning point" in the work of Leger, a Paris contemporary of Picasso.

"It really is a discovery," Gwendolyn Boeve-Jones, director of the Hague-based Studio Redivivus, said.

The work is believed to be part of a series in which Leger painted the view from his studio of the Paris skyline towards Notre Dame, repeatedly focusing on the smoking chimneys.

Dutch art historian Sjaar van Heugten said only seven from the series were previously known to still exist, and the new work shows "hugely important" advances in Leger's use of colour and abstraction.

The story of the lost Leger begins around 110 years ago when the artist (1881-1955) gave the "Bastille Day" painting to his friend Marc Duchene as a wedding present in 1912 or 1913.



But Duchene was killed in World War I, and while the painting stayed in his family the "sad memories" meant it was never displayed and "remained unknown for years", Van Heugten said.

LOOKS AMAZING

"Bastille Day" was then bought from Duchene's heirs in 1999 by the Triton Collection, a private art foundation that

still owns the painting.

It found there had been some kind of restoration on the back, probably during the 1990s, but it was unknown exactly when and by whom — and in any case, it had merely caused further damage.

The mystery of what exactly was on the back remained largely intact, even as "Bastille Day" was shown in several galleries.

"It was covered to a large degree with a white-grey material and the collectors had been told it was nothing really to worry about, it's not important," said Boeve-Jones.

A backing board also obscured the image.

But the enigma continued to intrigue Boeve-Jones, who moved to the Netherlands from the United States to work at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum before setting up her own studio.

"When I was doing a condition check... I saw some of this which was exposed, and I thought wow, that looks amazing," said Boeve-Jones.

In 2016 the owners asked her to inspect further and Boeve-Jones, who says she has "known Leger my whole life", turned detective by poring over the Internet and through art publications.

The removal of the glue-like stuff then made it easier to see the distinctive forms and colours beneath, especially the billowing smoke.

"It wasn't that difficult to see that it belonged in some way to the Fumees Sur Les Toits (Smoke over the Rooftops) series," she said.

WONDERFUL PAINTING

High-tech imaging techniques looking at the layers of paint and at damage from the frame then allowed her team to restore the painting to its former glory.

The painting's significance quickly emerged, placing it as a "huge leap" from Leger's darker earlier work to the more abstract and colourful style that the series pioneered.

"It's not just that the painting was covered up, that's interesting to a degree — but what we've found is the role that this must have played in his journey," said Boeve-Jones.

Experts were sure that it was a genuine Leger due to the provenance, to the brushwork and even the "stretcher" of the canvas that has his signature on.

"This says Leger all over it," she said. Van Heugten, previously head of collections at the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam, said he was "very surprised by the quality" of a work once feared "hopelessly damaged."

"It's a wonderful painting and I'm very glad the restoration was so successful," he said.

The newly-discovered painting goes on display at the Kröller-Müller Museum in the central Netherlands as part of an exhibition on the rooftop series from 19 November until April 2.

It will be displayed in a glass cabinet that will allow viewers to see both sides. — AFP

HEALTH & WELLNESS

How bad is red meat for you? Health risks get star ratings



RESEARCH ABOUT what is healthy comes so thick and fast — red meat can appear good for you one week, stroke-inducing the next — that a confused public often struggles to keep up. But a massive new review published on Monday aims to look beyond the latest study by evaluating the available evidence on a range of health topics and giving it a star rating.

The US-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), which has become a global reference for health statistics, analysed the existing research in 180 areas to find out how much a particular risk factor, such as smoking, is linked to a health outcome, such as lung cancer.

The connection between smoking and lung cancer was given the highest five-star rating, as was the link between high blood pressure and heart disease, which means that the evidence is solid and unlikely to change in the future.

However nearly two thirds of the risk-outcome relationships received only one or two stars, sug-



gesting that the proof for a lot of widely believed health advice is weaker than might have been thought.

For example, evidence for a connection between eating a lot of unprocessed red meat and having a stroke was given just one star, meaning there was "no evidence of an association", the study said.

The links between red meat and colon cancer, breast cancer, ischaemic heart disease and diabetes were all given two stars.

Christopher Murray, IHME director and a senior author of several of the "Burden of Proof" studies published in the journal Nature Medicine, said he was "very surprised at how many of the diet risk-outcome relationships are relatively weak."

Murray told a press conference that the meta-analysis was prompted by concern that "everyone follows the latest published study," even though the results often "swing from one end to the other."

The researchers looked at the existing research on the subjects, crunched the numbers to find consistency, then asked "what is the most conservative interpretation of the evidence?" Murray said.

WHAT ABOUT VEGETABLES?

The researchers investigated how eating more vegetables affected a range of health outcomes, looking at 50 studies encompassing 4.6 million participants across 34 countries.

Increasing the amount of vegetables people eat from zero to four a day led to a 23 per cent decline in the risk of ischaemic stroke, with the connection getting three stars, IHME epidemiologist and study co-author Jeffrey Stanaway said.

The link between eating vegetables and type two diabetes received only one star.

But "even under the most conservative interpretation of the evidence, vegetable consumption is significantly associated with reduced chronic disease risk," Stanaway said.

Experts not involved in the research called it interesting, but warned against over simplification.

Kevin McConway, a statistician at the UK's Open University, worried that "a great deal is inevitably lost" when complex studies were boiled down to a star rating.

Duane Mellor, a dietician at the UK's Aston University, said the red meat research was "not that surprising" because it focused on unprocessed products.

"Typically it is intake of processed red meat, such as bacon and sausages, which have been associated with a higher risk of disease, which these papers did not report on," he said.

The IHME said it plans to update its findings as new research comes in, hoping the new tool will guide the choices of the public and policymakers.

It will also soon release findings about other health relationships including those involving alcohol, air pollution and further dietary factors. — AFP

Pink diamond sells for nearly \$58 million in Hong Kong

A RARE PINK DIAMOND has sold in Hong Kong for nearly \$58 million, setting a record for price per carat paid at auction for any diamond or gemstone, according to Sotheby's.

The 11.15-carat Williamson Pink Star on Friday fetched HK\$453.2 million (\$57.7 million), the second-highest price paid at auction for any jewel, Sotheby's added.

The winning bid, by an undisclosed buyer from Boca Raton, Florida, was

more than twice the estimated \$21 million sale price.

The stone was the second-largest pink diamond to be sold at auction. Pink diamonds are the rarest of the precious gems and the most in-demand on the global market.

The world record for a pink diamond was set in 2017, when a stone known as the CTF Pink Star was sold in Hong Kong for \$71.2 million.

Friday's sale "not only attests to



the resilient demand for top quality diamonds in Asia, but a heightened awareness of the great scarcity of pink diamonds", said Wenhao Yu, chairman of jewellery and watches at Sotheby's Asia.

The Williamson Pink Star was named after two other pink diamonds: the record-setting CTF Pink Star and the Williamson Stone, a 23.6-carat diamond given as a wedding

present to Queen Elizabeth II in 1947.

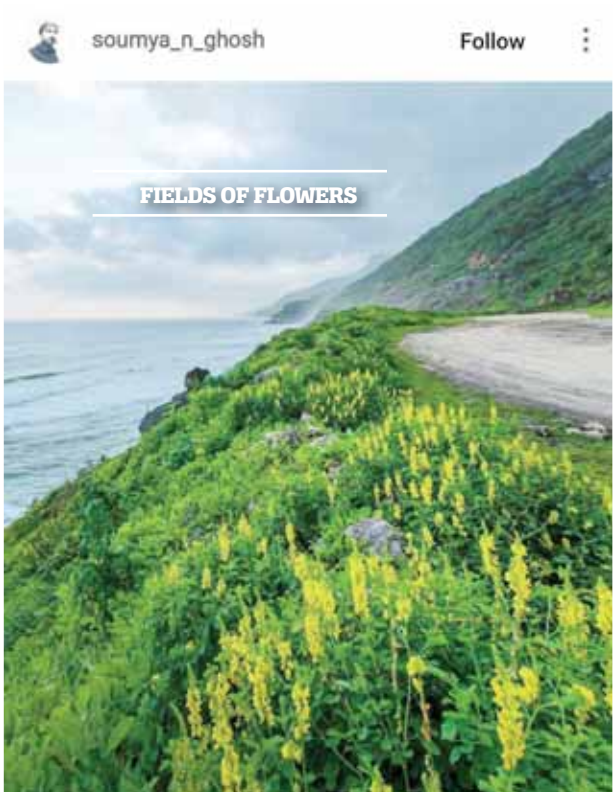
Tobias Kormind, managing director of UK jewel retailer 77 Diamonds, said the "astounding" sale proved high-quality diamonds could still fetch major prices in a shaky economy.

"Hard assets such as world-class diamonds have a history of performing well even in times of instability," he said. — AFP



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

'Stranger Things' music coordinator on reigniting love for Kate Bush



THE WOMAN who picked Kate Bush for "Stranger Things", creating an unlikely summer smash, says Bush's song allowed the world a much-needed sigh of relief after the stress of the pandemic.

As the Emmy-winning music coordinator for the Netflix show, Nora Felder takes a big part of the credit for turning "Running Up That Hill", a song first released in 1985, into arguably the defining song of 2022.

After Bush's song featured on season four in May, it saw an 8,700-per cent boost on Spotify, hitting the number one slot around the world.

"No-one imagined what it would become. It swept the world," Felder said.

"I think the song was a way for the world to exhale, to let go of their breath."

"The primary message of the song is stepping out of your shoes and understanding what the people around you are going through, that sometimes it's a long road to the top."

"And I think we all felt trapped and didn't know what was going to happen with the pandemic and everything else."

- 'KATE IS VERY PARTICULAR' -

Felder's job is more than just sitting around thinking of great tunes for a scene. Her day is filled with budgets, copyright negotiations, hiring bands and composers.

"I'm usually involved in the very early stages of the scripts," she said.

"It helps me a lot to have the stories in my head, to start building song ideas before it's shot. When I get to know the characters, that's when the ideas start coming to me."

It was a tense moment when she approached Bush's representatives, not knowing the singer-songwriter was already a fan of the show.

"Because Kate is very particular about how her songs are used, I took a lot of time preparing the context and what it meant to the story and the characters," Felder said.

"Kate approved it because she understood and accepted the vision that the Duffer brothers (the showrunners) had created."

It was a huge relief.

"I did have other selections but that was the best one. This song ticked all the check marks — the message behind the song, the way it built, the way it resonated with everything Max (the character) had gone through." — AFP

CULTURE

'Our home': Lesotho's last cave dwellers



INSIDE A DIMLY-LIT mud dwelling nestled within a rocky mountain in the southern African kingdom of Lesotho, Mamotonosi Ntefane, 67, dusts off an animal skin.

Her household is among a handful of families who still inhabit the Kome Caves, a heritage site in the north of the country, first occupied about 200 years ago by local tribes seeking shelter from conflict and cannibalism.

"Life is good, we grow our own vegetables, I can pray anytime I want," Ntefane, a rosary around her neck, said.

More than 1,800 metres above sea level, some 50 kilometres (30 miles) from the capital Maseru, the settlement is surrounded by barren pastures, where shepherds draped in long woollen blankets graze cattle in the morning mist.

Thin white smoke billows from outside the caves as "papa", a traditional corn porridge, boils in a black cast iron pot over a wood fire.

The cave is divided into several round houses propped against the basalt rock.

Open passages just high enough for a person to walk through serve as doorways. Walls and floors are made of a mix of mud and manure that require regular upkeep.

Inside are basic items including pots, plastic buckets to store water and a cowhide for a bed.

"There's no electricity and no fridge but this is our home, it's our history," says 44-year-old Kabelo Kome who is descended from the first people to settle the caves, after whom the place is named.



- HIDEOUT -

The caves became a hideout for members of the Basia and Bataung tribes in the 19th century, when conflict and a severe drought ravaged the region.

Christian missionaries travelling the area at the time reported some groups resorted to cannibalism to survive, as livestock and grain reserves dwindled.

It was in this period that Lesotho emerged as a single entity, as the Sotho, the region's largest ethnic group, united to fight Zulu raiders and European settlers.

Today, most of the country's two million people live off subsistence farming. Inhabitants of the Kome

Caves grow corn, sorghum and beans and raise chickens and cattle.

The elderly receive a state allowance, while others make money showing their homes to tourists.

Some like Mamatsaseng Khutsoane, a 66-year-old former teacher, have moved to a nearby village with greater creature comforts.

"I come here to eat, or with my grandchildren," she says.

There is mobile phone coverage, but no fixed Internet or running water.

"None of that here," scoffs Ntefane, as she stands outside her home, gazing at the mountains, while cow bells ring in the distance. — AFP

A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



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A Rat in the Aircraft

THE FOLLOWING is my English translation of excerpts from "A Soldier from Oman, Memory's Nectar" by (ret.) Inspector-General Said bin Rashid al Kalbani:

The following dawn we went down to our headquarters in the Rori Lagoon. In the midst of the road the two front teams were ambushed. Apparently, the enemy knew beforehand of our arrival. One team was under my command, the other under Khoda Bakhsh. We engaged in a fierce fight, many sustained injuries, three died. In the turmoil of the fight, we resorted to trees to screen ourselves from the enemy. I remember Corp. Khoda Bakhsh and his team resorted to a hole in the ground in an attempt to avoid the bullets. Though the place sheltered them, they, nonetheless, came out with the stench of a camel's carcass.

From my team Private Saif bin Salim al Kalbani fell from a thigh injury. He was surrounded in his place by the enemy. On my initiative, Salim al Farsi (from Dhank) and I went to save Saif. After taking the weapon from his hand, lest it fell in the enemy's hands, I pulled Saif to a secure zone. We managed to save him despite the volley of the bullets falling upon us. By the grace of God, we were saved.

The fight dragged on due to rain and fog, and we were about to run out of ammunition. Platoon 11 was under the command of Sgt. Mohammed al Busaidi. I remember amongst the soldiers some were from Miskan: Homaid al Kalbani, Ali al Kablani and Said al Kalbani, all were behind us, away from the enemy's fires.

Platoon 11 began attacking the enemy from the northern side, as a result of which the enemy retreated. All our injured and dead were taken to the Headquarters, and, subsequently to Om al Ghwarif in Salalah, where our regiment was. Saif was sent to the British army base in

Eden. He came back cured, thank God. (That base was closed down by the end of 1966, thus no more soldiers were sent for treatment).

Our platoon was on leave a few days later, and we travelled by plane to Masira Island. On our arrival, we went to the office of the wali, Abdul Rahman al Raisi, originally from Takiyya in Muscat. We were accommodated and catered for in the manner pre-arranged between both military and civil service.

We were due to fly back the following day. Our flight was delayed, thanks to, we were told, a rat in the engine. There was the fear that the naughty rat would play havoc with the plane. Some cats were brought in an attempt to catch the rat, but to no avail, as they were too big to get into the narrow parts of the engine. Finally, the engine was sprayed with a chemical locally known as "tezaab", and the rat died.

We overstayed for an entire week. Enjoying the island's attractions, we saw, for the first time, a railway line. On our asking, we were told that the British built it to move from the sea to the base. At that time, the flying route for the British army stretched from the Moharraq* Base, the Sharjah Base, the Farq runway and the Salalah Base (al Mohattal) to the Eden Base. The plane, which I remember looked like 130C**, took us from Masira to the Farq runway, from where some vehicles took us, each to his village, for our annual leave.

In the last days of our stay in Masira, I met Corp. Salim al Hosni from the second company in the wali's office; he and his company were on their way to Salalah to replace our company during our vacation. The following day we left early in the morning for Farq to board the flight that would take us again to Salalah.

*In Bahrain (the translator).
**As written in the source text (the translator).

art & life

Local Scene

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WEDNESDAY | OCTOBER 12 | 2022



Omani artist explores harmony between light and darkness

By Bayan al Hadhrami

For those who want to experience more when it comes to an art exhibit, emerging Omani artist and art teacher Jawaher Khalfan is allowing visitors to delve into a world of light and darkness through her exhibition 'The Call of Light'.

Opening last October 9 and ending on October 22, the exhibit takes place at Nasaq – a trendy art space founded by Mohammed al Auhi.

The collaboration promises an exceptional experience as the venue is not only an art gallery but a coffee shop allowing guests to have a memorable experience not only through art but the power of coffee.

Jawaher's artwork is dominantly black and white the artist explains that she aims to represent through her work the light and dark within people. She shared that she draws inspiration from the light within herself, stroking white paint on a black canvas.

Jawaher added that in her art world, the light does not overcome the darkness, but both coexist within us harmoniously just as the black and white in her paintings unite to compose art.

In other words, Jawaher believes that people should embrace and accept both the light and dark within them. Yet, Jawaher does not wish to impose on viewers and admirers of her work a specific message or idea. Accordingly, Jawaher does not title her work, and while her paintings in the exhibition remain nameless, each painting is accompanied by an excerpt

from Jawaher's personal diary, allowing us to view Jawaher's journey to find the light within herself.

Jawaher shares with us some of these excerpts: "There's magic and light somewhere deep within you waiting for you to see it", "I closed the room's door and turned off the lamp, then opened the doors of my heart and let the light within fill the place", "The light.. I found it, it's within me".

The artist also shares with us the beginnings of the adoption of her current art style, dominantly black and white with the representation of a search for light, which came to her as an inspiration as a child sitting under a tree and contemplating on the search for light.

Jawaher adds that she greatly adores plants which are evident in her artwork as elements of nature such as trees, branches and leaves play a role in her work.

Finally, Jawaher expresses her gratitude and immense admiration for the venue Nasaq and the values it upholds, she is glad there's a good place for artists, for them to share and enjoy each other's work. She particularly admires the moral and incorporeal values on which Nasaq had been founded. Jawaher explains that Mohammed and Wail al Auhi have created this venue as a memorial of their deceased sister Sahar who loved painting and enjoyed art. The fact that the place is decorated with Sahar's artworks adds greater value and beauty to the venue, adds Jawaher, and she looks forward to future collaborations with Nasaq as she plans to conduct a workshop in the venue.

