

Pilot held after threat to crash

A pilot who had threatened to crash his small plane into a Walmart store in Mississippi has landed and been taken into custody, officials said. The plane, which had circled erratically over the city of Tupelo and a nearby area for hours, landed around 11:25 am Eastern time, Connie Strickland, a dispatcher with the Benton County sheriff's office, said. Benton County is about 65 km northwest of Tupelo. The authorities have not identified the pilot or released any information on possible motive. – AFP



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WILLIAMS LOOKING FORWARD TO 'DIFFERENT SERENA' AFTER OPEN EXIT



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OMAN FLOUR MILLS PLANS MINI FACTORY CLUSTER



P20

A LEADING CHOREOGRAPHER JOINS THE WAR EFFORT, WITH CLASSICAL BALLET



NEW WALKING TRACK IN AL AMERAT



Muscat Municipality has announced implementation of a walking track (Phase 4) in Al Nahdha city in the Wilayat of Al Amerat. It is one of the community projects aimed at providing exercise facilities to boost public health. The project involves 1,200-metre long, 5-metre wide footbath alongside a 3-metre wide cycling track. It also has a 2-metre wide grassy area with trees and flowers, a space for vendors, a car park and 70 lighting distributed along the length of the track. – ONA

Muscat highly vulnerable to floods

MUSCAT: Nearly 45 per cent of the areas in Muscat are vulnerable to floods from wadis, while another 20 per cent are subject to coastal floods. This was revealed at a seminar organised to discuss the details of the Greater Muscat masterplan.

The project directors of the masterplan called for the need to identify areas of high risk and take precautions to counter worst-case scenarios for the local population, such as easy access to hospitals and facilitating localised safety areas with easy access.

The statistics are important as the National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change for the Sultanate of Oman (2020-2040) of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had called on urban planners to consider the impact of heavy rainfall that usually follows the low-pressure systems developed in the sea. **DETAILS ON P2**

Evaluation of rain-affected roads in governorates over

SUHAIL AL NAHDI
MUSCAT

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT) announced the completion of evaluation of the damage to roads due to heavy rains the country witnessed during the previous period.

The MoTCIT, in coordination with the Ministry of Finance, has prepared funds required for restoration and rehabilitation of the affected roads.

In addition, the MoTCIT confirmed the continuation of the restoration of roads affected by cyclone Shaheen last year, affirming that the road restoration projects are

progressing well including the stretch between Al Maladda roundabout in the Wilayat of Al Musannah in South Al Batinah Governorate to Saham roundabout in North Al Batinah Governorate where the rehabilitation work involves repairing the affected road fence.

Awadh bin Salim al Sideiri, Director of road rehabilitation department at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said that the technical teams have finalised the assessment of the damage to roads and there was coordination with the Ministry of Finance to provide the funds needed to award tenders for the rehabilitation projects. **TURN TO P2**

NASA SCRAPS MOON ROCKET LAUNCH



Media personnel prepare to leave after the launch of the Artemis 1 rocket was scrubbed at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida on Saturday. Nasa scrapped a second attempt to get its new 30-storey rocket off the ground and send its uncrewed test capsule towards the Moon after engineers detected a fuel leak. **DETAILS ON P6**

BACK TO SCHOOL

1,422 SCHOOLS READY TO RECEIVE 741,000 STUDENTS

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Over 700,000 students will return to government schools on Sunday, marking the start of the academic year 2022-23.

It may also be noted that students from low-income and social security families will be eligible for special support under the school supplies and nutrition initiative, which was launched after the Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

While teaching and non-teaching staff in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman returned to work last week, 741,000 students from 1,422 government schools will resume classes after the summer break in various governorates. Officials have confirmed that all preparations, including availability of textbooks and arrangement of school buses, have been made.

Around 130,000 students will also be attending 800 private schools and kindergartens.

Preparations for the new

ROP has taken many measures in coordination with the Ministry of Education and in line with the Traffic Law and its executive regulations. The roads will witness traffic congestion, especially at peak times

COL KHAMIS BIN ALI AL BATTASHI
Assistant DG, Traffic

school year began last week with the return of 57,033 teachers, including 39,637 female teaching staff, in addition to 10,834 technicians.

The ministries of health and education said students' health would be given top priority, as vaccinations will be provided as

per the school health programme.

Royal Oman Police (ROP) has issued guidelines for bus drivers to ensure the safe transportation of students. The instructions are significant because speeding, negligence, bad behaviour and not keeping a safe distance are among the main causes of road accidents in the country, according to the latest statistics.

Col Khamis bin Ali al Battashi, Assistant Director-General of Traffic, said, "ROP has taken many measures in coordination with the Ministry of Education and in line with the Traffic Law and its executive regulations. The roads will witness traffic congestion, especially at peak times, and therefore traffic patrols will work to facilitate traffic, especially in places with more congestion than others. Traffic patrols will facilitate the movement of buses, give them priority in traffic, and monitor the extent to which the bus driver adheres to traffic rules and regulations and the number of students allowed on a bus."

SEE ALSO P3

OMAN FM 90.4

Jump Start

AMAL AL BALUSHI

TALAL AL SHAHRI

WEEKDAYS 7AM

uoc OMAN FM



Muscat highly vulnerable to floods: Experts

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Nearly 45 per cent of the areas in the capital are vulnerable to floods from wadis, while another 20 per cent are subject to coastal floods. This was revealed on Thursday at the seminar organised to discuss the details of the Greater Muscat masterplan.

The project directors of the masterplan called for the need to identify areas of high risk and take precautions to counter worst-case scenarios for the local population, such as easy access to hospitals and facilitating safety areas with easy access.

The statistics are important as the National Strategy for Adaptation and Mitigation to Climate Change for the Sultanate of Oman (2020-2040) of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) had called on urban planners in the

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Oman to consider the impact of heavy rainfall that usually follows the low-pressure systems developed in the sea, especially the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. Urban areas characterised by a high concentration of people, infrastructure, business and industry will be vulnerable to extreme climate events without adequate planning and governance. “Extreme rainfall can lead to flash floods, which can adversely affect business sectors such as telecommunications, insurance and banking, among others.”



Rains in January which flooded parts of Muscat.

The report warned that with climate change, the Sultanate of Oman’s low-lying areas along the coast will be vulnerable to flooding from the combined impact of sea-level rise and storm surge associated with extreme weather events.

Also wary of the rising temperatures during summer, the masterplan called for measures to reduce exposure and vulnerability

to heat by densification of buildings (shade/thermal comfort), tree planting, solar reflectance of white and green spaces, wind flow to support passive cooling, and reduce facades facing critical sun path and zero per cent of glazing in buildings. The masterplan for Greater Muscat will be completed in the first quarter of 2023. Officials said that some progress has been made in the first and second phases, which focused on collecting and analysing data. The third phase will focus on the structural plan based on data collected from the first and second phases. The seminar discussed the current state of planning in Greater Muscat, challenges facing urban growth and development opportunities that can be exploited with the help of a high-standard masterplan.

GCC health guide calls for regular check-ups

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

The Health Council of the GCC has issued a comprehensive guide to medical examinations from birth to 60 years and above. For children, it covers periodic examinations, follow-up of the vaccination schedule, cholesterol examination and oral health. The guide also includes examinations of adults and the elderly, and how to monitor health status from home.

The council said that periodic examinations will help reveal some diseases that do not show symptoms at an early stage, such as blood pressure and cholesterol, and depend on several factors, including age group, gender and medical history.

The guide said periodic examinations are done for a healthy person before symptoms appear for a particular disease with the aim of early detection and prevention of complications. The GCC said that the cure rate for breast cancer is 95 per cent if it is detected early and 46 per cent of people do not know that they suffer from high blood pressure until after going to the doctor.

EA CHIEF VISITS AL WUSTA SANCTUARY



Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Omari, President of the Environment Agency, visited the wildlife sanctuary in Al Wusta Governorate to find out about the administrative and technical challenges and to follow up on some of the existing projects in the reserve.

Evaluation of flood-hit roads over

FROM P1
He added that the roads experienced various types of damage including damage to the subgrade, the asphalt layer and the protection fences. The ministry is currently working to complete the road rehabilitation process as soon as possible in order to restore normal vehicular movement, the official said, noting that the restoration of bridges require longer periods and that the ministry is currently studying

the most appropriate methods to do so before floating the tenders. However, at the time being the ministry focuses on road rehabilitation and the restoration of traffic. Al Sideiri noted that the ministry has already awarded 11 tenders for rehabilitation of dirt roads in 10 governorates while the rehabilitation of paved roads continues and some tenders were awarded and others will shortly be floated by the Tender Board.



Water is a future source of fuel for cars

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

An 18-year-old student has developed a prototype of a car that runs on hydrogen produced from water. Boutaina Boujrada, a student of University of Technology and Applied Sciences, said, “With the support of the teaching staff and my family, I found myself stuck in science and discovery. I delved more and more into hydrogen fuel especially, and how to add it to vehicle engines.” “There were shortcomings in the hydrogen cars produced in the world, and they are all dependent on hydrogen fuel stations to charge



their batteries, so they are not self-producing hydrogen. My idea was to address this shortcoming and create a car that works on hydrogen only once it is filled with water. I called it the “water wheels’ car,” she said. The idea for this car came

while researching topics related to renewable energies. Today, the project has become realistic and is still scalable to increase the car’s efficiency with the highest possible capacity. Boutaina is a source of encouragement for young students

to work hard and innovate. She called on the Omani youth to make more efforts to build this country. A solar energy system powers the process of working for this type of car to separate the components of water into hydrogen and oxygen. Water, which makes up 70 per cent of the earth, is an excellent source of hydrogen. So water instead of hydrogen will be a better resource. This car is completely clean and workable. It has been tested through a small car, and it worked. The car is still scalable, and the work on weight of the car and efficiency increase to cross the 350 km barrier is going on.



Online service of Invest Easy to boost ease of doing business

MUSCAT: In a bid to boost ease of doing business in the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion has started giving issuance of country of origin certificates for the Arab countries, Singapore and European Free Trade Area countries. The service is offered online through “Invest Easy” portal and aimed to facilitate procedures for companies operating in the field. The introduction of this service is aimed to accelerate online issuance of certificates of country of origin without the need for physical presence at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. It also aimed to create an appropriate and attractive environment and to save time and efforts.

Mahmoud bin Shanon al Souti, Industrial Planning Engineer at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said that the service comes within the procedures taken by the ministry to facilitate the procedures related to export of products and the comprehensive development of services offered by the ministry and to transform all services of the ministry to online services. It also aimed to facilitate and improve the business environment and to implement the best international practices.

The companies and establishments interested in issuance of country of origin certificates when exporting to Arab countries, Singapore and EFTA countries could access the Invest Easy portal and attach the required documents which would be approved online by the personnel concerned at the

ministry or the directorates and departments affiliated to the ministry. He also called owners of national establishments including entrepreneurs, owners of SMEs, investors and craftsmen to avail from the economic agreements and FTAs executed between the Sultanate of Oman and other countries in terms of export, import and obtainment of preferential treatment. The number of online transactions conducted through Invest Easy portal saw a remarkable increase to reach 244,744 in the first quarter of 2022 compared to 75,630 transactions during the same period in 2021. The online transactions introduced through Sanad Centres represented 40.78 per cent and the transactions presented through the self-service amounted to 27.2 per cent. The transactions conducted through the directorates and departments affiliated to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion represented 22.79 per cent with the remaining percentage for transactions conducted by the other departments. The Department of Information, Data and Statistics at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion stated that the transactions conducted through the front offices of the ministry during the first quarter of 2022 amounted to 20,303 compared to 5,894 during the same period in 2021. The number of transactions conducted through the departments and directorates affiliated to the ministry amounted to 55,787 compared to 27,663 transactions during the same period in 2021. — ONA



Al Dakhiliyah set to welcome 10,592 new students

AN EDUCATION VILLAGE TO BE SET UP IN THE WILAYAT OF AL JABAL AL AKHDHAR



AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, SEPT 3

The Al Dakhiliyah Governorate is ready to receive 106,784 students in 160 public schools on Sunday. The General Directorate of Education in the governorate has completed preparations to begin the new academic year, which will welcome 10,592 new students in the first grade.

The total number of teachers, administrators and other staff is 9,040.

Saif al Julandani, Director-General of the General Directorate of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said: “First, we are pleased to congratulate the our students, and their parents on the occasion of the start of the new school year 2022-2023. We look forward that this year will be an extension of the contributions and

achievements that the directorate is witnessing in the various schools of the governorate. The General Directorate of Education in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah has completed its preparations to receive our students. New teachers have been appointed in the governorate.”

SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND BUSES

The Projects Department in the Directorate of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate confirmed its follow-up to the maintenance work and the initial handover of several schools that had been renovated. It also received teachers' houses in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. At the same time, work is under way on Seih Al Shamkhat School for Basic Education and Madinat Al Turath School for Basic Education in the

Wilayat of Bahla. The renovation of Aisha Umm Al Muminin School for Basic Education in the Wilayat of Samayil is also on track.

The department also completed the follow-up to replace 300 air-conditioners and maintain other air-conditioning devices according to a pre-prepared work plan and programme in coordination with the companies. The department also issued some tenders to provide school buses to accommodate more students.

TRAINING AND QUALIFICATION PLANS

The Department of Administrative Affairs in the Directorate, in cooperation with the Department of Educational Supervision, has completed training of new teachers, school principals and assistant directors.

The Department of Career

and Student Guidance will also implement several training workshops for counselling psychologists and career guidance specialists.

The Information Technology Department has also prepared a package of training programmes and workshops for specialists and their new assistants in

The Department of Special Education and Continuous Learning confirmed the completion of the procedures for opening an education village in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. It also receives requests from people wishing to register in adult education for grades 7-12.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR AL DAKHILIYAH SCHOOLS

The Information Technology Department in the Directorate has approved its plan to set up

computer labs in schools and best quality Internet service.

The Scientific Olympiad Innovation Department has followed up on the various competitions affiliated with the Innovation and Scientific Olympiad Department at the Ministry of Education. The department held several meetings with schools implementing the GLOBE project, the STEM project, and the Future Engineers project.

AWARENESS AND SCOUTING ACTIVITIES

The Vocational Guidance and Student Guidance Department have completed its plans to activate educational, awareness, and scouting activities in various ways and means. It supports schools in local and international participation through field visits

and media bulletins through social media. It also trains students on the skills required to achieve the desired results.

The Directorate continued to complete the procedures for obtaining new private school licenses and renewing expired ones. The total number of private schools in the governorate reached 129 schools; 18 schools for monolingual and bilingual private school education; 58 kindergartens, 51 schools for teaching the Holy Quran; two Indian and Pakistani schools; and 21 nurseries.

The department also developed a professional development plan to expand the administrative and teaching capabilities of the cadres through organising forums, training workshops, and exchange programmes for internal and external visits.

Student safety a shared responsibility

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samuelkutttyp

Safety is the buzzword for students, drivers and teachers as schools reopen for the new academic year in the Sultanate of Oman on Sunday after the summer vacation.

With a call to ensure safety of students, the Ministry of Education and the Royal Oman Police (ROP) have instructed all involved in the transportation to abide by traffic regulations and avoid bad behaviour.

In a two-minute film titled “Child on Board” to raise traffic awareness on child safety inside the vehicle, the ROP calls for ensuring the safety of school students in school buses and roads through the cooperation of all, especially drivers of other vehicles.

“Our children are students. Because you are the most valuable investment for this country. We wish you an academic year full of enthusiasm and activity”, the ROP said in the film released on the occasion.

The film asks both drivers and students to be vigilant at pick-up and drop-off points. Drivers of public and private school buses must be careful at these spots and not move until they are sure that all students have crossed the streets.

“Buses should be stopped at designated places, whether in



front of schools or after work is completed”, the film urges the drivers.

“ROP has taken many measures in coordination with the Ministry of Education and in line with the Traffic Law and its executive regulations”, Colonel Khamis bin Ali al Batashi, Assistant Director-General of Traffic, said.

He said the instructions are significant because speeding, negligence, bad behaviour and not keeping a safe distance are among the main causes of traffic accidents in the country.

Roads are expected to witness heavy traffic, especially at peak times. Taking this into account, traffic patrols will be posted to facilitate the movement of school

buses, give them priority in traffic, and monitor the extent to which the bus driver adheres to traffic rules and regulations, and the number of allowed on a bus.

In the weekly radio programme “Al-Ain Al-Sahira” and an episode entitled: “Student safety is a shared responsibility”, First Lieutenant Saeed Salim al Mahrazi, Directorate of Relations and Public Information, stressed on the need to instil traffic awareness among students to avoid accidents through the use of the best educational and training means, and information.

Another film released by the Ministry of Education directly communicates with students drawing their attention to

“Our children are students. Because you are the most valuable investment for this country. We wish you an academic year full of enthusiasm and activity. Buses should be stopped at designated places, whether in front of schools or after work is completed

ROYAL OMAN
POLICE

important aspects of safety when taking a bus or any other means of transport to school.

The initiative has been designed to sensitise, motivate and train children and school bus staff, on issues related to school bus travel and safety.

“The most dangerous aspects of riding the school bus is getting on and off the bus, and crossing the street, the film asks students to wait in a safe place, and make sure the bus has stopped completely”, it said.

Al Hamra children enthused ahead of new school year

AMAL AL RIYAMI
AL HAMRA, SEPT. 3

The Make a Smile and Leave a Trace volunteer team hosted entertainment activities for the children of Al Manthar area in Al Hamra ahead of the new school year.

The activities came with the message of promoting mental health among children. It also aimed to encourage children to go to school in a spirit of enthusiasm and work hard in studies. The initiative was keen on developing children's skills and instilling the values of citizenship.

Over 100 boys and girls aged 5-12 years took part in the event.

The event included many games, sports and activities to encourage students' talents. The programme also included a training workshop on how to make clip art from tissue paper.

The children enjoyed taking clicks in photo frames with the team logo as souvenirs.

The programme included face painting, drawing, and colouring.

The team presented mementos to the children.

The children expressed their overwhelming joy at the events and sought more such events

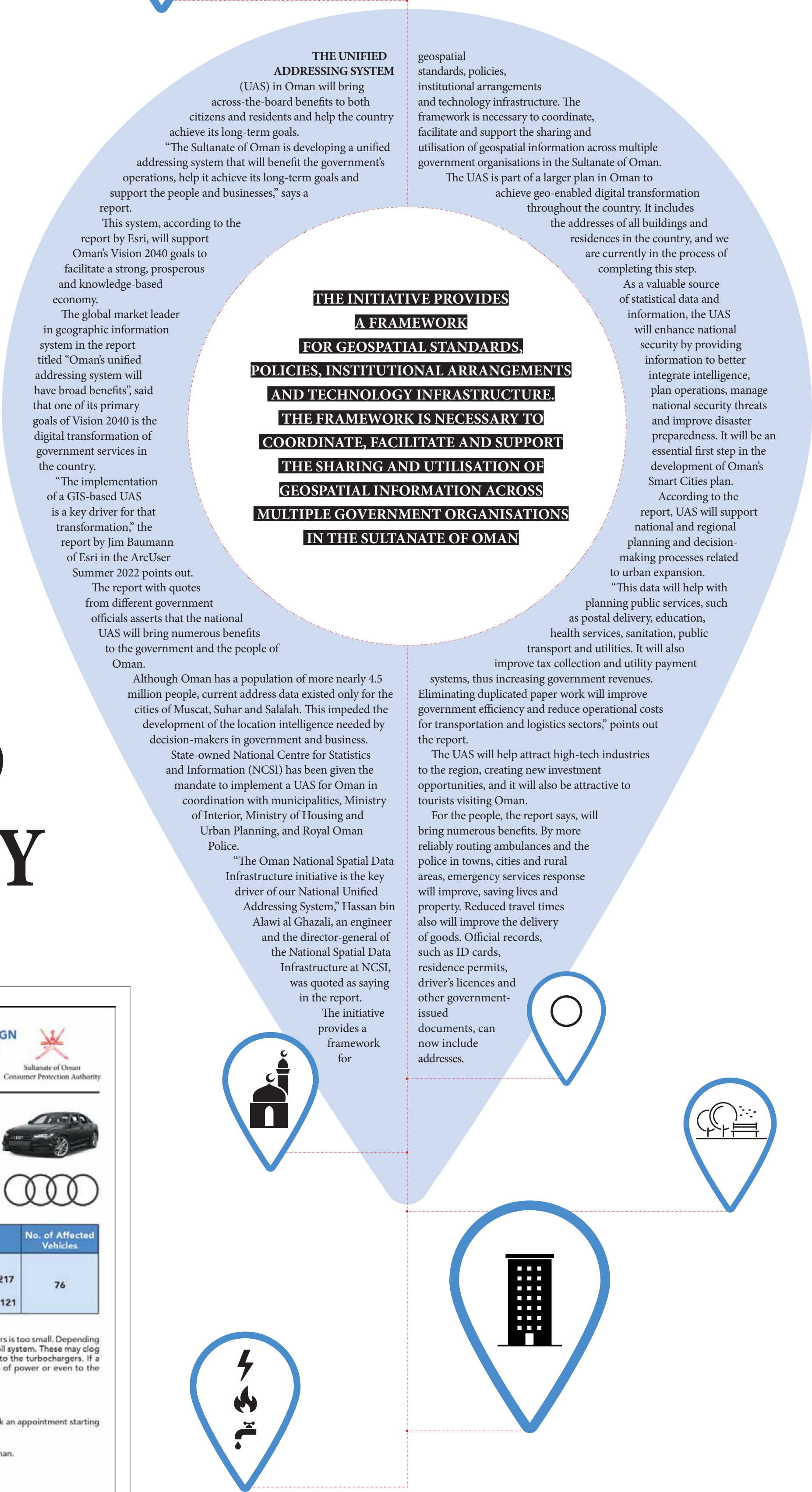


in the future. Their parents also thanked the team members for making their children happy and positively motivating them to return to school in a spirit of joy and happiness.



FOR A KNOWLEDGE BASED SOCIETY

SAMUEL KUTTY
[@samkuttyvp](#)



**AUDI VEHICLES RECALL CAMPAIGN**
MODELS S6,S7,S8,A8,RS6,RS7
2012-2017



Sultanate of Oman
Consumer Protection Authority



Campaign Date : 04 / 09 / 2022
Campaign Type : Safety Action
Campaign Section : Mechanical / Change the Oil Line Strainer
Product Description : Audi Vehicles

Production Year	Vehicle Model	VIN No.	No. of Affected Vehicles
2012 - 2017	S6,S7,S8,A8,RS6,RS7	From: WAU52DFC8DN081217 To: WUAG28FD7HN900121	76

• **Description**
The mesh size of the oil strainer in the oil supply for both turbochargers is too small. Depending on how the vehicle is used, deposits may accumulate in the engine oil system. These may clog up the oil strainer, which could lead to an insufficient supply of oil to the turbochargers. If a turbocharger becomes defective as a result; this can lead to a loss of power or even to the engine switching off without sufficient warning.

• **Action:**
Change the Oil line strainer.

• **For More Information:**
Owners of affected vehicles may contact Premium Motors to book an appointment starting 04/09/2022.

• **Contact Data:**
Premium Motors service center, Ghala, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 22845112 – Mob: 95700737
P.O. Box: 94, P.C: 105
Sunday to Thursday, From 8:00 AM To 5:00 PM



EMIGRE PALESTINIANS HURRY BACK TO VISIT FEARFUL OF NEW ISRAELI RULES

RAMALLAH: All summer, Palestinians from the millions-strong diaspora have been flocking to the West Bank, fearful of new Israeli rules expected to take effect next week could make future visits hard if not impossible.

Under the regulations, first published in February to a storm of protest, foreign passport holders -- including Palestinians living abroad -- will no longer be able to obtain visas on arrival and instead have to apply for them at least 45 days in advance.

The measures will place significant curbs on the ability of foreigners to study, volunteer or work in the West Bank, in a major blow to student exchange programmes operated by the European Union among others.

In most cases foreigners will no longer be able to arrive via Israel's main airport near Tel Aviv but only through the land crossing between Jordan and the West Bank, which was seized and occupied by Israel in 1967.

The new rulebook drafted by COGAT, the Israeli defence ministry body responsible for Palestinian civil affairs, is expected to come into force on Monday after being delayed twice by legal challenges.

In the West Bank city of Ramallah,

Palestinian lawyer Rasem Kamal said he has been inundated with clients from the diaspora wanting to register power of attorney amid deep uncertainty about arranging their affairs.

"Many people are rushing to come to the West Bank and finish their business here or give the power of attorney because they understand... there may be restrictions on their ability to visit," he said.

Ahmed Yassin, a Palestinian-American who divides his time between Monterey, California and the West Bank, is among thousands visiting Ramallah to see extended family and reconnect with their roots.

"I've been to a wedding every day for the past two weeks, I'm exhausted," he joked.

His wife Maggie said they did not come to see tourist sites like the Dead Sea frequented by other Americans.

"We come to see our family, and enjoy the country and to teach our kids about the Palestinian culture," she said.

'DRACONIAN'

The new rules will deprive "thousands of Palestinian families of the right to live together without

Palestinian killed in West Bank



Israeli security forces stand guard at the scene of a reported stabbing attack in Hebron. — AFP

HEBRON: A Palestinian was shot dead on Friday reportedly after stabbing an Israeli soldier at an army post near Hebron in the occupied West Bank, the Israeli army and the Palestinian health ministry said.

"An assailant armed with a knife" approached a military post and stabbed a soldier,

the army said in a statement, adding that another soldier opened fire and "neutralised" the assailant.

The Palestinian health ministry said it had been informed of the death of a young man near the flashpoint city, but did not immediately identify him.

The army said the wounded soldier was "evacuated to a hospital for medical attention, while fully conscious, and his family has been informed".

Israeli emergency services said the soldier was being treated in a Jerusalem hospital for "moderate" wounds to his torso. — AFP

interruption and to live a normal family life", said HaMoked, the Israeli rights group that led the supreme court appeal against the measures.

Canadian doctor Benjamin Thomson, one of the 19 plaintiffs involved in the legal challenge, said the Israeli move would disrupt the work of health professionals.

"These draconian measures will severely impact their work, and impair the lives of the Palestinian people," said Thomson, director of the Keys of Health project aimed at rebuilding healthcare in the Palestinian territories.

Foreign spouses visiting the West Bank will be limited to three- or six-month permits, with limits also placed on foreign volunteers.

"This is micromanaging, with the purpose to damage the Palestinian social fabric," said Sam Bahour, a Palestinian-American businessman who moved to the West Bank from Ohio in 1995.

The regulations will disrupt the visits of thousands living abroad without Palestinian identity cards.

Currently Palestinians with a foreign passport and no Palestinian ID can avoid the huge queues at the Allenby Bridge land crossing with Jordan by flying into Ben Gurion airport near Tel Aviv. — AFP

Iran briefly seizes two US Navy drone vessels

TEHRAN: An Iranian naval flotilla briefly seized two American military unmanned research vessels in the Red Sea before releasing them, Iranian state media reported on Friday.

The Iranian navy's "Jamaran destroyer encountered several American military unmanned research vessels on the international shipping route on Thursday while carrying out a counter-terrorism mission in the Red Sea," state TV said.

It added that the flotilla, "after warning an American destroyer twice, seized the two drone vessels to prevent possible accidents".

"After securing the passage of international shipping, the flotilla released the two vessels in a safe area," the state broadcaster continued, airing footage purporting to show the two US vessels being released by Iranian forces on board a ship. The US Navy said its vessels were taking photos of the surrounding environment and had been in the vicinity of the southern Red Sea for more than 200 days.

"At around 2 pm (local time) on September 1, US 5th Fleet detected the Iranian ship approaching both unmanned vessels and removing them from the water," the US Navy said in a statement.

Two destroyers operating nearby, the USS Nitze and USS Delbert D Black, "remained on scene communicating with the Iranian warship to de-escalate the situation," the statement added. The US Navy vessels were released at around 8 am the following day, according to the statement. — AFP



Sudanese gather amid renewed ethnic clashes in Al Roseires, in Sudan's southern Blue Nile state on Friday despite a ceasefire agreement between rival groups following deadly violence weeks ago. — AFP

Ethnic clashes in Sudan's south kill 18

KHARTOUM: Renewed ethnic clashes in Sudan's southern Blue Nile state have killed 18 people, a government aid agency said on Friday, despite a ceasefire agreement between rival groups following deadly violence weeks ago.

"The region has been witnessing renewed clashes between the Hausa (people) and Blue Nile communities," Sudan's Humanitarian Aid Commission said in a statement.

"Eighteen deaths have been recorded so far and 23 wounded," it said, adding that thousands had fled.

The violence flared on Thursday afternoon "without any clear reasons and despite sincere efforts by the government to stop hostilities", official news agency SUNA said earlier on Friday.

The fighting was centred around East Ganis village and the town of Roseires, SUNA added, quoting a statement from Blue Nile security

services. "The situation is very bad now — fires and gunfire everywhere," Hussein Moussa, a resident of a village east of Roseires, said.

In July, fighting in the region pitted the Hausa people against rival groups including the Barta, leaving at least 105 people dead and dozens wounded.

Those clashes erupted after Hausa members requested the creation of a "civil authority" that rival groups saw as a means of gaining access to land.

The violence displaced some 31,000 people, many of whom sought refuge in schools turned into displacement camps.

The clashes also triggered angry protests across Sudan, with the Hausa people demanding justice for those killed. Other demonstrations called for "unity" and an "end to tribalism" in the impoverished northeast African nation.

— AFP

ANNOUNCEMENT OF TENDERS



The Rural Areas Electricity Company (S.A.O.C) invites following tenders:

Tender No	Description	Tender Price (R.O)	Grade	Last Date of Buying	Last Date of Submission
Tanweer -12/2022	Construction of 2x3 MVA, (33 / 11 KV) Primary Outdoor Substation Associate With 33 KV OHL Interlink with Al Dhafrat Network to MIS at Al Wusta Governorate	1500/=	"B" and Above	15/09/2022	6/10/2022
Tanweer -13/2022	Construction of (33/11kv 2 X 3 MVA PSS and 33 & 11KV) Line Works Interlinking Najdha Network to MIS at Wilayat Mahout in Al Wusta Governorate	1500/=	"B" and Above	15/09/2022	6/10/2022

The Conditions:

- 1- Collection of Tender:** Interested and Specialized Companies and Establishments registered with Tender Board (valid certificate), Tanweer and Distribution Code Review Panel may obtain the Tender documents from Procurement & Contracts Department, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. The fees for the tenders shall be deposited on Tanweer account 0423010783090041 – Bank Muscat and for more information please contact via email address i.e. tender.purchase@tanweer.nama.om, or call us on phone number: 24250824.
- 2- Bank Guarantee:** The Tenderer should enclose original bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value with a validity of (90) Days from the last date of submission and addressed to Rural Areas Electricity Company SAOC (Tanweer).
- 3- Offers Submission:**
 - A- Original bids along Cover letter shall be placed by bidders inside the red waxed Tender's envelopes as communicated to bidders by Tanweer. Such documents must be serialized according to the numbers of the tender items.
 - B- Tender bids shall be provided separately on a CD Rooms, along with original cover letters in each envelop. Bids and cover letters shall bear the bidder's official seal and must be signed in either blue or red ink, but not black. A true soft copy of the bids shall be provided on a CD in an inner envelope marked "Copy". Bids who do not comply with these requirements will be overlooked.
 - C- Bidders shall write the following details on the cover of CD:
 - Tender name and number.
 - Tenders to be Addressed to the **Chairman of Minor Tender Committee**, Tanweer.
 - Prequalification / Technical Proposal / Commercial Proposal / Bid Bond.
- 4- Submission Location:** The Completed bids in CD should be deposited in the Tender Box at Tanweer Main Office at Wilayat Al Seeb, before 12:00 PM on the last date of submission.
- 5- Tender Price (R.O):** 5% VAT is inclusive.
- 6- Tanweer without mentioning the reason is not bound to accept the lowest or any other tender and not bound to refund tender purchase fees if you are not qualified to participate the tender.**

For more information please call: 80077787



Tanweer
P.O Box 1166, P.C. 133, Al Seeb, Sultanate of Oman
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Turkey offers to mediate in Ukraine N-plant standoff

KYIV: Turkey’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan offered on Saturday to mediate in the standoff over a Russian-occupied nuclear power station in war-torn Ukraine that has raised fears of an atomic disaster.

Alarm has grown in recent weeks over shelling hitting the area of Europe’s largest nuclear plant, Zaporizhzhia.

Ukraine on Friday said it bombed a Russian base in the nearby town of Energodar, destroying three artillery systems as well as an ammunition depot.

Erdogan on Saturday told his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin “that Turkey can play a facilitator role in the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, as they did in the grain deal,” the Turkish presidency said.

Ukraine, one of the world’s largest grain exporters, was forced to halt almost all deliveries after Russia attacked in late February,

There was no immediate mention of Erdogan having also spoken to Ukraine President Zelensky to offer his mediation

raising fears of a global food crisis.

Exports of grain across Black Sea ports resumed after Kyiv and Moscow in July inked a deal with the United Nations and Turkey acting as guarantors.

There was no immediate mention of Erdogan having also spoken to Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky on Saturday to offer his mediation.

Last month, Erdogan warned of the danger of a nuclear disaster when he visited Lviv for talks with the Ukrainian leader.

The Turkish leader said he wanted to avoid “another Chernobyl”, referring to the world’s



Finnish Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto addresses demonstrators at the Parliament House in central Helsinki to show support for Ukraine. — AFP

worst nuclear accident in another part of Ukraine in 1986, when it was still part of the Soviet Union.

This week, a 14-strong team from the International Atomic Energy Agency visited Zaporizhzhia, with

the UN nuclear watchdog’s chief Rafael Grossi saying the site had been damaged in fighting.

Russia’s envoy to Vienna, Mikhail Ulyanov, said six IAEA inspectors would stay behind for several days and that two more would remain there “on a permanent basis”.

The Russian invasion of pro-Western Ukraine has killed thousands of people and caused millions to flee their homes.

Western powers have reacted by dispatching military aid to Kyiv in a bid to stem the Russian advance, and slapping economic sanctions on Moscow.

On Friday, the Group of Seven major industrial democracies vowed to move urgently to set a price cap on Russian oil imports, a crucial source of revenue for Moscow.

As if on cue, Russian gas giant Gazprom said it had halted gas deliveries to Germany for an

indefinite period as there were leaks in a turbine. Its German manufacturer said that was not a valid reason to halt gas flows.

EU Economy Commissioner Paolo Gentiloni on Saturday however said the European Union was “well prepared” in the event of a total halt in Russian gas deliveries, thanks to storage capacity and energy-saving measures.

“We are well prepared to resist Russia’s extreme use of the gas weapon,” he told reporters on the sidelines of an economic forum organised by The European House — Ambrosetti.

In the European Union, “gas storage is currently at about 80 per cent, thanks to the diversification of supplies,” even if the situation varies from one country to another, Gentiloni said. Ukraine has accused Russia of storing ammunition at Zaporizhzhia and deploying hundreds of soldiers there. — AFP

■ LIFE IN DISARRAY AFTER FLOODS



Flood affected residents cross a railway track damaged by flood waters in Fazilpur area following heavy monsoon rains in Rajanpur district, Punjab province. — AFP

Russians bid farewell to Gorbachev

MOSCOW: Russians on Saturday paid their final respects to the last leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, in a ceremony held in Moscow without much fanfare and with President Vladimir Putin notably absent. Several thousand mourners queued up to quietly file past Gorbachev’s open casket as it was flanked by honour guards under the Russian flag in the historic Hall of Columns.

The hall has long been used for the funerals of high officials in Russia and it was where the body of Joseph Stalin first lay in state during four days of national mourning after his death in 1953.

With Russia facing increasing international isolation over its

military action in Ukraine, many of those in attendance pointed to Gorbachev’s opening of the country to the rest of the world.

“It was a breath of freedom, which was lacking for a long time, an absence of fear,” 41-year-old translator Ksenia Zhupanova said at the entrance to the hall.

“I am against shutting us out from the outside world, I am for openness, for dialogue. This is what Mikhail Sergeyevich showed the world,” she said, using Gorbachev’s patronymic.

The mourners were of all ages, some old enough to remember the years of Soviet stagnation before Gorbachev came to power, others young enough to have only lived in Russia under Putin. — AFP

Nasa postpones rocket launch to Moon due to fuel leak

KENNEDY SPACE CENTER: Nasa scrapped its launch on Saturday of a 30-storey rocket due to orbit the Moon, citing a fuel leak in delaying the mission for a second time.

The leak occurred as liquid hydrogen was being pumped into the rocket. No new date for another try was immediately announced.

As Nasa on Saturday resumed its second effort to get its new 30-storey rocket off the ground and send its unscrewed test capsule towards the Moon, engineers detected a fuel leak that potentially could lead to a

new delay.

With millions around the globe and hundreds of thousands on nearby beaches waiting for the historic launch of the massive Space Launch System (SLS), a leak near the base of the rocket was found as ultra-cold liquid hydrogen was being pumped in. Nasa said engineers would “stop flowing liquid hydrogen to the tank, close the valve used to fill and drain it,” then try to reseal it.

The space agency offered no information on the likelihood of a new delay in the Artemis programme — which



The Artemis I unmanned lunar rocket sits on the launch pad at the Kennedy Space Center before launch on Saturday. — AFP

aims eventually to return a human crew to the Moon — following Monday’s aborted effort. “Our team is ready,” Jeremy Parsons, deputy manager of exploration ground systems at Kennedy Space Center, had said on Friday.

“They are getting better with every attempt and actually performed superbly during launch countdown number one... I think if the conditions with weather and the hardware align, we’ll absolutely go.”

Though the area around the launch site will be closed to the public, an estimated 400,000 people were gathering on beaches

nearby to see — and hear — the most powerful vehicle that Nasa has ever launched climb into space.

The initial launch attempt was halted after engineers detected a fuel leak and a sensor showed that one of the rocket’s four main engines was too hot.

Both issues have since been resolved, the launch team said.

Earlier, shortly before 6 am on Saturday, launch director Charlie Blackwell-Thompson had given the go-ahead to start filling the rocket’s tanks with cryogenic fuel. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

COLOMBO

Ousted Lanka leader faces arrest calls after return

Deposed Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa faced calls for his arrest on Saturday after returning home from self-imposed exile under the protection of his successor’s government. Rajapaksa fled the island nation under military escort in July after a huge crowd stormed his official residence following months of demonstrations sparked by an unprecedented economic crisis.

The 73-year-old announced his resignation from Singapore and spent weeks under virtual



house arrest at a Bangkok hotel before his return late on Friday. Leaders of the protest campaign that toppled his government said Rajapaksa, who lost his presidential immunity after leaving office, should now be brought to justice. — AFP

ZURICH

Centuries-old Swiss glacier melts after summer heat

Some of Switzerland’s minor glaciers have lost significant amounts of ice this summer amid record heat levels, with scientists forced to end some of their measuring programmes as no ice remains.

“What we are seeing has been stronger than anything we thought possible so far,” according to Matthias Huss, who heads the Glosios glacier measurement network at the ETH Zurich.

Some of the layers of ice at



the Corvatsch glacier in south-eastern Switzerland that were formed around 7,000 years ago have melted, he said. The dating of the ice is based on earlier measurements made by the University of Heidelberg in Germany. — dpa

NEW DELHI

India raids online payment firms over ‘illegal loans’

India’s financial crimes agency said on Saturday it had raided the offices of several online payment platforms, including local market leader Paytm, for allegedly facilitating illegal loans by Chinese nationals. The Enforcement Directorate said it had received several complaints of extortion and harassment from members of the public who had taken small loans through mobile apps. It said that investigations had found the apps were run by entities registered at



fake addresses and traced back to Chinese nationals.

The agency said in a statement that popular Indian payment gateways, including Razorpay and Cashfree, were “generating proceeds of crime” from the loan companies. — AFP

‘Magic in her hands.’ The woman bringing India’s forests back to life



SAMEER
YASIR

She has walked for miles, deep into tropical rainforests, carefully cutting healthy branches from hundreds of trees and replanting and grafting them. Her eyes light up when she talks about rare seeds or a sapling. And when she dies, she would like to be reborn, she said, as a big tree.

Tulsi Gowind Gowda — who doesn’t know the year of her birth but believes she is older than 80 — has devoted her life to transforming vast swaths of barren land in her native state of Karnataka, in southern India, into dense forests.

Over the years, she has received around a dozen prizes for her pioneering conservation work. But the most prestigious came last year, when the government recognised her efforts and her vast knowledge of forest ecosystems with the Padma Shri award, one of the country’s highest civilian honours.

On a recent morning, Gowda sat in a plastic chair welcoming visitors to her three-room home in Honnali, a village of about 150 houses at the edge of a forest. She wore a backless sari, designed to make physical labour easier, and six layers of beads around her neck made of stones and natural fibre. Behind her, a wall-mounted showcase was filled with pictures and plastic sculptures of Hindu deities and photographs of her award ceremonies.

Winning the Padma Shri award, India’s fourth highest civilian honour, brought Gowda unaccustomed attention, with its extensive coverage in the Indian press. When villagers see her these days, they bow down, and children stop to take selfies with her. Busloads of students arrive at her home, where she lives with 10 members of her family, including her great-grandchildren.

“When I see them, I feel happy,” she said, referring to the students, in an interview. They need to be taught how important it is to plant trees, she said. When India was under British rule, the colonisers led a huge deforestation drive in the mountains to strip wood to make ships and lay railway tracks, wiping out much of the forest cover of the Uttara Kannada district, where Gowda lives.

After India’s independence in 1947, the country’s leaders continued to exploit forest areas for large-scale industrialisation and urbanisation. Between 1951 and 1980, around 4.2 million hectares of land, or about 10.4 million acres, was devoted to developmental projects, according to government figures.

Even as a child, Gowda, who never learned to read, worked to reverse the stripping of local forests by replanting trees. During daylong trips to forests to collect firewood for the family, her mother taught her how regeneration is best done with seeds from big, healthy trees. When she was a teenager, she turned a gutted landscape behind her family house into a dense forest, local residents and Indian officials say.

“Since her childhood, she spoke to trees like a mother would speak to her infant children,” said Rukmani, a local woman who uses only one name and has worked with Gowda for decades.

By 1983, government conservation policies had changed.



Tulsi Gowind Gowda works at a government nursery in Karnataka, her home state in southern India.

That year, a top Indian forest officer, Adugodi Nanjappa Yellappa Reddy, arrived at a government nursery in Karnataka with a daunting task: to reforest large portions of land in the area. On his first day of work, under a sweltering sun, he met Gowda, who worked at the nursery. She was separating small stones from soil and meticulously planting seeds and saplings.

“There was some magic in her hands,” said Reddy, 86, and now retired. “Her knowledge to identify indigenous species and collect them carefully and nurture trees can be found in no book.”

Gowda became his valuable adviser, Reddy said. And working with him brought her new attention locally, with residents beginning to call her “the goddess of trees.”

Gowda walked barefoot to receive her medal for the Padma Shri award in the Rashtrapati Bhavan, the official residence of the president in New Delhi. Throughout her life, Gowda said in the interview, she has walked barefoot and never worn shoes, not uncommon for members of her tribal community.

India’s 700 or so tribal groups have a population of 104 million, according to the last completed census, in 2011. Out of those groups, more than 600 communities are scheduled tribes, which means they get certain government benefits, including preference in educational institutions and government jobs.

But Gowda’s tribe, the Halakki-Vokkaligas — population about 180,000 — was never given scheduled status. Members of her tribe, who have occupied the vast tropical forests of the western mountains in the state for centuries, have been agitating for such recognition since 2006.

The poverty rate among the Halakki-Vokkaligas is about 95 per cent, with only 15 per cent completing any level of education, said Shridhar Gouda, a teacher at Karnataka University who has studied the community for decades.

Gowda worked for 65 years in the government nursery, retiring officially in 1998, though she continues to do some work there in an advisory role, sharing her immense knowledge of local trees.

While she said she often feels tired after long conversations with visitors, a walk by rice fields, past a billboard with her life-size picture on it and through a dense forest filled with acacia trees seemed to invigorate her.

During the walk, she stopped frequently to recite the names of trees and plants in her native Kannada language: *Garcinia indica* (in the mangosteen family), *Ficus benghalensis* (or banyan) and tamarind, among dozens of others she could find.

In recent months, the number of people arriving at her house to see her has increased, she said. Often, they ask her about climate change. She said she doesn’t understand what it means. All she knows, she said, is that the space of trees and animals has been encroached upon, with large-scale destruction of forest land and its ecosystem.

And she has noticed that monsoons in her part of the world are more erratic and dangerous, killing people because of flooding and landsliding.

“The reversal will take a lot of time,” she said, referring to the regreening of stripped land, but she also expressed some optimism for the future. “When I see these filled forests here, I feel it is possible for humans to prosper without cutting trees.”

Winning the Padma Shri award, India’s fourth highest civilian honour, brought Gowda unaccustomed attention, with its extensive coverage in the Indian press

Does this fisherman have the right to be in a billionaire’s backyard?



BEN RYDER
HOWE

Colorado’s natural beauty — groves of aspen shimmering in fall, snowcapped 14,000-foot peaks bathed in alpenglow — has much to lure outdoor enthusiasts, from college-age tubers to private jet owners. For the wealthy in particular, there is world-class skiing and shoulder-rubbing in glitzy redoubts like Telluride, plus an attraction no other state can provide: the power to control some of the most storied rivers in the West.

According to federal law, the beds of navigable waterways are owned by states, which hold them in trust for the public.

But in Colorado, a series of unusual rulings have given landowners leeway to bar the public from riverbeds adjoining their property — and the water covering them, even if people float onto it after entering legally elsewhere.

Colorado has more than 100,000 miles of rivers, some accessible to the public without a landowner’s consent. However, in recent years, thanks to a population surge stressing the state’s prized natural resources — in addition to wealth concentrations unseen since the age of railway barons — complaints about haves and have-nots along its waterways have



I just want to stand in the water. The landowners are going to scream this is a taking. And my reply is you’ve already taken something from me. I have looked at waters I had every legal right to fish for 40 years

ROGER HILL

an old-school dry fly fisherman

risen, bruising the image of a sportsman’s paradise.

Roger Hill, an old-school dry fly fisherman, is particularly angry. And he is seeking to do something about it. In 2018, Hill, 81, a retired nuclear weapons scientist, filed a lawsuit asking the state to clarify its notoriously muddy stream-access laws vis-à-vis one of his favourite trout fishing grounds. To the ire of many landowners, who see it as a threat not only to their privacy but to their property values, that suit has been progressing through the state court system like a slow-moving missile.

A victory against the landowners would “have



Roger Hill, who has sued to have the state clarify its laws around one of his favourite fly-fishing grounds, at the spot where he first caught a trout in the Arkansas River more than 40 years ago, near Cotopaxi, Colorado.

staggering implications for settled agreements governing the use of our state’s rivers,” according to a statement from the office of Colorado’s attorney general, Phil Weiser.

Weiser, with legal support from powerful agricultural and real estate interests, has sought to have the suit thrown out. Advocates for landowners argue that the West’s natural resources are being “loved to death.” Colorado has one of the largest outdoor recreation economies in the nation. “It doesn’t take a genius to figure out that this can have an impact throughout the entire economy here,” Hill said. He hopes the lawsuit will give anglers access to all navigable rivers in Colorado, including stretches long set aside for the exclusive use of invitation-only clubs and others that would essentially function as open driveways to sprawling private estates.

“It’s all very simple. I just want to stand in the water,” Hill said.

“The landowners are going to scream this is a taking. And my reply is you’ve already taken something from me. I have looked at waters I had every legal right to fish for 40 years.”

In a state criss-crossed by iconic waterways, the Arkansas River does not stand out — except on weekends, when it may be the liveliest river in the West.

When your parent becomes your child



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

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

What do you do when you notice that your parent has become a new person?

The calm, loving and caring mother or father is replaced by someone who mixes up your names, accuses you of stealing his key, and insists to go to work, though he has been retired for over 20 years.

In the book title “When your parent becomes your child,” American journalist Ken Abraham describes the changes he noticed with his mother.

The memory loss, the decline in physical health, the poor hygiene and the unhelpful attitudes.

When he took his mother to the doctor he was told she has dementia, a diagnosis that changed her life — and the whole Family’s life forever.

The author described how he initially dismissed the changes in his mother’s behaviour as “due to old age”. This is a form of denial, a psychological trap family members often fall through when they are faced with such a situation.

After all, how do you accept that your parent is no longer the same person and that the condition he has will change him further sadly, there is no cure.

The journey Ken and his siblings went through was not easy as he witnessed his mother becoming more dependent on others in the simplest things such as having a wash, changing her clothes and eating a meal.

“It was heartbreaking to see how she went from someone who always

‘SEPTEMBER IS WORLD ALZHEIMER’S MONTH. IT’S THE TIME TO BUILD AWARENESS ABOUT ALZHEIMER’S AND OTHER DEMENTIA AND ACKNOWLEDGE THE DIFFICULT EMOTIONS PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA AND CAREGIVERS GO THROUGH.’

takes pride in her looks to someone who needed to be persuaded to shower and eventually fed with a spoon, it felt like she was becoming my child.”

Dementia is a brain disorder that affects the elderly and the risk of developing it increases as we age.

Most people are familiar with the term “Alzheimer’s disease” which is a progressive condition where the person experiences gradual memory loss, and personality changes and exhibits difficult behaviours such as aggression, agitation, or sad mood. Although Alzheimer’s is the most common type of dementia, other types must be considered as patients’ needs differ significantly.

At present there is no cure for dementia and currently available medications can slow the progression of the disease and if prescribed early, can help the person maintain his independence and have a better quality of life.

Almost all people with Alzheimer’s and other dementias

end up needing full care which is provided by a caregiver who is often the spouse or the daughter or son.

This can be a very challenging task even with the most caring people. Having to deal with a person that he may not recognise you or even worse, believe that you are up to harm him.

Some families employ a formal caregiver who looks after the basic needs of the person while the family members provide psychological support.

September is world Alzheimer’s month. It’s the time to build awareness about Alzheimer’s and other dementia and acknowledge the difficult emotions people with dementia and caregivers go through.

What’s in a name? Czechs learn to live in ‘Czechia’

JAN FLEMR

Nearly three decades after Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two states, Czechs are still looking for a proper name in English for their country.

“The Czech Republic” has been widely used, though the shorter “Czechia” has slowly been catching on since its official registration by the United Nations in 2016.

Today the European Union and Nato member’s current stint at the helm of the rotating EU presidency offers an opportunity for a breakthrough.

“We are seeking to unify the presentation of our country abroad and at home after a long 30 years,” Deputy Foreign Minister Martin Dvorak, an advocate of “Czechia”, said.

“It is absurd to have 27 EU members and 29 Nato members using their short names and Czechia as the only member country stating its political status,” as a republic, he added.

The foreign ministry promotes the shorter name, while Prime Minister Petr Fiala’s office has largely used “the Czech Republic” on its website and social networks.

To make matters worse, at times the two names show up in tandem. When it took over the EU presidency on July 1, the government rolled out a website hailing the “natural beauty of Czechia” in one sentence and the cultural heritage of “the Czech Republic” in the next.

“The current mess... in naming our country is the biggest obstacle to creating a ‘brand’. We want to change it,” said Dvorak.

“We can see some diplomats are having a hard time getting used to it, but the trend is already clear.”

Czechia was used in Latin texts centuries ago as an equivalent to Bohemia, referring to the western part of the country comprising Prague.

In the first English translation of the Czech anthem — titled “Where is my home?” — poet Josef Vaclav Sladek wrote “Czechia, my fatherland” in the 19th century.

After the Czechoslovakia (Ceskoslovensko) split, there were no doubts about Slovakia or “Slovensko” as the name broke away as smoothly as the country itself. But Czechs were reluctant to use the short name, also because of opposition in the eastern historic lands of Moravia and Silesia, which felt it slighted their territory.

Former Czech president Vaclav Havel once said hearing “Cesko” felt like “having slugs creeping down” his body.

The current head of state, Milos Zeman, in contrast is known for pushing Czechia as a more practical title.

Fellow fans of the name already founded the Cesko/Czechia initiative back in 1997. — AFP



DAVID BROOKS

The writer is a political and cultural commentator for NYT

If an alternative candidate is needed in 2024, these folks will be ready

What happens if the 2024 election is between Donald Trump and somebody like Bernie Sanders?

What happens if the Republicans nominate someone who is morally unacceptable to millions of Americans while the Democrats nominate someone who is ideologically unacceptable? Where do the millions of voters in the middle go?

Does Trump end up winning as voters refuse to go that far left?

The group No Labels has been working quietly over the past 10 months to give Americans a third viable option. The group calls its work an insurance policy.

If one of the parties nominates a candidate acceptable to the centre of the electorate, then the presidential operation shuts down. But if both parties go to the extremes, then there will be a unity ticket appealing to both Democrats and Republicans to combat this period of polarised dysfunction.

The No Labels operation is a \$70-million effort, of which \$46 million has already been raised or pledged.

It has four main prongs. The first is to gain ballot access for a prospective third candidate in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The organisation is working with lawyers, political strategists and petition firms to amass signatures and establish a No Labels slot on the 2024 ballots.

The group already has more than 100,000 signatures in Ohio, for example, and 47,000 signatures in Arizona.

The second effort is to create a database on those Americans who would support a unity ticket.

The group’s research suggests there are 64.5 million voters who would support such an effort, including roughly one-third of the people who supported Donald Trump in 2020 and 20 per cent of the Democrats who supported Joe Biden in that year, as well as a slew of independents.

The group has identified 23 states where they believe a unity ticket could win a plurality of the vote, including Pennsylvania, Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, Minnesota and Colorado.

If the ticket gained a plurality in

those 23 states, that would give its standard-bearer 279 electoral votes and the presidency.

The third effort is to find a policy agenda that appeals to unity voters.

The group has come up with a series

THE GROUP HAS NOT FIGURED OUT HOW THE NOMINATING PROCESS WOULD WORK, ALTHOUGH THEY WANT TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE A TRANSPARENT PROCESS THAT WOULD GENERATE PUBLIC INTEREST

of both/and positions on major issues: comprehensive immigration reform with stronger borders and a path to citizenship for DACA immigrants; US energy self-sufficiency while transitioning to cleaner sources; no guns for anyone younger than 21 and universal background checks; moderate abortion policies with abortion legal until about 15 weeks.

The fourth effort is to create an infrastructure to nominate and support a potential candidate. There’s already a network of state co-chairs and local volunteers.

Many of them are regular Americans, while others are notables like Mike Rawlings, a Democrat and the former mayor of Dallas, civil rights leader Benjamin Chavis and Dennis Blair, the former director of national intelligence.

The group has not figured out how the nominating process would work, although they want to use technology to create a transparent process that would generate public interest. There would be a nominating convention in Texas, shortly after it becomes clear who will be the Democratic and Republican nominees.

The people who are volunteering for this emphasise that they are not leaving their parties. This is not an effort to create a third party, like Andrew Yang’s effort.

This is a one-off move to create a third option if the two major parties abandon the middle in 2024.

The big question is: Is this a good idea? To think this through I’ve imagined a 2024 campaign in which the Republicans nominate Trump, Biden retires and the Democrats nominate some progressive and the No Labels group nominates retired Admiral William McRaven and former PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi.

(I’m just grabbing these latter two names off the top of my head as the sort of people who might be ideal for the No Labels ticket).

— The New York Times



Flags and a microphone set up before a Republican luncheon in Washington.

What have they put in the water this week?



Ray Petersen
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The writer is a media consultant

It's been a massive week of foot trips, stumbles, and falls in the United Kingdom this week, and the Sultanate of Oman, as having traditional ceremonial, commercial and educational ties to what have, this week, been rather unsteady isles. Bournemouth stumbled through their EPL match against Liverpool, conceding a whopping 0-9 result, and their manager Scott Parker was shown the door just a couple of days later... and that set the ball rolling...

Meghan Markle, wannabe royal, or don't wannabe royal, depending which day of the week it is. She's the one that married Harry, who always seemed like a good bloke, but now? Anyway, she channeled her inner Marie Antoinette this week, in yet another artless faux pas, as she compared herself to, of all people, the statesman who reformed a nation, bringing hope to tens of millions, and changed the world more than any individual, the wise and modest, Nelson Mandela.

For those of you who missed it, 'Princess Pushy,' and yes, I know she's not a princess anymore, but has anyone told her? Anyway, she told 'The Cut' magazine that she had been taken aside by a member of the cast of 'The Lion King,' explaining in her own words, "He looked at me and said, "I need you to know: When you married into the Royal Family, we rejoiced in the streets the same way we did when Mandela was freed from prison."

IN ENGLISH, WE HAVE THIS WONDERFUL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN HEARING AND LISTENING. YOU CAN HEAR WITHOUT LISTENING AND LISTEN WITHOUT HEARING

moment? This is a quality, or an asset, of adulthood that is developed and refined throughout childhood, frequently tested during the angst-riven teens, and enhanced continuously through our lifetimes... I think we call it wisdom.

Daniel Bernstein said, "In English, we have this wonderful difference between hearing and listening. You can hear without listening and listen without hearing." Following that wisdom, it is also true that to hear, you must stop talking, and particularly when you are talking about yourself. Honestly! How do such self-obsessed individuals achieve so much media and societal prominence?

Oh, and speaking of 'foot in the mouth' moments, British politician Liz Truss, who will probably end up as the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom this week, has been 'leaked!' Saying, in 2012, that it is a historical fact for decades, that British workers, particularly outside London, lack skill, application, mindset, and attitude, in their working culture, with the hammer blow... "If you go to China, it's quite different, I can assure you!" Well, that's one way to get your electorate behind you... not!

Not so much 'foot in the mouth,' as foot on the throat, energy suppliers across Europe and the United Kingdom have flexed their muscles through that paragon of consumer protection, that watchdog of fiscal responsibility, that arbiter of social equity and responsibility, Ofgem, the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets. Not content with the 'Big Six' all reporting profits of more than a billion pounds each, on August 26, Ofgem 'allowed' the energy giants to increase their tariffs by more than 50 per cent.

Such increases are outrageous, given that Ofgem appears to be failing in its statutory obligations to consider the impact of any tariff changes on consumers, and societies. They identify on their own website, their roles and responsibilities as being to, "deliver a net-zero economy, at the lowest cost to consumers, to stamp out sharp and bad practice, ensuring fair treatment for all, especially the vulnerable, and (get this), to enable competition and innovation, to drive down prices." Their failings are epic!

I could chat too about overpaid footballers playing like mugs, behaving like thugs, and not 'feeling the love,' OMG... I think I'll just go to the dentist instead!



LONGEST SURVIVING 2-HEADED TORTOISE

Janus, the Geneva Museum of Natural History's two-headed Greek tortoise enjoys salad on Saturday on the day of its 25th birthday, reaching the record for the longest known life span of a two-headed tortoise. Named after the two-headed Roman god, Janus was born on September 3, 1997 at Geneva's Natural History Museum from an egg that had been placed in an incubator. With two heads, the animal would not have survived in nature, but thanks to the attentive daily care of the museum, the tortoise hold the record of longevity. – AFP

Schoolchildren deserve free lunch



Kevin Watkins

The writer is a former CEO of Save the Children UK, is a visiting professor at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa at the London School of Economics

As children across Europe and the United States start a new school year, the world's governments are gearing up for their own big education moment. At the United Nations Transforming Education Summit (September 16-19), they have a chance to tackle a global learning crisis that has been amplified by the Covid-19 pandemic and rising levels of child poverty and malnutrition.

They should start by mobilising behind an old cause with an urgent new resonance: the provision of free school meals to children who would otherwise be left too hungry to learn.

Pandemic school closures deprived hundreds of millions of children of learning opportunities. Poorer countries closed their classrooms for longer than richer countries, with 1-2 entire school years lost across much of Africa, South Asia, and Latin America. And in rich and poor countries alike, opportunities for remote learning were heavily skewed towards children in wealthier households.

With schools reopening, the scale of the learning losses triggered by school closures is coming fully to light, along with evidence of widening inequalities. Data from poorer countries point to devastating declines from already-abysmal levels. The World Bank estimates that the share of ten-year-olds who are unable to read a simple story has risen from a pre-pandemic level of 57 per cent to over 70 per cent. One recent study in Malawi found that seven months of school closure led to a loss of more than two years' worth of foundational learning, with children forgetting concepts mastered before lockdown.

Millions of children are now returning to school carrying the triple burden of lost learning, increased poverty, and malnutrition. Hunger was rising even before Russian war on Ukraine added another inflationary twist to the global food crisis. Applying the Food and Agriculture Organization's regional estimates to Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia suggests that 179 million school-age children were living with hunger in 2021 – an increase of 35 million from 2020. In Africa's case, almost one-quarter of school-age children were suffering undernutrition.

Nor is this crisis restricted to the Global South. In the US, the number of children living in households struggling to put food on the table has increased dramatically over pre-pandemic levels, from 12 million to 18 million. In the United Kingdom, the debate about the cost-of-living crisis has focused mostly on energy prices. But food-price inflation has also squeezed household incomes and left more children hungry. The proportion of children living in food-insecure homes in the UK rose from 12 per cent to 17 per cent in the first quarter of 2022 alone, according to Food

Foundation surveys. As heating bills and food costs rise, the UK is now facing an Autumn child hunger crisis.

For poor and rich countries alike, undernutrition now represents a formidable – and fast-rising – barrier to recovery in learning. As every parent and teacher understands, hungry children struggle to learn. They are more likely to drop out of school, less likely to realise their potential, and at greater risk of being trapped in lifelong cycles of deprivation.

There is an antidote, though. Well-designed and properly financed free school-meal programmes can protect children against hunger, unlocking

MILLIONS OF CHILDREN ARE FALLING BEHIND IN THEIR EDUCATION AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC, MALNUTRITION, AND POVERTY. BUT WITH WELL-DESIGNED AND PROPERLY FINANCED SCHOOL-MEAL PROGRAMMES, GOVERNMENTS COULD HELP TO AMELIORATE THIS TREND, SPARING MILLIONS FROM A LIFELONG CYCLE OF DEPRIVATION

the benefits of education. There is overwhelming evidence that school feeding can increase attendance, reduce dropout rates, and improve learning outcomes, especially for the poorest children. An evaluation of Ghana's programme found that it increased average learning across the board, with children living in extreme poverty making the greatest gains – the equivalent of nine months of schooling.

The benefits of effective school-meal programmes extend beyond education and across generations. India's Midday Meal scheme – the world's largest school-feeding programme – has raised learning levels, partly by creating incentives to keep girls in education. Recent evidence has shown that girls covered by the MDM

also married and had children later, made greater use of health services, and had children who were less likely to be stunted.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic, many developing countries were expanding school-meal programmes, albeit from a low base. In Africa, where around one-quarter of children were covered by such programmes, governments had adopted ambitious plans for expanding access. Unfortunately, many of these plans have now been shelved, as unsustainable debt, slower growth, and reduced revenues have shrunk governments' fiscal space, weakening support for children in a moment of desperate need.

Richer countries were able to use their school-meal programmes to protect vulnerable children during the pandemic. For the first time in its 75-year history, the National School Lunch Program in the US was made available to all children without means testing. And in the UK, the soccer player Marcus Rashford cajoled a reluctant government into providing meal support during school holidays. Sadly, these concessions are now being diluted or withdrawn even as hunger increases.

What's needed now is a global movement for school meals. At this month's Transforming Education Summit, governments should commit themselves to the goal of universal provision of free school meals.

For the poorest countries, reaching that goal will require international support. The School Meals Coalition estimates that \$5.8 billion per year will be needed to restore programmes disrupted by Covid-19 and to expand provision to an additional 73 million children. The summit provides an opportunity for governments, aid donors, the World Bank, and other multilateral development banks to specify how they will fill the financing gaps. They should start by backing former UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown's proposal for a new education financing facility.

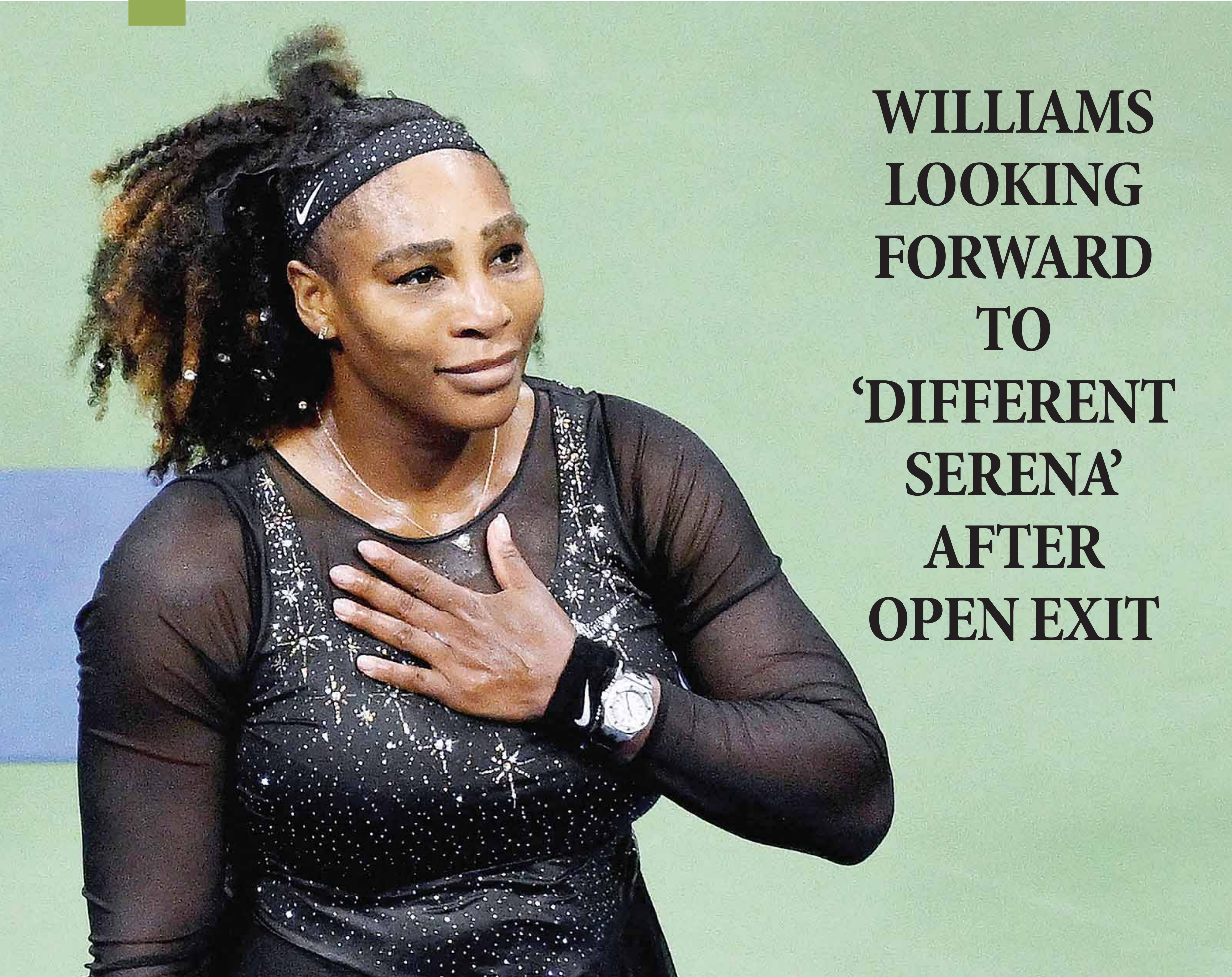
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Pandemic school closures deprived hundreds of millions of children of learning opportunities.

sport

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WILLIAMS LOOKING FORWARD TO ‘DIFFERENT SERENA’ AFTER OPEN EXIT

NEW YORK: Serena Williams said she is looking forward to a life beyond tennis after her dreams of a fairytale 24th Grand Slam victory at the US Open ended in defeat on Friday.

Williams, who turns 41 later this month, plans to “evolve” away from tennis following a US Open campaign that ended in the third round on Friday with a 7-5, 6-7 (4/7) 6-1 loss to Australia’s Ajla Tomljanovic.

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion said afterwards that while she was satisfied with her performances in New York, she was already eyeing her post-tennis life.

“It takes a lot of work to get here. Clearly I’m still capable,” Williams said. “It takes a lot more than that.”

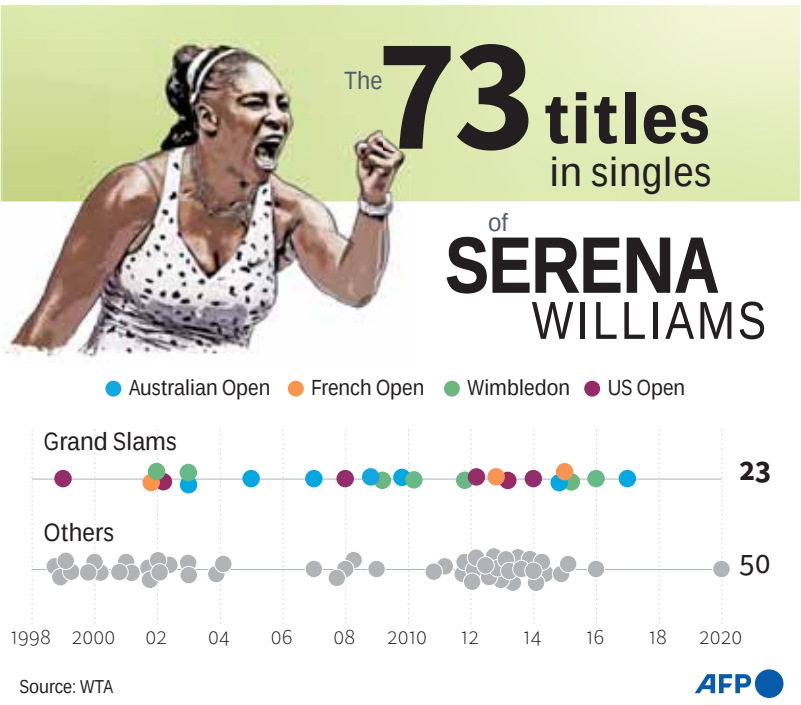
“I’m ready to, like, be a mom, explore a different version of Serena.”

“Technically in the world I’m still super young, so I want to have a little bit of a life while I’m still walking.”

While Williams said she hopes to remain involved in tennis in some capacity, in the near-term she plans to spend more time with daughter Olympia, 5.

“It’s been really hard on her, my career,” she said. “So it will be nice just to do that and spend some time with her, do things that I never really have done or had an opportunity to do.”

Williams admitted however she was uncertain about what role



tennis would play in her life.

“I’ve had so many amazing moments, that I don’t see a future without it,” she said. “What’s my involvement? I have no idea.”

Williams has stopped just short of definitively announcing her retirement, and once again deflected a question about whether there was any “wiggle room” in her apparent desire to hang up her racquet.

“I’m not thinking about that. I always did love Australia, though,” she quipped in a reference to next January’s Australian Open, a tournament she has won seven times.

Earlier, Williams had poured everything into one last stand

in front of a ferociously partisan crowd at the Arthur Ashe Stadium during her three-hour battle with Tomljanovic.

After levelling the match in a marathon 1hr 23min second set, the veteran’s resistance was finally broken in the third set as Tomljanovic raced into a 5-1 lead.

Even then, Williams summoned every last drop of her fighting spirit in an attempt to stave off defeat, saving five match points in the seventh game before finally succumbing.

Afterwards, Williams saluted the crowd, welling up as Tina Turner’s anthem “Simply the Best” belted out around the stands.

“It’s been a fun ride,” Williams

said. “It’s been the most incredible ride and journey I’ve ever been on, I mean, in my life.”

“I’m just so grateful to every single person that’s ever said, ‘Go, Serena,’ in their life. You got me here.” Williams reserved special praise for her parents Richard Williams and Oracene Price who put her and elder sister Venus on the path to tennis superstardom.

“It all started with my parents,” Williams said. “They deserve everything.”

GREATEST OF ALL TIME

Of big sister Venus, she added: “I wouldn’t be Serena if there wasn’t Venus, so thank you, Venus. She’s the only reason that Serena Williams ever existed.”

Tomljanovic, 29, meanwhile expressed disappointment that Williams’ career had drawn to a close.

“I’m feeling really sorry just because I love Serena just as much as you guys do,” she told the crowd. “What she’s done for me, for the sport of tennis, is incredible.”

“I never thought I’d have a chance to play her in her last match when I remember watching her in all those finals, so this is a surreal moment for me.”

Tomljanovic said she had also never felt certain of victory.

“Even to the last point, I knew that she’s in a position to win even when she’s down 5-1,” she said. “That’s just who she is. She’s the greatest of all time. Period.” — AFP



USA's Serena Williams waves to the audience after losing against Australia's Ajla Tomljanovic during their 2022 US Open Tennis tournament women's singles third round match. — AFP



Zimbabwe stun Australia in historic third ODI win

TOWNSVILLE: Zimbabwe stunned a nearly full-strength Australia by three wickets on Saturday to claim a historic victory in the third one-day international in Townsville.

After leg-spinner Ryan Burl (5-10) played a starring role in dismissing the hosts for a lowly 141, Zimbabwe overcame a wobbly chase to beat the cricket powerhouse for the first time in Australia when they hauled in the target in the 39th over, triggering scenes of celebration.

It was a consolation victory for Zimbabwe to conclude the three-match series.

“We showed a whole lot of fight... it was a testament to the work the boys put in,” said Zimbabwe skipper Regis Chakabva, who top-scored with a composed 37 not out.

The tourists started the chase impressively, with Takudzwanashe Kaitano and Tadiwanashe Marumani posting a 38-run opening stand.

But Australia quick Josh Hazlewood turned the game on its head with the wicket of Kaitano (19) in the ninth over, and soon after dismissed Wessly Madhevere and Sean Williams on consecutive deliveries.

A nervous Zimbabwe, seeking just their third victory against Australia from 32 ODIs, batted defensively and slumped to 77-5 after Murumani (35) fell to towering all-rounder Cameron Green.

Chakabva calmed the nerves and was joined by an inspired Burl, who hit a six off player-of-the-series Adam Zampa to get Zimbabwe within sight of a famous victory.

He fell with five runs needed but there was no late twist.

‘RELENTLESS WITH THE BALL’

“You turn up to international sport and you can get beaten on any day, and we saw that today,” said Australia captain Aaron Finch.

“They were relentless with the ball early on.”

In their first series in Australia since 2004, Zimbabwe struggled to be competitive in the opening two matches at the same venue and were routed for just 96 on Wednesday.

In a confidence boost, Chakabva won the toss for the first time in the series and his accurate attack claimed regular wickets against Australia’s misfiring batting order.

Only two batters reached double figures, with star opener David Warner (94) playing a lone hand in Australia’s innings lasting just 31 overs.

After Zimbabwe’s probing seamers tore through Australia’s top-order, an inspired Burl claimed five wickets in a whirlwind 18 balls starting with the key scalp of Glenn Maxwell, who helped rebuild the innings with a half-century partnership alongside Warner.

The dangerous Maxwell holed out for 19 in the 27th over and Burl got on a roll in his career best performance, including dismissing Warner, who fell just short of his 19th ODI century.

Zimbabwe bowled out Australia for the first time in ODIs and the eventual triumph fuelled their bid to climb the ODI Super League ladder, which goes towards qualification for next year’s 50-over World Cup in India. — **AFP**

WTT CONTENDER 2022 BEGINS IN MUSCAT TOMORROW

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

The Sultanate of Oman is all set to host another edition of WTT contender at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Muscat on Monday.

The six-day Muscat 2022 tournament, which is organised by the Oman Table Tennis Association (OTTA) in cooperation with WTT and ITTF, will attract more than 1,011 paddlers, referees, officials from 29 countries including Slovenia, Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, France, the US, Austria, Czech, Sweden, Japan, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Denmark, Ecuador, Iran, Italy, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Montenegro, Romania, Ukraine, Singapore, Poland, the Philippines, Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and the hosts Oman.

The event offers a total cash prize of \$75,000 in five disciplines including men’s and women’s singles/doubles and mixed doubles. The paddlers and officials from across the world began to arrive in Oman for the tournament on Friday. The remaining delegations will arrive on Sunday.

Seven paddlers from Oman will represent the hosts in this world-class event including Asaad al Raisi, Muhannad al Balushi, Ahmed al Riyami, Badar al Jassasi, Nasser al Balushi, Mohammed al Mutawa and Ghassan al Ghassani.

All of the national players will take part in the singles qualifications while the duo Asaad al Raisi and Muhannad al Balushi, and Badar al Jassasi and Mohammed al Mutawa will compete in the doubles competition. The playing system of all singles matches will be best of five games except for the semifinals onwards, which will be best of seven games.

All doubles and mixed doubles matches will be best of five games while all competitions are elimination knockout. As many as 25 referees from Oman and abroad will officiate in the event. Peter Bohumsky from Czech is the chief referee while Mahmoud Koraim from Egypt is the deputy referee. Muscat was the host city for several major TT events including WTT contender last February.



Rizwan helps Pakistan enter Asia Cup Super Four with huge win

SHARJAH: Mohammad Rizwan propelled Pakistan into the Asia Cup Super Four Stage as their bowlers kittled out minnows Hong Kong for a record low of 38 on Friday.

Pakistan scored 193-2 in a must-win Twenty20 international with Rizwan (78 not out) and Fakhar Zaman (53) putting on 116 after being invited to bat first on a slow and low Sharjah pitch.

Spinners Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz then shared seven wickets to bundle out Hong Kong in 10.4 overs and win by 155 runs - Pakistan’s biggest T20 victory margin by runs.

It was Hong Kong’s lowest T20 international total after their 69 against Nepal in 2014. It was also the lowest against Pakistan by any team after they bowled out West

Indies for 60 in 2018.

Pakistan join Afghanistan, India and Sri Lanka in round two of the six-nation tournament that acts as a tune-up to the T20 World Cup in October-November in Australia.

“Our performance and effort is for everyone to see,” man of the match Rizwan told reporters.

“Boys are putting in their 100 per cent and gelling well together and catering to the demand of our nation. The result is in the hands of God.”

Pace bowler Naseem Shah struck twice in the third over of the Hong Kong innings including the wicket of skipper Nizakat Khan for eight.

“Naseem Shah is emerging to be in line as another fast-bowling superstar. No one can replace Shaheen Shah Afridi (out with



Pakistan’s Mohammad Rizwan plays a shot during the Asia Cup Twenty20 international cricket match between Pakistan and Hong Kong at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium in Sharjah. — **AFP**

a knee injury), but Naseem is shaping up well,” said Rizwan.

Hong Kong, who made the main draw by winning all their

three matches in the qualifiers, could not recover.

Shadab returned figures of 4-8 from his leg spin and Nawaz took

three wickets with his left-arm orthodox.

KHUSHDIL BLITZ

Earlier, Khushdil Shah hit five sixes including four in the final over to finish with a flourish in his unbeaten 35 off 15 balls as Rizwan watched the blitz from the non-striker’s end in a partnership of 64.

Hong Kong’s bowlers kept the Pakistan openers in check with a disciplined line and length and spinner Ehsan Khan got the key wicket of skipper Babar Azam for nine in the third over.

It was Azam’s second failure in the tournament after he made 10 against India in his team’s opening loss, but Rizwan said the star batsman remains a “superstar” and a prolific run-getter.

Azam hit a four off Ehsan’s off

spin but the bowler soon took revenge with a caught and bowled to silence a pro-Pakistan crowd.

The left-handed Fakhar joined Rizwan, a wicketkeeper-batsman, and the two rebuilt the innings.

Rizwan reached his fifty off 42 balls to raise the bat amid raucous applause from the crowd.

Fakhar also changed gears and reached his fifty with a towering six off Murtaza’s left-arm spin, but got out next over to Ehsan after a 41-ball stay.

Khushdil then tore into the opposition bowling and ended the innings with three successive sixes.

Afghanistan will meet Sri Lanka in the Super Four opener on Saturday in Sharjah while India clash with rivals Pakistan for the second time in the tournament on Sunday. — **AFP**



Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc steers his car during the third free practice session ahead of the Dutch Formula One Grand Prix at the Zandvoort circuit. — AFP

Leclerc tops final Dutch GP practice ahead of Russell and Verstappen

ZANDVOORT, NETHERLANDS: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc topped the times ahead of George Russell of Mercedes in Saturday's third and final practice for the Dutch Grand Prix, the pair edging out local hero and runaway series leader Max Verstappen.

Red Bull's world champion was third in a closely-matched session that raised the prospect of a tight and competitive qualifying session at the short and compact Zandvoort circuit.

Leclerc was quickest with a best lap in one minute and 11.632 seconds to outpace Russell by 0.066 seconds with Verstappen a tenth of a second behind.

Carlos Sainz was fourth in the second Ferrari, less than two-tenths off the 24-year-old Dutchman's pace, ahead of seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes and Sergio Perez, who was sixth in the second Red Bull.

The top six were separated by only half a second.

Two-time champion Fernando Alonso was seventh for Alpine ahead of four-time champion Sebastian Vettel of Aston Martin, the man he is set to replace next



Ferrari's Monegasque driver Charles Leclerc

year, with Mick Schumacher ninth for Haas and Lando Norris 10th for McLaren.

It was a session with few notable incidents that saw the times improve throughout as the conditions encouraged greater speed.

On another perfect, dry late-summer's day, with an air temperature of 23 degrees and the track at 29, Perez was the first man out followed by Gasly. For several minutes, they were the only cars on track.

Verstappen made a dramatic entrance after 12 minutes by topping the timesheets immediately in 1:12.309 with Sainz slotting in second behind

him, six seconds adrift.

It was a statement lap from the Dutchman in front of his vast army of fans in the 105,000 crowd, packed into the tight and picturesque circuit in the North Sea sand dunes.

Despite complaining of lack of grip, Verstappen trimmed his time to 1:12.196 after 22 minutes with Leclerc in pursuit, 0.5sec adrift, and Hamilton third, six-tenths off the pace.

Ferrari responded with 19 minutes remaining when Sainz jumped to the top as the first man in the 1:11's, two-tenths clear of Verstappen before teammate Leclerc improved on that in 1:11.632.

The track was clearly improving and offering more grip and speed as Russell leapt to second, splitting the Ferraris and Hamilton taking fourth ahead of Verstappen, shortly before the champion returned to the fray.

His first lap lifted him to third, behind Leclerc and Russell, with Sainz fourth, this group separated by only three-tenths - indicating anyone from one of the leading three teams can mount a bid for pole position later on Saturday.

— AFP

Dominant South Africa snap winless streak in Australia

SYDNEY: A dynamic South Africa scored their first win on Australian soil in nine years on Saturday, overpowering the Wallabies 24-8 in Sydney to get their Rugby Championship campaign back on track.

The Springboks had not tasted victory in Australia since 2013, spanning eight previous Tests, but the four tries to one bonus point win ended the dire run to avenge their 25-17 loss in Adelaide last week.

Coach Jacques Nienaber's men went to the break 12-3 in front after tries from Damian de Allende and Canan Moodie on his debut, before Franco Mostert and Makazole Mapimpi added to the tally after the restart in a much-improved display.

It elevated them to joint second on the Rugby Championship ladder, a point behind leaders New Zealand with two games to play, both against Argentina, who were thrashed 53-3 by the All Blacks in the earlier game.

"Tough week last week, but grateful for the way the boys stood up and for the support back at home," said South Africa captain Siya Kolisi.

"It was the same as last week, but we just took our opportunities this week. It's been a long drought without a win here and it's a great thing for us."



Defeat left Australia sharing the second spot on nine points, with Dave Rennie's inconsistent team again failing to back up a win, a trait that has dogged them all season.

They now face an ominous double-header against the All Blacks in their drive to win the

southern hemisphere title for the first time since 2015.

"We really wanted to build a bit of momentum. That's probably why I'm so gutted right now, lost a game for our country and it doesn't get any easier," said Australia skipper James Slipper.

— AFP

Brilliant Pickford keeps out Liverpool in Everton derby thriller

BERLIN: Jordan Pickford frustrated Liverpool with a stunning goalkeeping performance in an absorbing 0-0 draw with Everton at Goodison Park on Saturday.

The England number one made a string of excellent saves, while opposite number Alisson also had to be sharp to prevent a home win in a Mersey side derby that could have been flooded with goals.

Both sides rattled the frame of the goal in the first half, Everton through Tom Davies before Liverpool's Darwin Nunez and Luis Diaz followed suit, while Mohamed Salah was also denied by the wood



work late on. Chances flowed in an open game, and Everton thought they had snatched the lead midway through the second half when former Liverpool academy player Conor Coady touched in Neal Maupay's cross, only to be denied when a VAR checked showed he was inches offside.

Liverpool goalkeeper Alisson made a smart early save to gather Anthony Gordon's fizzing strike after an Everton corner was only half-cleared, and the hosts came within a whisker of the opener when Davies smacked a shot from 12 yards against the left post. — dpa

Smith trails Wolff by one in LIV Golf debut



NEW YORK: World number two Cameron Smith capped an eventful LIV Golf debut round with a massive eagle putt to lie one shot off the lead at the LIV Golf Invitational in Boston on Friday.

Americans Matthew Wolff and Talor Gooch topped the leaderboard at The International Golf Club outside Boston on seven-under par 63.

Wolff seized his share of the lead with the help of two eagles — one of them the first hole-in-one in the history of the Saudi-backed breakaway circuit that has thrown the sport into turmoil.

"It was really cool to do that on a part of the golf course where there's a lot of fans, and to be the first one to have an ace at LIV Golf is really good," said Wolff, whose tee shot at the 178-yard second hole -- his fifth -- bounced once

and rolled into the cup.

"I'm thrilled and stuff, but I'd rather be holding that trophy at the end of the week," added Wolff, who also eagled the par-five 12th.

Smith shared third on 64 with another LIV Golf newcomer, Chile's Joaquin Niemann.

The fourth event of the inaugural season drew a small group of demonstrators decrying LIV Golf as an attempt to "sportswash" Saudi Arabia's human rights record.

But plenty of fans turned out eager to see the new product that has provoked the wrath of the US PGA Tour and the DP World Tour.

The US tour is suspending any member player who appears on the circuit, which awards \$25 million purses in a 54-hole format and has reportedly offered top stars tens of millions in signing

bonuses.

Smith, the 29-year-old Australian who captured the Open Championship at St. Andrews in July, made the jump just this week and got right to business.

With three birdies in his first six holes and an eagle at the eighth, Smith had a share of the lead but found himself three adrift after a double-bogey at the par-four 14th.

Smith rebounded with a birdie at 15 and an unlikely par save at 16 -- where his tee shot nestled at the base of a tree.

He got relief from a stance on a cart path but still damaged his gap wedge when it hit the tree on the shot. Nevertheless, he avoided dropping a stroke, and Smith was right back in the thick of it after rolling in a long eagle putt at 18. — AFP



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Oman Flour Mills plans Mini Factory Cluster

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

Seeking to expand its already considerable presence in the food sector, publicly listed Oman Flour Mills (OFM) says it plans to set up a first-of-its kind Mini Factory Cluster at a suitable location in the Sultanate of Oman.

OFM CEO Haitham al Fannah said the initiative will primarily focus on potato processed products, healthy snacking options and alternative protein options in the first phase.

“(The project is) in the evaluation phase,” said the CEO. “Multiple studies have been concluded and we are in the phase of finalising the best location for the cluster and the cluster engineering design,” he added in exclusive remarks to the *Observer*.

The company, Haitham al Fannah said, is currently studying suitable locations for the establishment of the Mini Factory Cluster. “We are looking into multiple industrial plots in the Sultanate of Oman, and it has yet to be finalised, however our priority is



to be close to Sohar Port as much as possible as our aim is also to penetrate the export market and being close to Suhar will give us a logistical advantage to access the international market,” he stated.

Asked about a timeline for the implementation of the venture, the CEO added: “Our aim is to award the civil contract for the construction in Q1 of 2023 and a programme for the installation of the equipment will be aligned with civil works completion and readiness of the building.”

The proposed Mini Factory

Cluster is part of a sizable portfolio of new initiatives planned by Oman Flour Mills to diversify its product offerings in the food sector. The company aims to become the first in the domestic industry to venture into Plant-Based Meat Products — a multibillion industry that is growing exponentially around the world.

The project, set to be the first of its kind in the country, is expected to be launched “within 1 – 2 years”, although this would depend on “penetration and opportunities as well”, he added.

E-commerce subject to VAT in Oman

Online marketplace:
Electronically supplied goods and services transacted via websites, electronic platforms, social media stores and electronic apps are subject to VAT regulations

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

New guidelines issued by the Oman Tax Authority confirm the inclusion of the e-commerce sector, currently expanding at an exponential rate, within the purview of the country’s Value Added Tax (VAT) regulations.

Consequently, a wide variety of goods and services supplied via electronic means, such as websites, electronic platforms, social media stores and networking sites and other electronic apps, are now subject to Oman’s VAT framework.

The Omani e-commerce market, valued at \$2.19 billion in 2020, is expected to reach \$6.52 billion by 2026, registering a CAGR more than 20 per cent by 2026, according to Japan-based Shibuya Data Count, a specialist in market research.

The sector grew robustly during the pandemic phase and is projected to expand dramatically on the back of the country’s digital transformation, rollout of 5G telecom services, rapid uptake of digital payment options, and the emergence of thriving online marketplaces.

The Tax Authority’s recent guide on the application of



VAT to e-commerce — also known as electronically supplied goods and services — makes it obligatory for suppliers, who engage in e-commerce activities but do not have a place of residence in the Sultanate of Oman, to register for VAT if they are required under the tax law to collect VAT due on their supplies to customers within the country.

Furthermore, as the application of VAT depends on the place of supply, the recipient customer and the nature of the goods, the Tax Authority has clarified that the place of supply is “where tax is imposed on goods at the end of the supply chain” — a key consideration especially when goods move between two countries.

Taxable suppliers who are registered or mandated to register for VAT must determine the appropriate tax rate on goods supplied within the Sultanate of Oman.

While the standard rate of 5 per cent is levied on

most goods, the zero-rate tax applies to certain types of goods, such as foodstuffs, medicines and specific medical equipment.

In some limited instances, the goods may be “exempt” from VAT, although these exemptions do not apply to goods supplied in the context of e-commerce, according to tax experts.

Importantly, a variety of digital services also fall within the remit of Oman’s VAT framework. Included in this category is the supply of digitised products such as software, website and webpage hosting services; digitised content of books and electronic publications, subscriptions to online newspapers, journals, online news, weather reports and so on; accessing or downloading music, jingles and ringtones; accessing or downloading films and video games; distance education services; supply of advertising space on the Internet; and live broadcasts via the Net.

Oman Chromite Company posts strong output growth in H1

HAMMAM AL BADI
MUSCAT, SEPT 3

Publicly traded Oman Chromite Company produced 25,900 tonnes of chromite ore in the first half of 2022, a significant increase over the corresponding output of 9,349 tonnes a year earlier.

After tax, the firm earned a profit of RO 653K, representing an increase of 245 per cent compared to RO 266K a year earlier. The uptick in profits was aided by the company’s ability to reduce costs, among other factors.

Earlier this year, the Oman Chromite signed a joint investment agreement with Mineral Development Oman (MDO) to explore for chromium ore at two sites, one in the North Al Batinah



Governorate and the other in Al Buraimi Governorate.

The company continues to seek licences for new sites and evaluate existing sites for their mineral potential. Its efforts to develop and enhance exploration and mining operations have contributed to an increase in production at its Mahrah mine, where it obtained a mining

licence in June 2021.

Chromite ores — metallic and refractory — are exported via Sohar Port metallic raw and refractory raw to East Asian markets and European countries, including Japan and South Korea, as well as India, Thailand, and South Africa.

Chromium is characterised by its great resistance to high temperatures, corrosion and rust.

Oman Chromite’s vision is embodied in the development of its activities and expansion in studies, production, processing and marketing of minerals, and the company aims to make minerals one of the most important sources of income for the Sultanate of Oman, and to improve the returns of shareholders and employees.

AUCTION ANNOUNCEMENT

Requis would like to announce an open invitation to the public to participate in a sealed bid auction on the Requis website as described in the table below.

LOT No.	Material Description	Location	Visit Date	Last Date for Bid Submission	Bid Submission	Bank Guarantee Amount
LOT # 1022	Assorted of Un-Used / Used Materials	Khazzan Logistic Hub	12 th -13 th September 2022 (8am- 4pm)	15 th September 2022 (02:00pm)	19 th September 2022 (02:00pm)	OMR 10,000

In accordance with the following terms & conditions:

The items offered for sale can be viewed at its dedicated area mentioned above “As is-where is” from 8am – 5pm and photos of the equipment along with **terms and conditions of the tender** can be found through following the link below and obtaining the bid form from the same website.

<https://supplychain.requis.com/procure/lots/1022>

Interested bidders should have valid commercial registration certificate issued from Ministry of Commerce & Industry Investment Promotion with commercial activity in specialized stores of material scrap and proof of registration (waste Management activity) from Oman Environmental services Holding Company (Be’ah).

Bidders planning to visit the field shall have Opal approved vehicle with valid inspection and minimum personal protective equipment (Hard hat, safety shoes, High-vis jacket and safety glasses) and send an email to auction coordinator for the site inspection to said.al-adawi@requis.com.

Interested bidders should submit the tender documents specified in the bid form in closed envelop on/ prior **15th September 2022 (02:00pm)** to auction coordinator at Landmark Building, Building 5115, Way 4557, Complex 245, 3rd floor.

For more details, please contact auction coordinator during site visit days on **Mob (+968 24473498)**.

Bank Muscat partners with Suhail Bahwan Group Holding for digital transformation

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman and Suhail Bahwan Group Holding LLC, one of the largest diversified business and commercial groups in the GCC, headquartered in the Sultanate of Oman have signed a cooperation agreement to expand the bank's cutting-edge digital solution coverage within the group, thereby accelerating digital transformation.

Through this agreement, Bank Muscat will leverage its digital capabilities in providing industry proven innovative solutions of B2B Payments, Account Services, Collections & Receivables and Liquidity Management to Suhail Bahwan Group Holding for making their entire transaction process efficient, seamless, and secure.

This agreement further enhances the existing relationship of Bank Muscat with Suhail Bahwan Group Holding, which includes wide range of banking solutions and services comprising of corporate loans, trade finance services, investments, and digital channel solutions.

The agreement was signed by Amal bint Suhail Bahwan, Vice Chairperson, Suhail Bahwan Group Holding and Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager — Corporate Banking,



Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid



Amal bint Suhail Bahwan

Bank Muscat.

Speaking on the digital transformation, Ilham bint Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager-Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: "We are currently in an exciting new era which is characterised with innovation, technology, and digitisation. The digital transformation is very much essential for an organisation to maximise execution capacity and for achieving breakthrough performance level.

We are further strengthening our long-standing relationship with Suhail Bahwan Group Holding, with our new age digital solutions accelerating the digital and process transformation initiatives within the group.

As a trusted banking partner, we are pursuing an ambitious

digital transformation strategy to support the success of our customers. We are building on our expertise and understanding of transaction landscape to bring sophisticated digital solutions to our customers to enhance their banking convenience.

Amal bint Suhail Bahwan, Vice Chairperson, Suhail Bahwan Group Holding said: "The case for digital transformation has never been so clear. We are delighted to partner with Bank Muscat to drive business transformation within our group in all areas of banking, which includes payments, collections, visibility of funds and liquidity management.

The digitalisation will immensely benefit our customers, partners, and employees. The new digital initiatives will act as a catalyst in shaping our journey

to become a future ready and sustainable organisation.

A shift to digital typically brings in a host of benefits including efficiency, cost reduction, accountability, speed and scalability to our group which enables us to stay ahead of the market change."

Bank Muscat's 'B2B Connect' platform is a Host-to-Host solution through which corporates can directly integrate with the bank's systems, and embed the banking solutions for salary and vendor payments within their ERP systems.

The bank's niche Business to Business (B2B) Connect platform is particularly useful for institutional customers as they can achieve a high degree of automation in payables reconciliation and minimise risks related to payment processes through the solution.

The enhanced ease of banking will enable the institution to provide better service to its vendors, customers and other stakeholders because of the straight-through nature of online channels. Bank Muscat's Transaction Banking solution enables achievement of automation in the activities of the treasury/finance team through cutting-edge technology and processes aligned with corporate's needs.

The Account Services solution

provides enhanced visualisation of the overall banking relationship across all banks which includes accounts with Bank Muscat as well as other local/international banks. Direct Debit and Virtual Accounts are collection solutions, which facilitate automation in the reconciliation of receivables in addition to providing corporates with complete control and visibility of collections.

'Sweeps' is an advanced liquidity management solution for account balance management, which allows automation in funds movement between accounts as per pre-defined rules.

With business connectivity and digitalisation now more important than ever, Bank Muscat's corporate banking solutions are providing its valued clients with seamless access to a number of corporate services that is crucial to their success in the modern world.

The bank's corporate offerings include tailor-made solutions such as Corporate Internet Banking, Remote Cheque Deposit and Direct Debit solutions. Bank Muscat has been a pioneer in Oman in implementing digital banking solutions for its customers and is focused on helping corporates to make a smooth transition towards efficient tech-focused processes and use cutting-edge technology to their best advantage.

Vodafone unveils new subscription plans



MUSCAT: Vodafone has announced the release of two additional plans tailored for those looking for more. RED Explore and RED Pioneer join Vodafone's permanent line-up of subscription-based plans; RED Advance, RED Premium and RED Elite, offering competitive data and voice allowances worry-free.

As with all RED plans, the latest additions also include roaming in GCC and Vodafone destinations worldwide, easy onboarding through the My Vodafone App with eSIM, unrestricted hot spotting and speeds, great value-add-ons and much more.

Since early 2021, Vodafone has been gradually changing the technology landscape in Oman. Operating a worry-free subscription-based business model, it is giving customers an enlightened perspective on telecom needs, by providing the agility and freedom to either change or auto-renew their plans on a monthly basis — no strings attached.

"We consider our customers part of our Research and Development team and since our launch, we have been carefully monitoring and analysing their usage, consumption and inquiries, identifying patterns that guided us in designing our RED plans," said Aisha al Kiyumi, Vodafone's Pricing Manager.

"Vodafone in Oman is a mobile technology company established for a purpose, and that is connect. Connect people, connect businesses, connect industries through simple, flexible, worry-free telecom services."

The new RED Explore includes 25GB and 500 minutes for RO 12 monthly while RED Pioneer offers customers a jaw-dropping 80GB, unlimited local calls and 200 international minutes for only RO 24 monthly.

Nafath Renewable Energy partners with bp Oman to provide solar systems for cyclone-impacted farms

MUSCAT: Omani integrated energy solutions firm Nafath Renewable Energy launched the fourth cycle of the 'Mustadeem' programme in partnership with bp Oman, and in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The programme will provide 50 independent 10kW solar energy systems for greenhouses and farms in areas affected by Cyclone Shaheen.

The programme will focus on Al Suwaiq and Al Khabourah wilayats and will include training sessions for farmers and jobseekers on how to use those solar energy systems.



This will help reduce electricity costs and enable the farmers to have a reliable power sources

during power grid outages. In addition, the programme will offer courses to 150 university

and college students, training opportunities for job seekers, and will allow SMEs to participate in implementing the programme in line with the national priorities of increasing in-country value.

Shamsa al Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, commented: "This collaboration is a great example of how we can empower communities by investing in renewable energy sources. Not only will it help increase higher farming production rates, but it will reduce approximately 640 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions. This collaboration delivers on our aim at bp of

achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and reimagining energy for our people and planet."

Abdullah al Saidi, Chief Executive Officer at Nafath Renewable Energy said: "We are excited to partner with bp Oman to deliver the programme's objectives of delivering solar power energy to affected farms.

Diversifying the way we produce energy in Oman particularly to the agricultural will contribute to Oman's food security and self-sufficiency, which is a key priority in Oman Vision 2040. We look forward to the outcomes of the programme and the impact it will generate."

OETC, REN sign MoU to boost technical cooperation

MUSCAT: Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), a member of Nama group, has signed a memorandum of understanding with Redes Energéticas Nacionais (REN), a Portuguese company which operates in transmission of electricity in high voltage in Portugal and transmission of high-pressure natural gas to boost work mechanisms, joint technical cooperation and knowledge sharing between the two companies in the field of transmission of electricity.

With the participation of Eng Omar al Wahaibi, Nama Group CEO, the MoU was signed by Eng Saleh al Rumhi, OETC CEO, and Rodrigo Costa, REN CEO.

This agreement aims to enhance cooperation between the two parties, to share knowledge, exchange experiences and best practices on technical and technology field.

The MoU also encourages cooperation in the field of sharing information and exchanging experiences and studies in technical and scientific development in the electricity transmission sector and use of 4th industrial revolution in development and operation of electrical networks.

Commenting on the MoU, Eng Saleh al Rumhi, OETC Chief Executive Officer, stated, "Signing this MoU is an important step



towards achieving the company's vision to have a world-class smart transmission grid. We are confident that cooperation with REN will contribute to upgrading the Sultanate of Oman electricity transmission grid by benefiting from the REN's experience in this field.

In addition, according to the MoU, the two parties will cooperate to carry out training activities in fields related to electricity transmission, studies and research as well as arrange for visits of professionals from both Parties. Each party may also seek experts' assistance of the other party."



Al Shawamikh and Frontech ink pact to use blockchain in sustainable energy management

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 3

Al Shawamikh Oil Services Company, a leading local community company (LCC) operating in the energy sector, has signed a cooperation agreement with well-known technology firm Frontech, to develop a sustainable energy management system through the usage of blockchain technology.

The pact, signed by Dr Aflah bin Said al Hadhrami, CEO of Al Shawamikh Oil Services, and Dr Ammar bin Darwish al Obaidani, CEO of Frontech, looks into enhancing the work system and joint cooperation in developing sustainable energy solutions.

Dr Aflah al Hadhrami

commented: "Blockchain or the digital blockchains are the new digital revolution that may go beyond the Internet revolution and has gained great momentum recently.

"The agreement between Al Shawamikh and Frontech comes to take advantage of one of the possibilities of the fourth industrial revolution to develop sustainable solutions for energy and to meet the aspirations and objectives of Oman Vision 2040 in its renewable renaissance."

He pointed out that blockchain technology contributes to finding smart solutions to develop performance, increase efficiency, and reduce the time and effort required to provide the service while maintaining



the highest standards of quality and effectiveness through the use of smart and unconventional patterns.

From his side, Dr Ammar al

Obaidani, CEO of Frontech, said: "Frontech was established to achieve national goals by providing high-level technical solutions to leading technologies. The company works

on implementing many projects and initiatives with various sectors, whether from the governmental or private sectors. This partnership with Al Shawamikh Oil Services Company will accomplish one of those goals through the National Blockchain Network, as it provides a points system on the blockchain technology for its partners and clients."

Based on the agreement, Frontech will develop a system for generating points of specific and recognised value using blockchain technology to represent the units produced in sustainable energy networks, in order to effectively manage the units of energy produced, and the ability to use them in different ways.

In implementation of this

agreement, both parties will also hold regular workshops to exchange knowledge and allow specialised experts from various institutions in the two sectors to exchange ideas on field studies of the system.

Al Shawamikh Oil Services is one of the trusted local community companies in the oil and gas sector within energy market in the Sultanate of Oman including fields of sustainable energy.

While Frontech is a leading provider of integrated, customised solutions and systems empowered with blockchain using the latest technologies to develop various systems and platforms in the Sultanate of Oman and around the world in a safe and sustainable manner.

Oman Corrosion Conference concludes at OCEC

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, SEPT 3

The Oman edition of the Corrosion Conference, jointly organised by Al Nimr Expo, Innovative Concepts and Raya Services in partnership with AMPP Oman, was held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre last week under the auspices of Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shammakhi, Under-Secretary of Transport, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The inauguration of the 2-day forum was attended by a VIP gathering of technical experts, industry leaders and influencers across the corrosion sector.

The welcome address was delivered by Amjad al Kharusi,



AMPP Oman General Manager, which was followed by an opening address and keynote speeches by Salim al Mahrouqi, Trustee, AMPP Oman Chapter; Taher bin Mohammed al Busaidi, Acting Director-General, Maritime Affairs Consultant and Auditor

for the International Maritime Organization, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology (MoTCIT), Talal al Nabhani, PDO, and Nasser al Behlani, respectively.

The inaugural session concluded with the presentation of the Nasser

Behlani Youth Excellence Awards.

The conference featured sessions revolving around the key themes: Corrosion Control and Management, Asset Integrity Management, Big Data Analytics-Corrosion Modelling, Surface Preparation and Coatings, Failure Analysis and Remote Inspections: Use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning plus case studies.

Leadership panel sessions were focused on "Integrating Corrosion Decisions into an Organisational Management System" and "Proactive Approach to Corrosion."

A pool of esteemed panelists included representatives from OQ, BP Oman, Schlumberger, PDO, Port of Sohar, Petronas Group and MoTCIT.

How to avoid scams in crypto



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The writer is a member of the International Press Association

with you again. In crypto however, this might come as a form of transaction.

For example, someone sends you a lengthy message stating that a mysterious seller is willing to let go a number of Bitcoins (sometimes gold too) for a discounted price. The process for the transaction is carefully described in details, making it sound really thought through and legit.

However, there is no legitimacy at the back of it, because there is no seller to start with. Someone is just looking for a way to pocket some advance transactions with the excuse of testing how genuine is the buyer, or the authenticity of a crypto wallet.

A Ponzi scheme on the other hand is designed with the intention of raising funds for the development of some sort of actual project. One that I was pitched last year promised many thing along the way: a crypto wallet, a crypto messenger, a blockchain social media, a blockchain phone, a metaverse.

Every time they failed to deliver a promise, they promised something better and bigger, to keep the money flowing in. In general they tend to show their face, unlike true blue scammers. Probably, Ponzi founders deep down genuinely think that they can get something done, but due to their greed and often total lack of knowledge on the subject matter, they fail to deliver.

Generally they tend to embellish their story citing some successful case study. Often there is a young good looking man in his 20s, probably stationed in Dubai, driving a fancy car and posting pictures of posh restaurants on Instagram.

This "pawn" is fully sponsored by the Ponzi puppeteer and is used mostly to show that "the system works". The sad thing about Ponzi scheme is that the entry level amount is relatively small, and most inexperienced investors think: "It's just a small amount, even if I lose, it is not a big deal."

MSX rises 1.48% supported by investors

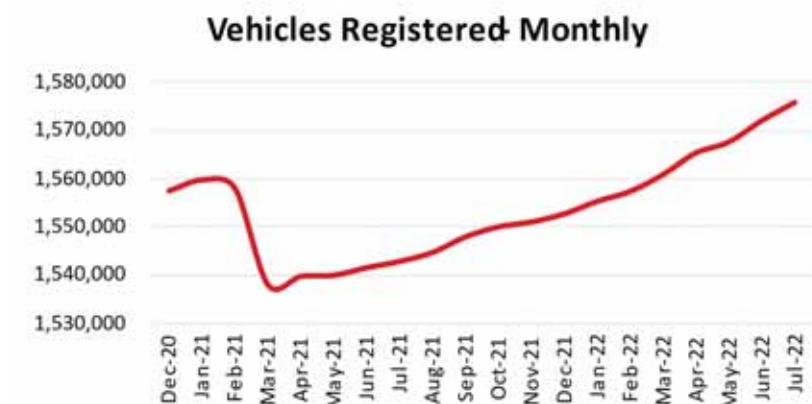
MUSCAT: The MSX30 index ended the week higher by 1.84 per cent. The Financial index ended the week up by 1.69 per cent, the Services index also ended the week higher by 2.48 per cent. The Industrial index closed higher by 2.23 per cent. The MSX Shariah index closed also up by 1.21 per cent.

GCC and foreign investors bought \$3.3 million worth of stocks on the bourse, while Omanis and Arabs were net sellers. During the week, Al Maha Petroleum Marketing Company announced that it has signed an agreement with the Port of Duqm to provide bunkering services for marine vessels.

As part of Oman's Vision 2040 to diversify the economy, including marine and logistics services, this agreement is also the fulfilment of a long-term vision for Al Maha to be a refueling service provider to all industries in Oman.

Al Maha Ceramics announced on MSX during the week, in reference to Sales and Purchase agreement between Al Maha and Al Hael Ceramics Company LLC that was made on May 30, 2022 on MSX, that the acquisition of a 45-per cent stake in Al Hael Ceramics has now been completed.

Al Maha will manage and operate Al Hael factory for the next



5 years as per the management agreement. Al Hael's factory is one of the largest in the Middle East, which is equipped with the latest Italian technologies in tiles manufacturer from SACMI.

Acquiring 45 per cent stake in Al Hael Ceramics at a consideration of \$5.4 million is one of Al Maha Ceramics strategic moves to increase its production capacity and thus its future sales.

Al Maha Ceramics has a production of 6m sqm and Al Hael Ceramics has a production capacity of 18m sqm.

A number of companies have been hosting Investor & Analyst Calls to discuss 1H22 financial results. This has provided an opportunity to investors as well as analysts to find out about the company's performance and future plans through direct interaction with the senior management of the companies.

The total number of vehicles registered in Oman stood at 1.576 million in July 2022, representing an increase over June 2022 registered vehicles at 1.752 million, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Private vehicles topped the list of vehicles registered at 1.252 million, followed by 0.235 million commercial vehicles and 0.028 million taxis. The number of vehicles with temporary registration increased to 7,003 in July 2022 compared to 7,152 vehicles in June 2022.

OQ, the integrated energy group of the Sultanate of Oman, posted a 62-per cent jump in consolidated during 2021, which surged to \$22.768 billion, compared to \$14.006 billion a year earlier.

The state-owned energy conglomerate – part of Oman

Investment Authority – posted a net profit of \$1.818 billion for the year, compared to a net loss of \$4.460 billion in 2020.

OQ Group Chairman Mulham Basheer al Jarf described the group's performance in 2021 as "exceptional", driven primarily by the "improved market environment, as well as strong operational performance across the business".

The aggregate volume of agricultural, livestock and fisheries production increased rapidly from 2015 to 2021 at an average growth rate of 8.1 per cent in Oman. Total output aggregated 4.6 million tonnes in 2021.

According to the annual report of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, the agriculture and fisheries sectors contributed 2.5 per cent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) last year. The data also indicated an increase in the value of exports and imports from the end of the eighth Five-Year Plan (2015) until the end of last year.

Total agricultural and fishery exports last year amounted to RO 305 million, compared to RO 270 million in 2015, while imports amounted to RO 991 million, compared to RO 847 million in 2015.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

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Friday Market, In The Morning

I reached the Friday Market around eleven o'clock, and parking was extremely difficult. One, however, was hardly found. Having visited this market twenty-five years ago, I was not surprised that I arrive at the market in the same nature it always has been in the past... **P20**

Peak Tram back on track in tourist-devoid Hong Kong

THE PEAK TRAM, Hong Kong's famed public transport and a popular tourist draw, reopened on Saturday after a year-long \$102 million facelift even as the city's coronavirus curbs continue to keep overseas visitors at bay. The historic funicular, which dates back to 1888 and offers panoramic views of Hong Kong Island's famous skyline as it ascends to Victoria Peak, used to draw over six million visitors a

year, according to its operator. The latest makeover brought more spacious tramcars that accommodate 210 passengers, a full overhaul of its rail systems and a redesigned terminus at the heart of Hong Kong's central business district. The Peak Tram closed for upgrades in June 2021, a period when the Chinese finance hub's strict border controls — in line with Beijing's zero-Covid strate-



gy — all but wiped out its tourism industry. The redevelopment went overbudget by around \$15 million, which its operator attributed to supply chain difficulties during the pandemic, such as bringing the custom Switzerland-made tramcars to Hong Kong. An adult return ticket now costs HK\$68 (\$11.20), a nearly 70 per cent jump from before the makeover. "I hope all visitors will feel it's worth

the price," May Tsang, general manager of tram operator the Peak Complex, said on Wednesday. "We have to consider the increase in our operating costs and the long-term sustainability of our business." On Saturday morning, a woman named Kwok and her young daughter were among a crowd of around a hundred waiting in line to try out the refurbished tram. "It's been a long time since I was

here and it'll be her first time," she said of her daughter. Chau, who brought his two sons along for a family outing, said he was generally satisfied with the revamp. "It's a bit pricey, but so is everything nowadays." Tourists were mostly absent on Saturday as Hong Kong saw just a total of 134,000 visitors in the past four quarters — a mere fraction of the 65 million that came to the city in 2018. The new sixth generation tramcars are a far cry from the sedan chairs that carried visitors to Victoria Peak during the early days of British colonial rule. But they are now painted in a deep green colour, a nod to previous generation tramcars in service from 1948 until 1989 — when they were refurbished in a burgundy red. At 396 metres (1,300 feet) above sea level, the Peak, once an exclusive enclave for Hong Kong's rich and powerful, remained off-limits to most of the local population until 1947. It is now best known as an easy-to-access spot for residents and tourists to enjoy views of Hong Kong's sprawling cityscape, with Victoria Harbour in the distance.

READ

LIGHTLARK

BY ALEX ASTER

Every 100 years the island of Lightlark appears and a deadly competition called the Centennial takes place.



MUSSELS WHAT?

An employee of "La Chicoree" restaurant empties a bucket of empty mussel shells onto a pile during the annual Braderie de Lille (Lille Fleamarket) in Lille, northern France. Around 1.5 million people are expected to attend the Braderie weekend, which comes back after a two-year break due to Covid. — AFP



FASHION TREND

A model displays a creation from the Requal 2023 S/S Collection by Japanese designer Tetsuya Doi at Tokyo Fashion Week in Tokyo. — AFP





A Leading Choreographer Joins the War Effort, With Classical Ballet

CHOREOGRAPHER ALEXEI Ratmansky was leading a newly formed ballet company of Ukrainian dancers who have fled the war in a run-through of “Giselle,” a 19th-century classic, in a repurposed conservatory in The Hague, Netherlands, where the dancers have been rehearsing, and some living, since April.

He seemed to be everywhere at once, fine-tuning the corps de ballet (“Feel the geometry between the hand and the leg”), correcting a soloist (“That jump was not very good — you have to push into the floor”), and honing the acting of a male lead (“Imagine that you are in a dark forest, and then run because you see something, not because you are supposed to run at that moment”). He was working to turn this ad hoc group of dancers of varying skill into a first-class company that could project Ukrainian excellence to the world.

“I want people to see them as artists, not as refugees or victims,” Ratmansky said after a rehearsal. “There is so much history and drama behind these performances. It colours everything we do.”

Ratmansky, one of the greatest living choreographers and most important figures in ballet, has thrown himself into supporting Ukraine, where he spent his childhood, with an intensity matched by few other artists. When the Russian war began, he was in Moscow working at the Bolshoi Ballet, where he was once the artistic director; he left immediately and later said he was unlikely to return while President Vladimir Putin remained in power in Russia.

“It was exactly like the world was crashing down,” he said of that first morning of the war. “The fact that Russia was bombing Kyiv, where my parents and sister live, and that my family’s life was in danger was just too overwhelming.”

On social media, he has marshaled expressions of solidarity with Ukraine from across the ballet world, a world in which Russia has historically played a towering role. And he and his wife, Tatiana, a former dancer, spent two months in The Hague, helping build the new United Ukrainian Ballet Company, which toured the Netherlands and will perform in London next month.

It is a major shift for Ratmansky, who has said in the past that he did not see himself as a political artist. But since Russia attacked Ukraine, he has begun to see things differently. “The situation brings art and politics together in such an obvious way, in a way I’ve never experienced before,” he said.

The choice of “Giselle,” a French ballet, reflects this. “We picked it because it is something that they know and that requires a large number of dancers,” Ratmansky said, “but also because it is not Russian.”

Ratmansky’s life and career reflect the long, intertwined relationship between Russia and Ukraine. With a mother from St. Petersburg, Russia, and a father from Kyiv, Ukraine, Ratmansky grew up in Kyiv, trained in Moscow and began his dancing career at the National Ballet of Ukraine. As a student in Moscow, he was often referred to as “the boy from Kyiv.” After stints in Canada and Denmark, he became a choreographer and rose to the heights of Russian ballet, becoming



the director of the Bolshoi, before leaving in 2008 to become artist in residence at American Ballet Theater in New York and to focus on his increasingly busy international career.

Since the war, he said, he has heard from few of his Russian friends and colleagues, though many know he has family in Ukraine. “It’s hard to put into words,” he said. “It is very painful.”

In The Hague, Ratmansky — who, like many Ukrainians, grew up speaking Russian — reluctantly led rehearsals in Russian. “I was hoping to switch to Ukrainian while I was here, but when I tried, I made so many mistakes, the dancers were all laughing,” he said.

Ratmansky’s parents, Osip and Valentina, both in their 80s, were able to leave Ukraine to visit him briefly in The Hague, taking a long bus ride to Warsaw, Poland, and then a flight to Amsterdam; they hadn’t seen their son since the war. “My parents were their usual selves,” he said. “Apart from just being bubbly and hugging us, they were like professional tourists, trying to see as much as possible.” After a week, they returned to Ukraine. “We had one or two more serious talks,” he said. “Of course it hasn’t been easy.” They insisted that they

would be fine.

The new company was formed through the efforts of Igone de Jongh, a former star of the Dutch National Ballet, who was on tour with two dancers from the National Ballet of Ukraine, Alexis Tutunnique and Stanislav Olshanskiy, when the war began. With the help of the Dutch theatrical management and production company Senf and city officials, she became the leading force behind the establishment of the Dutch Center for Ukrainian Dancers here and began working to create the United Ukrainian Ballet Company. Word of the new company spread quickly, via social media, among the Ukrainian ballet diaspora.

De Jongh knew Ratmansky from her time at Dutch National, where she danced several of his ballets, including “On the Dnieper” and “Russian Seasons,” but did not know his background until she began to see his full-throated support for the Ukrainian war effort.

“Honestly, I had no idea he was Ukrainian before now,” she said. When she invited him to help the new ensemble, he jumped at the chance, agreeing to donate his time. In less than two months, a company was born.

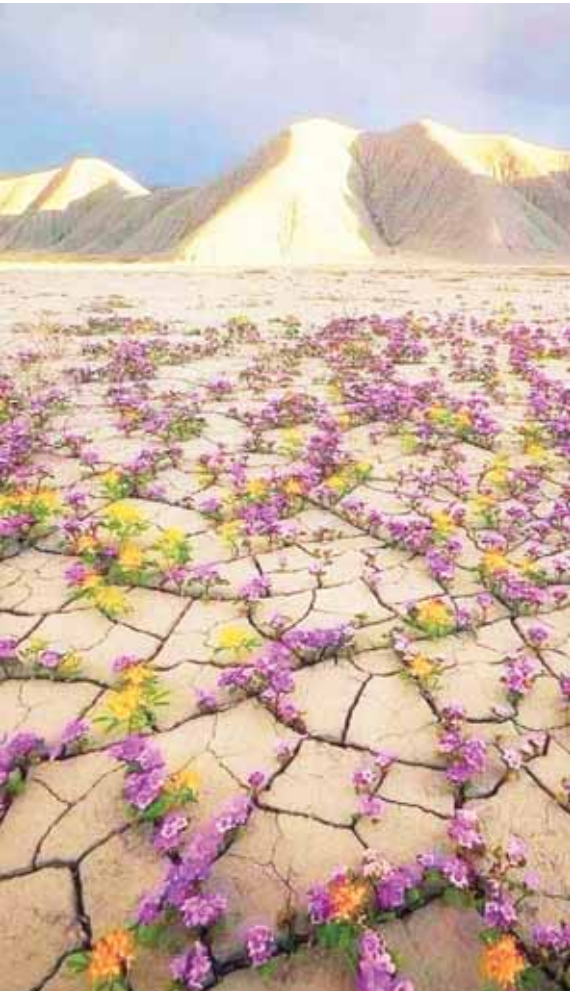
Ratmansky arrived in June to begin

rehearsing his “Giselle,” which is based on archival documents, including 19th-century notations. (He used the same sources when he staged the ballet for the Bolshoi in 2019.) Sets and costumes were lent by the Birmingham Royal Ballet, with the second-act backdrop, a nocturnal forest, borrowed from Frederick Ashton’s “The Dream.” When the company tours London, the English National Opera will provide an orchestra, to be led by Viktor Oliynyk, who conducts the orchestra of the National Opera of Ukraine in Kyiv, where the Ukrainian ballet also performs. (In the Netherlands, the performances were to recorded music.)

During a recent visit to the former conservatory, small groups of dancers, who come from the Ukrainian cities of Kyiv, Odesa, Donetsk, Dnipro and Kharkiv, and range in age from 18 to their late 30s, went about their business with a quiet sense of purpose. A few huddled on couches, speaking in soft voices in a mix of Ukrainian and Russian. The children of several dancers (there are 63 dancers in all) and of some of the nearly 200 other Ukrainian refugees living in a separate wing of the building ran through the hallways, making up games. — NYT

TRAVEL TALES

Chile’s flowering desert may bloom again after heavy rains



THE ARID PLAINS of northern Chile are likely to once again be painted a rainbow of colours with blooming flowers after this year’s winter rains set the stage for the so-called flowering desert in the Atacama Desert.

The Atacama bloom attracts large numbers of local and foreign tourists and happens after heavy rains in the southern hemisphere’s winter.

In June, some areas received more than 80 millimetres (3.15 inches) of water, a significant amount for the normally arid desert, said biologist Roberto



Contreras.

“That tells us the (floral) phenomenon could be significant (this year),” he added.

Seeds and bulbs of endemic species like the “Ananuca” or “Pata de Guanaco” typically hide underground as the hot sun beats down from above, waiting for enough water to shoot out of the ground.

In the Llanos de Challe National Park, the gateway to the driest desert in the world, the phenomenon is already seen with the sprouting of small carnations and other species.

“It is just beginning, we hope that by the second half of September we can have even more flowering,” said park ranger Jorge Godoy.

Due to the fragility of the ecosystem, the area is usually protected and driving through the grounds



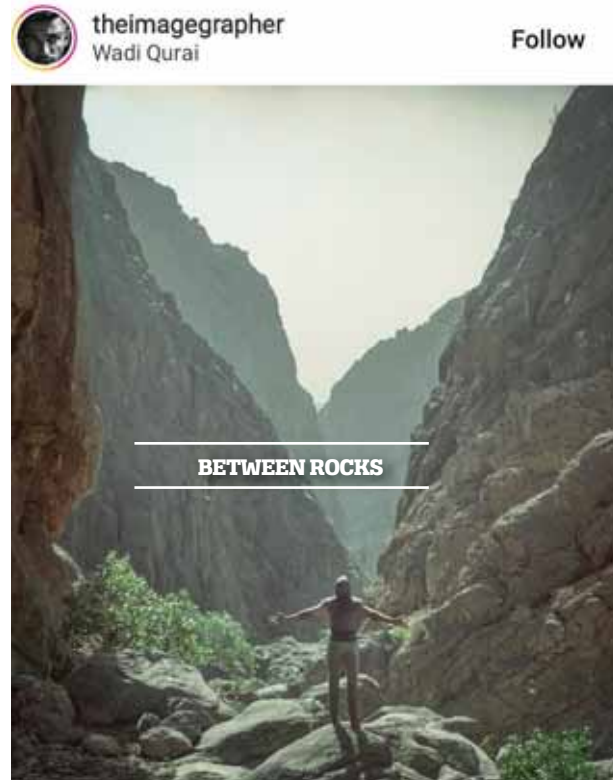
is forbidden, but it is still common to see vehicles passing through the flowery slopes.

The area also faces the persistent threat of traffickers of endemic species or visitors picking flowers, which are unlikely to survive outside their environment.

The regional head of the national tourism office, Alejandro Martin, said his office is already preparing for tourists who want to witness the bloom, adding visitors would be expected to protect the natural surroundings. — Reuters



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AROUND THE WORLD

LIFESTYLE

Young stars, fragile families to the fore at maskless Venice



THE VENICE FILM Festival opens on Wednesday with all health limitations lifted, but with the emotional fallout of the pandemic echoed in the many films exploring families facing trauma, which highlight a new generation of talent.

For movie fans it will be a welcome return to normal at the world's oldest film festival, as they are once again able to greet stars arriving at the Lido red carpet for the 11-day festival.

"We missed the atmosphere, the mood, the joy of the people watching the talent on the red carpet," festival director Alberto Barbera told Reuters.

Regarded as a launch pad for Oscar contenders, Venice has become increasingly important for production houses looking to showcase some of their most eye-catching movies, which this year feature a younger-than-usual line-up of budding A-listers.

Timothée Chalamet, Ana de Armas, Sadie Sink, Harry Styles and Florence Pugh are just some of the new generation of stars, who will be rubbing shoulders with more established festival favourites such as Penelope Cruz, Cate Blanchett, Tilda Swinton, Christoph Waltz and Sigourney Weaver.

"I think that we are facing a sort of renovation of the generation of the talent and the filmmakers as well," said Barbera. "This is the cinema of tomorrow, of course."

While Venice draws together movies from vastly different countries and cultures, many appear to have a similar theme coursing through them — dysfunctional families struggling to overcome trauma and chaos.

"The pandemic created a lot of problems inside the families ... and most of the films that we are showing in the festival are reflecting this situation," said Barbera. "The tone is pretty dark, actually."

TOXIC

The opening picture, director Noah Baumbach's "White Noise", which stars Adam Driver and Greta Gerwig, should provide some humour as it shows an American family's efforts to deal with everyday life even as they confront toxic disaster.

"The Son", starring Hugh Jackson, shows a family struggling to reunite after falling apart, while "The Eternal Daughter", follows an artist, played by Swinton, as she confronts long-buried secrets with her elderly mother.

"The Whale" by Darren Aronofsky, portrays Brendan Fraser as an obese man attempting to reconnect with his estranged daughter, played by "Stranger Things" actor Sink.

"Other People's Children" by Rebecca Zlotowski, "Love Life" by Koji Fukada, "Saint Omer" by Alice Diop, "Our Ties" by Roschdy Zem all put aspects of family life at the heart of their dramas, as does "L'Immensita" by Emanuele Crialese, which stars the winner of last year's best actress award, Cruz.

One of the most anticipated films is Andrew Dominik's "Blonde" which features Cuban-born actress de Armas in an emotional re-telling of how an unwanted child became the most sought-after and troubled star of her age — Marilyn Monroe.

"Blonde" is one of four Netflix films up for the prestigious Golden Lion prize — a testament to the streaming company's movie ambitions even as it struggles to maintain subscribers.

While much attention is focused on the main prize, a handful of movies shown out-of-competition could steal the limelight, including steamy thriller "Don't Worry Darling", directed by Olivia Wilde and starring Pugh and Styles.

An apparent fallout between Wilde and Pugh, and Internet gossip over relations between Wilde and Styles has only fuelled interest in the film, which premieres on September 5. — **Reuters**

TOURISM

Sweltering Saudis escape to mountainous 'City of Fog'



AS SAUDI ARABIA swelters in sizzling desert temperatures, some are escaping to the "City of Fog" — a mountainous oasis of cool where warm clothing is needed even in summer.

Sitting with friends on a picnic blanket, under light rain and a thick, swirling mist in Al-Namas, Abdullah Al-Enizi wears a body-warmer over his traditional white robes to guard against the chill.

The retreat, 2,800 metres (9,200 feet) above sea level in Saudi Arabia's rugged south, is in stark contrast to other parts of the vast, largely desert country where summer heat of up to 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit) is an annual challenge.

At Al-Namas, humid monsoon weather keeps temperatures below 30 degrees Celsius, dropping as low as 15 degrees Celsius at night, as fog blocks out the sun over verdant hills.

"It's 46 degrees in Riyadh and only 20 here, it's 26 degrees lower," says Al-Enizi at the holiday destination, about 850 kilometres (530 miles) southwest of the Saudi capital.

"We're escaping the heat. Here, it's cool and the rain and fog are here nearly all the time," added the semi-retired Saudi, 45, who drove about 12 hours from Riyadh.

Around his group of friends, families enjoy the breeze as their children run around in the fresh air, rather than being cooped up in their air-conditioned houses as is usual elsewhere in the country.

Clusters of holidaymakers in raincoats and woolly hats sip Arabic coffee and crowd under umbrellas, while kites flutter in the wind.

"Before we came, we packed all our winter things!" says Nouf, who did not want to give

her surname, while doing up her daughter's coat.

Tourist authorities have built a "fog road" for hikers and cyclists traversing a high summit that overlooks the mist-shrouded mountains.

Khalaf Al-Juheiri travelled to Al-Namas with his wife and children from Tabuk, in Saudi Arabia's north, to enjoy the "cool weather".

"We really miss this weather when the temperature goes over 40 degrees in summer" in Tabuk, said the 33-year-old

technology company.

It has become a prized destination at a time when Saudi authorities, searching for new income streams apart from oil, are heavily promoting domestic and international tourism.

The "Visit Saudi" promotion is in full swing just three years after tourist visas were first made available for foreign visitors in 2019.

As plane fares surge after the pandemic, Saudi families spent 80 billion riyals (about 21



civil servant, covering his head against the rain.

'VISIT SAUDI'

In 2020, a study published by the *Science Advances* magazine showed that the Gulf region had the hottest and most humid climate on the planet.

Because of global warming, some Gulf cities could become uninhabitable before the end of this century, experts say.

Thanks to its altitude and strong winds, Al-Namas escapes the worst of the increasing heat, says Hassan Abdullah, a Jordan-based official from the WASM weather

billion euros) on domestic travel last year, a 30 per cent increase from 2019, ministry of tourism figures show.

"Summer is the peak tourist season, going from May to October," says Abdullah Al-Shahri, a hotelier at Al-Namas, where winter temperatures sometimes plunge to zero degrees.

At the top of a hill that overlooks the green valley, Mushabab Al-Omari takes in the view, sitting next to his wife.

"I've been here nearly three months," says the retiree, "and I'm ready to stay another four or five months if the weather stays like this." — **AFP**

DISCOVERY

Skeleton of huge dinosaur unearthed in Portugal



PALAEONTOLOGISTS in Portugal have unearthed the fossilised skeleton of what could be the largest dinosaur ever found in Europe.

The remains are thought to be those of a sauropod, a herbivorous dinosaur 12 metres (39 feet) tall and 25 metres long that roamed the Earth around 150 million years ago.

"It's one of the biggest

first noticed at the site in 2017, when the owner was digging up his garden to make way for an extension.

He contacted palaeontologists, who unearthed part of the dinosaur skeleton earlier this month and have been examining it ever since.

Sauropods have characteristically long necks and tails and are among the largest animals to have ever



specimens discovered in Europe, perhaps in the world," palaeontologist Elisabete Malafaia, from the Faculty of Sciences at Lisbon University, told AFP on Monday.

The bones were uncovered by Portuguese and Spanish scientists in the garden of a house near Pombal in central Portugal at the beginning of August.

Among the bones collected, they found the remains of a rib about three metres long, Malafaia said.

Fossil fragments were

lived.

The fossils discovered at the Monte Agudo site in Pombal are thought to be those of a brachiosaurid who lived during the Upper Jurassic period.

The fact that the vertebrae and ribs were found at the same location and in the position they would have been in the dinosaur's anatomy is "relatively rare", Malafaia said.

The team may conduct more digs in the coming months at the site and in the surrounding area. — **AFP**



Friday Market, In The Morning

By Mohammed Al Balushi

"THE PRICE OF EACH of these rings is one Omani Rial. We have a variety of them, as you can see on the stall," said the Omani seller in Wadi Al Kabir's Friday market.

"I have a shop in Muttrah market as well", he added.

I reached the Friday Market around eleven o'clock, and parking was extremely difficult. One, however, was hardly found. Having visited this market twenty-five years ago, I was not surprised that I arrive at the market in the same nature it always has been in the past.

I was taken back to the Ajmal Khan Road Market, Karol Bag, in New Delhi, India, where I spent time with my family in 2014, and for another five minutes to the Greenwich Vintage Market, London, where I spent some time recently.

What did I see in the Friday Market? There were different types of products for sale, and these products, of course, were inexpensive. Their beauty lie in the fact that they contain products that are rarely found in modern markets.

"What time do you come to this market?" I asked one of the sellers.

"The market opens around six o'clock in the morning, and I come there at that time, and it closes around nine o'clock in the evening," he replied.

As I walked through the stalls, I discovered old cassettes of Arab singers like

Abu Baker Salim and Mehad Hamad. On my left, I saw old cassettes of Indian movies' songs such as Cooli, Dus Numbari, and Kal Nayak as well as late Latta Mangeshkar's songs.

Further, I also explored an old VCR with VHS cassettes of national brands.

"My name is Mullah and do not ask me about my full name", the other Omani seller said for which we both laughed.

"I live in the Dabbag area of Muscat," he said.

In a glass-covered settee next to him, he kept some of the old Omani notes of One Hundred Baisa, Two Hundred Baisa, and One Rial.

"Are these notes for sale as well?" I asked Mullah, the seller.

"No, these are not. Since these notes are not available in the market or exchangeable, I kept them for decoration for visitors to see", he answered.

It was the crowd of the market that attracted me the most, as I saw people from different parts of Muscat or coming from different regions of the country.

There is no downside to opening similar markets in other parts of Muscat, such as Al Seeb, Al Khuwair, Al Hail, and Al Maabala.

Markets like these allow vendors to both sell their own products and promote Omani products. In the end, sellers and buyers will benefit from the sale and purchase of goods. How likely is it that the Municipality of Oman will consider opening such more markets in Muscat?

