

P10

LIVERPOOL GO TOP AFTER MAN UTD THRASHING



P13

AL-FUTTAIM IKEA SET TO OPEN FLAGSHIP STORE IN OMAN



P18

HOW TO ENHANCE YOUR FAMILY'S NUTRITION DURING RAMADHAN



MUSCAT

OMAN’S PAVILION TO SHOWCASE CULTURE AT BIENNALE ARTE

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth will patronise over the opening ceremony of the Sultanate of Oman’s pavilion at the 59th edition of the Biennale Arte 2022 International Arts Exhibition, scheduled to be held on Thursday. The five-day event will be held in Venice, Italy, from April 23 to 27. By participating in the exhibition, the Sultanate of Oman aims to highlight the Omani culture locally and internationally and to bolster its cultural position. SEE P2

CRUDE PRICES AT \$105.54 A BARREL

Oman oil price for June delivery on Wednesday reached \$105.54, comprising a decline by \$3.03 from the price of Tuesday, which was \$108.57. The average price of Oman oil for April delivery has stabilised at \$91.96, thus \$8.34 per barrel higher than March delivery. Meanwhile, Asian markets were marginally higher on Wednesday while oil began recovering after a downgraded IMF global growth forecast for 2022 had sent crude prices plunging. Brent crude is up by 0.7 per cent at \$107.96 per barrel.



19
Ramadhan
1443 AH

PRAYER TIMINGS

Fajr
04:22 AM

dhuhr
12:11 PM

asr
03:38 PM

maghrib
06:35 PM

isha
07:49 PM

INSIDE



SHANGHAI EASES LOCKDOWN AS DEATHS RISE

P6



WHAT WE NEED FOR PEACE AND PROSPERITY

P9

ROYAL DECREE RATIFIES AGREEMENT WITH CHILE

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Wednesday issued a Royal Decree No 17/2022 on the ratification of an agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Republic of Chile on mutual waiver of visas for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports, signed in Cairo on March 22, 2022. Article (1) ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version attached to this Decree.

Article (2) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

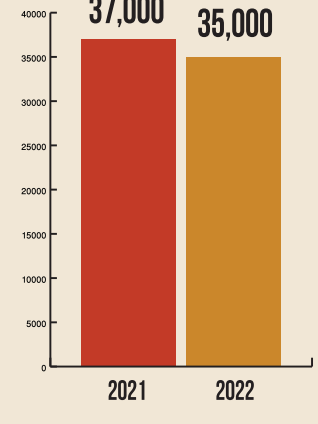
— ONA

35,000 JOBS FOR OMANIS IN VARIOUS SECTORS THIS YEAR

8,730

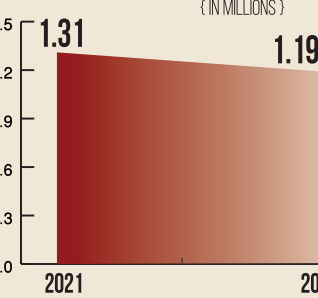
NATIONALS GET JOBS IN PRIVATE SECTOR

EXPATS IN PUBLIC SECTOR



Year	Expats
2021	37,000
2022	35,000

EXPATS IN PRIVATE SECTOR (IN MILLIONS)



Year	Expats (Millions)
2021	1.31
2022	1.191

SHAMSA AL RIYAMIYAH

MUSCAT, APRIL 20

A total of 8,730 nationals insured with the Public Authority for Social Insurance, have been appointed in the private sector in the first quarter of this year as increased oil prices put the economy on a recovery track, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Data released by NCSI on Wednesday indicated that the number of insured national employees in the private sector reached 275,500 by March. Meanwhile, the number of expatriate workforce in the public sector declined to 35,000 from 37,000 by the end of the first quarter. The number of expats employed by the private sector stood at 1.191 million by March-end from the figure of 1.31 million registered at the end of 2021. The NCSI statistics show that many developments are being witnessed in the labour market as the labour policies of the Sultanate of Oman attach priority to the provision of job opportunities in various economic sectors. The private sector is expected to employ more nationals during the upcoming period given the improvement in economic growth indicators which contributes in generating job opportunities within the objectives of the Tenth Five-Year Development Plan and Oman Vision 2040. In January, the Ministry of Labour said that it was planning to provide as many as 35,000 jobs in both sectors during the current year. This reflects that the ministry is adopting a clear employment strategy based, in part, on increasing job opportunities in the private sector. The Ministry of Labour has, over the previous period, made significant efforts to raise Omanisation rates and replace expatriates with nationals in many sectors, including health, education, logistics, tourism and others. Several decisions were also taken to encourage private companies to employ citizens in some professions, such as financial and administrative positions in insurance companies, auditing car agencies, sales, money exchange and business management, among others.



275,500

OMANIS IN PRIVATE SECTOR BY MARCH 2022



GDP to grow by 5.6% in 2022

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) will grow by 5.6 per cent in 2022 and by 2.7 per cent in 2023, said the recent report of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) titled “World Economic Outlook”. The report indicated that the Sultanate of Oman’s current account balance is expected to go up by 5.9 per cent during 2022 and by 5.6 per cent during 2023. The IMF also indicated that the inflation rate is expected to rise by 3.7 per cent in 2022 and 2.2 per cent in 2023. Meanwhile, the IMF painted a grim picture of higher inflation and repercussions from Russia’s ongoing war on Ukraine. The new forecast says global economic growth will now likely be at 3.6 per cent for 2022. That is another drastic reduction in the outlook, primarily due to unprecedented economic pressures. In January the IMF had already lowered its global economic forecast for 2022 by half a percentage point, to 4.4 per cent. “Global economic prospects have been severely set back, largely because of Russia’s war on Ukraine,” IMF chief economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas said in a press release. “The effects of the war will propagate far and wide, adding to price pressures and exacerbating significant policy challenges.”

TURN TO P2

Simon has a story to tell... but he is non-verbal

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Simon has a story to tell, but he is non-verbal. His parents decided to tell his story through a film - his journey into free-diving. Celebrating Autism Acceptance - Month of April, Pages Muscat Bookstore Madinat Sultan Qaboos presented the film - I Am Simon: The Call of the Elephants on Tuesday. The film is based on a real-life story, presented to be shared with the autism community and the world at large. Simon’s parents

wanted to share Simon’s story and the parents’ perspective. The story is of a young non-verbal autistic boy who amazingly taught himself free-diving. But the focus goes beyond showing the case as something extraordinary and presents the emotions experienced by the parents, as well as teaching about the fundamentals of life, compassion, love, kindness and the greatness in human beings’ potential. Viewers described it as a moving, inspirational, heartwarming and uplifting story. Simon’s parents, Juan Chavez



and Maria Jimenez Chavez are both petroleum engineers and had moved to the Sultanate of Oman more than 10 years ago. They are very supportive of their child’s development, but their journey was not that smooth, and thus, they made a documentary about him as a testimony to the world. Soon they were on the project - they made every part of the documentary from direction, production, cinematography and music. Hailing from Venezuela, Juan and Maria are parents of three children. Simon was diagnosed

with Autism at three years of age. “We moved to Scotland, where he attended special school when he was four years old. When we moved to Oman, I decided to let go of the worry unconsciously and focused on my new role in the company,” said Maria. She recollected the special day, “One day, a Venezuelan swimming instructor asked us to teach Simon swimming. We were very concerned and rejected the request. A few months later, she came again and said, ‘I really want to teach Simon how to swim.’”

TURN TO P2



Oman's pavilion to showcase culture at Biennale Arte

MUSCAT: His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth will patronise over the opening ceremony of the Sultanate of Oman's pavilion at the 59th edition of the Biennale Arte 2022 International Arts Exhibition, scheduled to be held on Thursday.

The five-day event will be held in Venice, Italy, from April 23 to 27.

By participating in the exhibition, the Sultanate of Oman aims to highlight the Omani culture locally and internationally and to bolster its cultural position.

It also targets reflecting its approaches in achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040 in the cultural sphere, locally and internationally.



The number of visitors to the Biennale Arte averages 600,000 to one million from all over the world each year, and the event's website views reach 10 million.

The event is covered by 8,100 international media entities, news agencies and international newspapers.

— ONA

Shura panel debates cloud seeding project

MUSCAT: The Food and Water Security Committee of Majlis Ash'shura held its fifth regular meeting of the third annual session under the chairmanship of Abdullah bin Ahmed al Malik, head of the committee, on Wednesday.

The committee hosted Engineer Ali bin Mohammed al Abri, Under-Secretary for Water Resources Affairs at the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and specialists from the ministry to discuss the artificial precipitation project in Oman.

At the outset of the meeting, the ministry's specialists presented a visual display on the artificial rain project. They explained that it is a national project that aims to increase groundwater level and reduce the water shortage in Oman by augmenting rainfall amounts.



Al Abri said that the cloud seeding project in Oman depends on the ionic technology, an environmentally friendly method that does not pose any hazard or negative effects on the environment or humans. Oman has currently 12 rain seeding stations, the first of which was established in 2012, and became operational in 2013. It comprises 3 main departments: the Research and Studies Department, the Operation and Maintenance

Department and the Control and Performance Evaluation Department.

The meeting reviewed the most important setbacks facing the artificial rain project, most notably the high cost of studies and the establishment of artificial rain seeding stations. The committee members inquired about the possibility of involving Oman Investment Authority (OIA) to invest in the project to reduce the financial

burden on the ministry.

The specialists affirmed that statistical reports for the period from 2013-2018 proved the success of the rain seeding project with a 15-18 per cent increase in rainfall amounts reported. They emphasised the importance of reliance on clear indicators of the economic feasibility of the artificial rain seeding project and its role in reducing the water shortage.

Shift in dietary habits to enrich agriculture output

SAMUEL KUTTY

@samuelkutttyp

People in the Sultanate of Oman are at present more focused on healthier diets, with more fruits and vegetables inclusion. The shift in dietary habits is reflected in the country's higher rate of agricultural production, says a report.

"There is a shift in the traditional dietary habits towards organic food. This is anticipated to influence vegetables and fruits production in the country," says the report by Mordor Intelligence, which forecasts an increase in the volume of agriculture production in the country.

According to the report, the interest in wellness and immunity has spiked due to the Covid-19 pandemic, leading to a higher demand for fruits and vegetables in the domestic market and in partner countries.

The report by Mordor, a firm specialised in advisory services, expects the agriculture sector in Oman to record a compound annual growth rate of 2.4 per cent from 2022 to 2027.

"The increase in the adoption of advanced farming technologies and conducive government policies supporting domestic crop production are some of the factors



driving the market growth in the country," points out the report.

Agriculture is considered the pillar of economic growth in the country; thus, it resulted in an immediate response from the national government to ensure food safety and security in the country.

The increase in the adoption of advanced farming technologies and conducive government policies supporting domestic crop production are some of the factors driving the market growth in the country.

Oman majorly meets its domestic fruits, vegetables and cereals demand through imports.

Therefore, says the report, "to

reduce import dependency, the country is aiming for self-sufficiency in agricultural products by encouraging its farmers to adopt advanced farming techniques".

According to Oman's agriculture ministry, despite Covid-19, the agriculture and fisheries sector saw a growth of 9.8 per cent in 2019-2020.

Hence, the country's agriculture market witnessed an impressive growth during the pandemic.

The country's agricultural production comprises mainly dates, vegetables, fruits, and other crops in a minor quantity.

Fruits like bananas and papaya are also grown in coastal re-

gions, which accounted for 18,447 metric tonnes and 5,840 metric tonnes of production respectively in 2020.

Additionally, the Sultanate of Oman has increased its barley, sorghum and wheat production in recent years.

The government has launched several initiatives to encourage private sector production, such as updating regulations, providing low-interest loans, aiding domestic production and running campaigns to increase the visibility of locally made products, which is anticipating the growth of the agriculture during the forecast period.



Oman, Saudi explore areas of cooperation

MUSCAT: Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, held here on Wednesday a meeting via video-conferencing with Dr Hisham Saad al Jadhey, CEO of the Saudi Food and Drug Authority (SFDA). The two sides discussed a spectrum

of topics, particularly in the field of exporting agricultural and animal products from Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Present at the meeting were representatives from the public and private sectors of the two countries. — ONA

More ROP services can be availed online

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The Royal Oman Police (ROP) has said it is possible to renew the driving licence online as part of the efforts to digitise all the services as per the Oman Vision 2040.

It may be noted that last week, ROP said that the transfer of ownership of vehicles that are less than 10 years old could be done through the website and smartphone application.

Even the 'learner's book' required for driving classes can be renewed online or via a mobile app.

The process of renewing

vehicle registrations has been in place for some time now.

According to details available with the Observer, to be able to renew a driver's licence online, both citizens and residents must meet some conditions, which include activating the online authentication feature of civil status cards as well as PKI activation of SIM cards.

The licence must be issued by the ROP and the licence must have expired or is about to expire in less than 30 days.

The licence holder must be in the Sultanate of Oman at the time of renewal, and the licence holder must be free from violations and fines.

Simon has a story to tell... but he is non-verbal

FROM PAGE 1

We agreed, and to our surprise, the teacher came back to us saying: 'He is already swimming!' This was when their lives took a new turning point.

The story with swimming (which later on developed into diving) began.

A few years later, they wanted to share this story with the world.

They realised that many films talked about Autism, what the autistic person feels and treatments, but few talked about the parent's perspective on bringing up an autistic child.

Juan, Simon's father, explained his son's method of learning free diving, "Simon learned very



difficult techniques of breathing for diving by himself. How he learned, "I believe he is connected with his soul."

"He was guided. He was connected to nature. And you

are only able to connect to nature when you quiet your mind. So I saw what he was doing, and I started to reproduce that. I wanted to learn from him. I realised that definitely when he is

in water, he is meditating. That is one of the key things. When you stop overthinking, you can be connected with nature."

He added, "One of the things I have learned is to give him space. I getting involved with what he is doing. As a parent, you need to get involved with your kid. I said to myself — I need to learn what he likes to do. I need to be in his place and secure the area. And observe, observe and observe. Give place and time and you will be able to see things."

This is how Simon's mother likes to summarise,

"We need to silence our minds and let our hearts talk. That is how we will be great as human beings."

GDP to grow by 5.6% in 2022

FROM PAGE 1

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR

The industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman is among the sectors targeted by the government as part of its economic diversification strategy. The sector is witnessing an increasing attention by the government in order to realise the goals it has envisaged for the industrial sector.

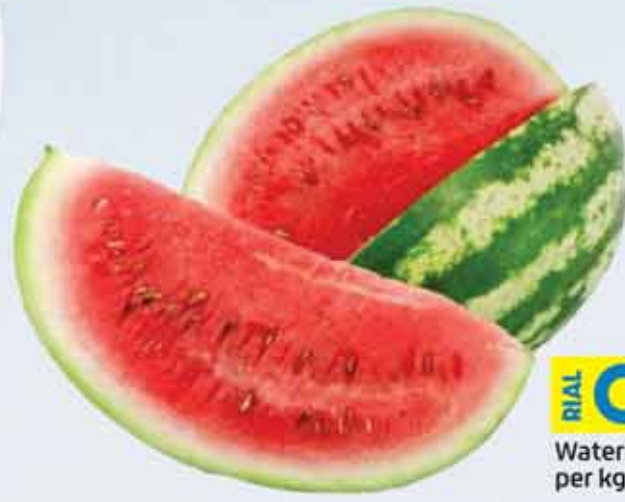
The industrial sector contributed RO 6.6 billion to the GDP by the end of last year, and the sector is expected to see more growth as the government is doing much to encourage investments, improve the business environment, support industrial innovation, and roll out attractive investment opportunities in the industrial sectors.

— Agencies

امسح الرمز لمعرفة باقي العروض

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR LATEST PROMOTION CATALOGUE

VIEW NOW



RIAL **0.150**
Watermelon (Oman)
per kg



RIAL **0.150**
Onion Loose (India)
per kg



SAVE 29.976%
RIAL ~~4.270~~
RIAL **2.990**
Bushra Lamb Cuts
per kg



SAVE 38.933%
RIAL ~~3.095~~
RIAL **1.890**
Pistachio Roasted Salted
500 gms



SAVE 37.762%
RIAL ~~1.430~~
RIAL **0.890**
Mazoon Spread Creamy /
Cheddar Cheese 500 gms
Assorted per pc



SAVE 33.600%
RIAL ~~3.750~~
RIAL **2.490**
Kellogg's Corn Flakes
2 x 750 gms



SAVE 48.696%
RIAL ~~1.150~~
RIAL **0.590**
Jabal Akhdar Drinking Water
24 x 500 ml



RIAL **4.250**
Indomie Noodles
40 x 70 gms Assorted



SAVE 28.571%
RIAL ~~1.750~~
RIAL **1.250**
Combo Meal Pack
(Mutton Kabuli 500 gms
+ Cucumber Labneh + Salad)



SAVE 29.048%
RIAL ~~2.100~~
RIAL **1.490**
Fairy Plus Dishwash Liquid
3 x 600 ml Assorted



SAVE 40.873%
RIAL ~~2.520~~
RIAL **1.490**
Pert Shampoo 3 x 400 ml
Assorted



SAVE 24.971%
RIAL ~~8.650~~
RIAL **6.490**
Pampers Active Baby Diaper /
Pants Assorted per pc



SAVE 21.429%
RIAL ~~2.100~~
RIAL **1.650**
Home Mate Antiseptic
3 x 500 ml

Shop & Win!

100,000 Worth of Cash Prizes

Shop for OMR 10 & get a chance to WIN...

Grand Prize OMR **10,000**

Weekly Prizes OMR **5,000** (750/500/200/100)

From 10th March to 7th May 2022

20 أنفق SPEND

10 احصل GET

قسمة شراء GIFT VOUCHER

For every RO 20 spent, get back RO 10 worth Lulu Gift Voucher Instantly to buy more Garments, Footwear, Ladies Bags & Luggage

From 14th April to 8th May 2022

* Coupons redeemable on garments, footwear, ladies bags & luggage only.

LULU HYPER MARKET .COM

SHOP ONLINE

DOWNLOAD LULU APP



Download on the App Store GET IT ON Google Play

Lulu **لولو**

Where the world comes to shop, safely!

حيث يأتي العالم للتسوق، بأمان!



KEEPING TRADITIONS ALIVE

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

When the whole world is on a fast track, Ramadhan comes as a reminder of tradition and culture, the expression of which is pervasive among societies and cultures.

It comes as a great reminder of cultural and traditional values, as people love to return to their roots. They eat traditional food, wear traditional clothes and live traditionally as much as possible. Mainly they adopt minimalism and take a break from unwanted imposed modernism. This breaks their monotony, rejuvenates, and brings many other benefits that reflect their well-being.

Ramadhan is the time when every Muslim household has plenty of traditional food. The quality and taste of the food vary from one region to another, one country to another. And the reason behind having traditional food during Ramadhan is its purity, easily digestible ingredients and incorporation of food elements that keep an individual hydrated.

The holy month is the best time to experience typical Omani food in the Sultanate of Oman. Most traditional dishes are served during iftar. The most popular conventional foods are Sakhana (a thick sweet soup made of wheat, dates, molasses and milk and Fatta (a meat and vegetable dish mixed with Khubz rakhal — thin Omani bread made out of unleavened dough).

“Harees, Mishkak and Shuwa are the best delicacies. Harees dish is prepared with wheat mixed with meat, Mishkak is skewered meat grilled on charcoal and Shuwa is a typically Omani delicacy prepared only on special occasions. These three dishes are delicacies prepared respectively for the first, second and third day of Eid,” said Abdullah Khatiri admitting the value of Ramadhan when he gets to eat so many home-made traditional foods. “And eating them with family, friends and community doubles your enjoyment,” he admitted.

■ Omani Halwa — a sticky sweet gelatinous substance made from brown sugar, eggs, honey and spices — is one of the popular desserts of Oman. It can be flavoured with many different ingredients such as nuts, rosewater or even chocolate.

The same spirit is reflected in clothing. Every household must have new clothes for everyone on the occasion of Eid al Fitr, which falls after the completion of Ramadhan. Preparation begins in the middle of the Ramadhan and most people love to go for traditional attires. It is a busy time for tailors, while shops dealing in traditional items like frankincense, ‘bakhur, khanjar, ‘masar’ (Omani turban) have a brisk business. It is a reminder of tradition for both the buyers and sellers. No doubt about it that traditional ‘habta’ markets in interiors and regular traditional markets like Muttrah in Muscat and Hafa Souk in Salalah witness huge footfall all through Ramadhan, mainly in the evenings.

The Covid-19 pandemic has restricted community iftar; otherwise, it has always been an opportunity to witness traditional practices in gatherings where people meet and greet each other. “It is like the introduction of the old generation to new and new to the old generation and this is how traditions transfer from one generation to another,” said academician Faizul Haq.

Some tourists from Europe admitted that Ramadhan helps the Muslim community to keep its tradition and culture intact.

Some tourists even admitted that they were not prepared for the rare treat of culture and tradition they got during Ramadhan in Oman. “I thought Muslim countries were off-limits during Ramadhan when I started from my country. But it proved to be a misconception due to the fact that I could witness the culture and local tradition from close quarters,” said Kristina, a tourist from the Czech Republic.



Stop driving if you feel fatigued

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Pull your car aside and rest for some time; don't dare drive if you're caught up with an urge to sleep, Royal Oman Police (ROP) urges motorists.

A large number of accidents reported during the holy month are said to be due to loss of attention in roving due to heat coupled with fatigue and lack of sleep which can result in deprivation of attention, resulting in accidents, often fatal.

“One shouldn't continue to drive if he or she feels sleepy while driving, and instead, he or she should pull the car aside and take sufficient rest before proceeding the journey,” an ROP official told the Observer.

This alert from the ROP holds high relevance just as the holy month is entering the last ten-day period, which is marked by spending more time in prayers, supplication and night prayers, which means staying inside the mosque till morning prayers and engaging in prayers and recitation of holy Quran.

The change in the patterns of sleeping and duty timings during



the holy month impacts the attention of motorists who are fasting, said the official.

According to the ROP, the primary reasons behind a relatively increased number of accidents during the month are sleep deprivation, fatigue, lack of attention and less visibility.

“One should ensure, before driving during the day, about fitness to drive and not to drive under fatigue or lack of sleep. If you feel sleepy or find yourself lost

while diving at night, pull your car to the shoulder and rest for a while before you continue your journey,” the official said.

During Ramadhan, the accident death rate was found to be 1.5 per cent, while non-Ramadhan months, it was 1.2 per cent, which indicates that the average number of traffic accidents was slightly higher in Ramadhan than in non-Ramadhan months.

Yet another reason contributing

to the traffic accidents during this month is when motorists fail to leave enough safe distance between vehicles.

“Motorists should ensure that they avoid tailgating with the vehicle in the front to stay safe on the roads during the holy month of Ramadhan,” he adds.

Likewise, drivers are advised to keep their air-conditioners on as the summer heat gives rise to the feeling of exhaustion, and this can result in fatigue.

be'ah clarifies on waste disposal

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

be'ah has issued a statement on social media reports about inadequacies in waste management services in some areas of the country, especially in the Governorate of Muscat.

The company said that the waste disposal service is carried out in cooperation with various municipalities, which are responsible for cleaning roads, parks, beaches, and other public places.

be'ah is responsible for waste management, which includes collecting and transporting household waste that is carried out through specialised contracted companies. The company also provides, through the contracting companies, the service of collecting tree waste and old furniture according to the procedures followed, through prior coordination.

The helpline number to call be'ah is 1881.

It has been noticed in recent times the quantities of non-do-

mestic waste such as tree parts and old furniture have increased significantly, and some contractors dispose of construction and demolition waste next to containers. Since most of these practices are in clear violation of the laws of the municipalities regulating these operations, and since the company does not have judicial control, be'ah has sought to work with the competent authorities to effectively enhance its supervisory role and reduce the process of illegal disposal of waste.

be'ah has started to intensify follow-up and monitor the performance of operating companies around the clock, and the various teams are intensifying waste collection operations to include spaces around containers regardless of their type and quantities as part of the process and preventing this type of waste from accumulating.

The company said it has additional resources to intensify fieldwork to deal with the observations that are received in real time.

Ministry organises forum on educational supervision

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Department of Applied Science Supervision in the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision, organised the first virtual forum of the Research and Studies Committee, on Wednesday, under the auspices of Dr Suleiman al Jamoudi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Educational Supervision. The theme of the forum was “Scientific Research between Theory and Practices in Educational Supervision of Ap-

plied Science Subjects.”

Professors from Sultan Qaboos University and from the University of Nizwa attended the opening of the forum along with directors of the supervision departments and their assistants, the first supervisors and educational supervisors in the ministry's general office and the educational directorates in the governorates, as well as a number of first teachers and educational specialists from various schools of the educational directorates in the governorates.

The forum aimed to raise awareness about the importance of scientific research and field



studies in developing educational supervision practices, and to benefit from scientific research in developing educational supervision.

It also sought to benefit from local and international experiences in directing scientific research towards developing educational

supervision practices and improving the teaching and learning processes.

The forum aimed to instil positive practices in scientific research and field studies that help unleash the creative abilities of the staff in the educational field and enhance professional development and capacity building in the supervisory field.

The forum began with a speech by Dr Suleiman al Jamoudi, in which he explained the importance of educational supervision and the role of the educational supervisor in improving the educational process. Dr Mohammed

bin Khalifa al Sinani, Assistant Professor and Head of the Department of Education at the College of Arts and Humanities at Al Sharqiya University, presented the main paper of the forum, which was titled “The Role of Action Research in Developing Supervisory Practices for Supervisors.”

The first session included three papers. Dr Khadija al Balushi, Assistant Director of the Department of Applied Science Supervision, presented the first paper entitled “The Effectiveness of Strategies That Stimulate Neurological Branching on Creative and Critical Thinking”.

PROVISION OF TOPOGRAPHY CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR AD HOC SERVICES

The Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP), a member of Nama Group, is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatisation of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the OPWP license.

Tender Description	OPWP is looking to hire a qualified and experienced consultant(s) under an ad hoc consultancy service contract(s) to carry out geotechnical surveys. The contract(s) will be for a period of three (3) years. Depending on the work required for each survey, the Consultant for the geotechnical surveys shall be mainly responsible of conducting all the required geotechnical investigations, screening for contamination, geotechnical seabed survey and ground water pumping test survey for the project(s) in accordance with the scope set in the tender documents.
Tender Number	OPWP/2022/006
Tender Purchase Period	18 April 2022 till 25 April 2024
Tender Fee	25 OMR
Submission date	5 June 2022 at 1:00 PM (GST)
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through OPWP website (https://www.omanpwp.om/new/Default.aspx). The payment is done electronically through OPWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om .
Bank Guarantee	A Bid Bond of OMR 600 valid for a period of 120 days from the submission deadline date referred to above is required to be enclosed as part of the Bid. If the Bidder is a small and medium enterprise (SME) with a valid Riyada card issued by Public Authority for SME Development, then the Bidder is not required to submit a Bid Bond.

Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP)
5th Floor, Building 5, Muscat Grand Mall, Tilal Complex (Office)
Tel.: +968 24508400 | Fax: +968 24399946 | www.omanpwp.com

New technology to detect leaks in water networks

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company, a member of Nama Group, has launched a state-of-the-art technology aimed at monitoring water networks to detect potential invisible leaks.

The new technology is expected to scan the transmission lines by using thermal and multispectral cameras. Using this technology, the company will receive accurate results within a short period through the geographic systems data available at the OWWSC database, which is managed by SCADA Control and Monitoring System.



PROVISION OF GEOTECHNICAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR AD HOC SERVICES

The Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP), a member of Nama Group, is responsible for procuring new capacity for power and water in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with the requirements of the law for the regulation and privatisation of the electricity and related water sector promulgated by Royal Decree 78/2004 as amended and the OPWP license.

Tender Description	OPWP is looking to hire a qualified and experienced consultant(s) under an ad hoc consultancy service contract(s) to carry out geotechnical surveys. The contract(s) will be for a period of three (3) years. Depending on the work required for each survey, the Consultant for the geotechnical surveys shall be mainly responsible of conducting all the required geotechnical investigations, screening for contamination, geotechnical seabed survey and ground water pumping test survey for the project(s) in accordance with the scope set in the tender documents.
Tender Number	OPWP/2022/007
Tender Purchase Period	18 April 2022 till 25 April 2022
Tender Fee	25 OMR
Submission date	2 June 2022 at 1:00 PM (GST)
Collection & Payment Methods	The tender documents are available for purchase in an electronic format through OPWP website (https://www.omanpwp.om/new/Default.aspx). The payment is done electronically through OPWP website. In case of any queries, please send an email to: procurement.officer@Omanpwp.nama.om .
Bank Guarantee	A Bid Bond of OMR 600 valid for a period of 120 days from the submission deadline date referred to above is required to be enclosed as part of the Bid. If the Bidder is a small and medium enterprise (SME) with a valid Riyada card issued by Public Authority for SME Development, then the Bidder is not required to submit a Bid Bond.

Oman Power and Water Procurement Company SAOC (OPWP)
5th Floor, Building 5, Muscat Grand Mall, Tilal Complex (Office)
Tel.: +968 24508400 | Fax: +968 24399946 | www.omanpwp.com



IMF asks Sri Lanka to restructure debt before bailout

COLOMBO: The International Monetary Fund said on Wednesday that it has asked cash-strapped Sri Lanka to “restructure” its huge foreign debt before a bailout programme could be finalised as anti-government protests escalated across the island.

Sri Lanka opened talks with the IMF in Washington this week after announcing its first ever default on external borrowings.

The South Asia country is in the grip of its worst economic crisis since independence in 1948 and has been rocked by a wave of protests over food and fuel shortages.

“When the IMF determines that a country’s debt is not sustainable, the country needs to take steps to restore debt sustainability prior to IMF lending,” the Fund’s country director Masahiro Nozaki said in a statement.

“Approval of an IMF-supported programme for Sri Lanka would require adequate assurances that debt sustainability will be restored.”

The IMF said talks with Sri Lanka were still at an “early stage,”



Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) party activists shout anti-government slogans during a demonstration in Colombo. — AFP

but it was “very concerned” about the economic situation and the hardships suffered by people, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Earlier this year, the IMF warned Sri Lanka’s approximately

\$51 billion foreign debt was unsustainable.

Colombo’s existing debt also means the country cannot apply for emergency financing, the IMF said.

Sources in the country’s finance ministry have made it clear that debt restructuring will require creditors to accept a “haircut” — a reduction in the value of their assets — or agree to longer

repayment periods.

Nearly two weeks ago, the government nearly doubled key interest rates and allowed the currency to depreciate faster, hoping the move would encourage

foreign currency inflows.

On Monday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa conceded that Sri Lanka should have gone to the IMF “much earlier”.

The country is short of dollars to finance even the important essentials, including food, fuel and medicines. Widespread shortages have sparked nationwide protests that turned violent on Tuesday.

One man was shot dead and 29 others were wounded in clashes in a central town, while tens of thousands continued demonstrations outside the president’s office in Colombo demanding his resignation.

Meanwhile, police enforced a curfew on Wednesday in a Sri Lankan town where an anti-government demonstrator was killed, a death that triggered international condemnation. Regular blackouts and acute shortages of food and fuel have sparked increasing public discontent in the island nation, which is dealing with its worst economic downturn since independence in 1948. — AFP

Philippines halts oil and gas exploration

MANILA: Manila has suspended oil and gas exploration in the South China Sea, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte’s spokesman said on Wednesday, as it tries to strike a deal with Beijing on a joint energy project.

Drilling off the Philippines was allowed to resume in October 2020 when Duterte — who has taken a softer approach than his predecessor to Beijing’s claims over most of the waterway — lifted a 2014 moratorium.

It was hoped that Duterte’s decision would fast-track talks with Beijing on joint exploration in the waters, which are believed to hold rich deposits of oil and gas.

But local companies involved in two projects off Palawan province have been ordered to stop again.

“SJPPCC suspended all exploration activities within the disputed areas in West Philippine Sea,” said presidential spokesman Martin Andanar, referring to the government’s security advisors.

He did not provide a reason.

The Philippine energy department has challenged the decision, arguing “a geophysical survey is a perfectly legitimate activity in any disputed area”.

The foreign affairs department said it was trying to confirm media reports that a Chinese coast guard vessel had shadowed Philippine survey vessels at one of the projects recently.

Manila signed an agreement with Beijing in 2018 to cooperate on oil and gas development as a way to benefit from the resources while setting aside the territorial dispute.

But the two governments have yet to identify specific projects, said Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines’ Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea.

Batongbacal said the suspension signalled the Philippines had buckled to pressure from China to stop drilling.

“China is essentially trying to make the Philippines

agree to joint exploration and development only on China’s terms,” he said.

“It’s coercion. The Philippines is folding to that pressure. That does not really bode well for the future of any exploration and development in the West Philippine Sea.”

The suspension comes as the Philippines faces dwindling energy reserves.

Malampaya gas field, which supplies about 40 per cent of power to the archipelago’s main island Luzon, is expected to run dry within a few years.

Beijing has ignored a 2016 international tribunal decision that declared its historical claim over most of the South China Sea to be without basis. Tensions between Manila and Beijing over the waterway have intensified in the final year of Duterte’s term in office.

In the latest spat, the Philippine coast guard accused its Chinese counterpart of steering one of its ships within metres of a Filipino patrol vessel near the contested Scarborough Shoal. — AFP

Shanghai cautiously eases lockdown as deaths rise

SHANGHAI: Shanghai further eased its weeks-long Covid-19 lockdown on Wednesday despite mounting deaths and tens of thousands of new cases — but some residents are furious that uneven enforcement is still leaving them trapped at home.

China’s largest city is inching towards reopening as businesses and residents grow increasingly desperate over closures and food shortages.

Faced with the country’s worst virus outbreak in two years, Shanghai has confined most of its 25 million people to their homes since last month, doubling down on the Communist Party’s unrelenting zero-Covid approach.

But the surge, driven by the fast-spreading Omicron variant, has thwarted official efforts to avert a pandemic rebound, with more than 400,000 infections reported since March.

City authorities confirmed seven Covid-19 deaths and more than 18,000 mostly asymptomatic new cases on Wednesday, while also announcing four million more people had been released from the strictest version of lockdown.

Some factories have resumed operations while requiring



A worker wearing personal protective equipment stands at a checkpoint during a Covid-19 coronavirus lockdown in the Jingan district in Shanghai. — AFP

Shanghai has confined most of its 25 million people to their homes since last month

workers to live on-site, and 12 million people previously barred from leaving their homes have in the past few days been given permission to venture outdoors.

However, many were disappointed at being denied a taste of freedom — despite their housing being classified

in the lowest tier of restrictions as of Wednesday. Residents of compounds without new cases in the past 14 days can move about freely — in theory.

But enforcement has been uneven and many in these “precautionary areas” have complained online of being denied permission to leave their housing compounds. A resident of Shanghai’s Jingan district who gave her name as Lilian said that despite living in a “precautionary area”, her compound has barred entry and exit without a 48-hour negative test result. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

BEIRUT

Lebanon crisis exposes kids to deadly viruses: UN

Child vaccination rates in Lebanon have dropped by more than 30 per cent, compounding a health crisis marked by drug shortages and an exodus of trained professionals, the United Nations said. “The critical drop in vaccination rates has left children vulnerable to potentially deadly diseases such as measles, diphtheria and pneumonia,” the UN children’s agency Unicef said in a new report titled “A worsening health crisis for children”.

“Routine vaccination of



children has dropped by 31 per cent when rates already were worryingly low, creating a large pool of unprotected children vulnerable to disease and its impact.” — AFP

BAGHDAD

Third dust storm sweeps through Iraq

Iraq was hit by its third heavy dust storm in two weeks, temporarily grounding flights at Baghdad and Najaf airports, as the weather phenomenon grows increasingly frequent.

The air in Baghdad was thick with a heavy sheet of grey and orange dust, while the state news agency INA cited the meteorological office as saying the latest storm was expected to lift on Thursday.

Flights were suspended at



Baghdad International Airport due to poor visibility.

The airport serving the city of Najaf to the south also released a statement announcing flights were grounded. — AFP

WASHINGTON

Blinken urges to ‘end the cycle of violence’

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken urged Israeli and Palestinian leaders to “end the cycle of violence” after a sharp escalation in tensions between the two sides in recent days.

In separate calls with Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, Blinken stressed “the importance of Israelis and Palestinians working to end the cycle of violence in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza



He also urged both sides to exercise “restraint” and refrain “from actions that escalate tensions” including at the Al Aqsa mosque compound.

— AFP



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | APRIL 21 | 2022

7

In brief

■ WARSAW



FIVE DEAD IN POLISH COAL MINE ACCIDENT

Five people were killed and seven more are missing following two gas explosions at a coal mine in southern Poland, the country's prime minister said. The company in charge of the Pniowek mine, JSW, said the first explosion took place shortly after midnight at a depth of 1,000 metres. There were 42 miners in the area of the blast and many suffered burns.

A second explosion occurred while rescue workers were assisting the victims of the first. One of the dead is a rescue worker, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki said. "The words catch in one's throat because we now know that five people are dead and seven are still trapped inside the mine galleries," Morawiecki said. — AFP

■ BRATISLAVA



SLOVAK EX-PM CHARGED OVER ORGANISED CRIME GROUP

Slovakia's former prime minister Robert Fico and his interior minister Robert Kalinak on Wednesday were charged with setting up an organised crime group, their party spokesman said. Fico and Kalinak were forced to resign in 2018 after an investigative journalist's murder exposed high-level corruption and sparked a wave of anti-government sentiment.

Their populist left-wing Smer-SD party later lost a snap election. "Robert Fico and Robert Kalinak have been charged with setting up an organised crime group — whatever that means," party spokesman Jan Mazgut said.

■ BERLIN



LEADER OF GERMANY'S HARD-LEFT PARTY STEPS DOWN

The co-leader of Germany's hard-left Die Linke party stepped down citing personal reasons as well as the need for a renewal of the party.

Die Linke is the most left-wing force in the German parliament, but commands only 39 seats, having won 4.9 per cent in national elections last autumn. "I am resigning today as party leader of Die Linke with immediate effect," Susanne Hennig-Wellsow, 44, wrote on her website.

Her personal circumstances did not allow her "to be there for my party with the strength and the time that is necessary in the current situation," Hennig-Wellsow said. — dpa



A rocket understood to have been launched from a Soviet-era BM-27 Uragan launcher is seen beside the house of the Los family in the village of Mala Tomachka, south of Zaporizhzhia. — AFP

Kremlin presents Ukraine with 'clear' offer for talks

MOSCOW: The Kremlin on Wednesday claimed it had presented to Ukraine a written offer for a negotiated settlement to the war Russia started nearly eight weeks ago.

"Our draft document has been handed over to the Ukrainian side, which contains clear and elaborate formulations," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said, according to the Interfax news agency. He did not provide details on the contents.

Talks between Moscow and Kiev began on February 28, four days after the war of Ukraine. Russia's demands include the secession of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, as well as the recognition of the Crimean peninsula as Russian. Kiev categorically refuses to relinquish territory.

Incremental progress in the talks was derailed earlier this month when hundreds of bodies of civilians were found strewn on the streets of a Kiev suburb after Russian troops withdrew.

Peskov reiterated the Russian side's dissatisfaction with the pace of negotiations so far, saying that it left "much to be desired."

Earlier, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova had said that Russia no longer had confidence in the Ukrainian negotiators. They were constantly changing their

Russia closes in on Mariupol as EU to hold donors conference on May 5 to ensure 'victory of Ukraine'

position and not sticking to negotiated agreements, she claimed.

On the ground in Ukraine, the warring sides both claimed to have made gains on Wednesday.

Russian Defence Ministry spokesperson Igor Konashenkov said air strikes had hit 73 military targets in Ukraine overnight.

"As a result of the impact of high-precision missiles in the Novovorontsovka and Kyselivka areas, up to 40 soldiers of the Ukrainian troops as well as seven armoured vehicles were destroyed," he said, referring to areas in Ukraine's south.

The Ukrainian General Staff of the Armed Forces said Russia had staged unsuccessful attempts to storm the towns of Rubizhne and Sievierodonetsk in the eastern Ukrainian region of Luhansk.

"After the storming attempts by the Russian occupiers in Rubizhne and Sievierodonetsk, 130 injured soldiers

of the enemy were admitted to the local hospital in Novoaidar," the general staff said in its situation report.

In addition, the Ukrainian military leadership reported Russian attack efforts near the small town of Izyum in the Kharkiv region and heavy fighting around Marinka, Popasna, Torske, Zelena Dolyna and Kreminna.

None of the information provided by Russian and Ukrainian officials could be independently verified.

The military stand-off also continued in the southern port city of Mariupol with the Ukrainian commander of the remaining marines in the city asking for an evacuation to a third country.

The south-eastern Ukrainian port of Mariupol was completely surrounded by Russian troops on March 1, shortly after the start of the Russian attack on Ukraine.

The city and the port are largely considered to have been destroyed.

"History will not forget the war crimes that have been committed here," European Council President Charles Michel said on Twitter.

"There can be no peace without justice," he said, publishing more pictures of his solidarity visit to Borodyanka, a Kiev suburb, where civilians were killed. — dpa

Finnish MPs open debate on joining Nato

HELSINKI: Finland's parliament on Wednesday opens debate on whether to seek Nato membership, after Russia's war of Ukraine sparked a surge in political and public support for joining the military alliance.

Despite Russia warning of a nuclear build-up in the Baltic should Finland and neighbouring Sweden join the military alliance, Finland's prime minister said that her country would now decide quickly on whether to apply for membership.

"I think it will happen quite fast. Within weeks, not within months," Prime Minister Sanna Marin said last week.

Sweden is also discussing whether to submit a membership bid following Russia's February 24 war.

The 200 MPs in Finland's Eduskunta last week received a government-commissioned "white paper" that assessed the implications of Nato membership alongside other security options, such as increased bilateral defence agreements.

The report did not make recommendations but stressed that without Nato membership, Finland enjoys no security guarantees despite currently being a partner to the alliance.

It said the "deterrent effect" on Finland's defence would be "considerably greater" inside the bloc, while noting that membership also carried obligations for Finland to assist other Nato states.

After two decades of public support for Nato membership remaining steady at 20-30 per cent, the war sparked a surge among those in favour to over 60 per cent, according to opinion polls.

"I used to be against joining Nato but because of this situation I'm now more in favour," said 24-year-old Sofia Lindblom, walking her dog in central Helsinki on Wednesday. — AFP



Foreign Defence Minister Antti Kaikkonen during a plenary session at the Finnish Parliament in Helsinki. — AFP

Modi lays foundation for WHO's Global Medicine Centre

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH

@patkaushal

WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) is a truly global project as 107 WHO member countries have their country-specific governmental offices, said Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO) during the foundation laying ceremony on Tuesday and called the Indian initiative a game-changer move that can help generate evidence, data, sustainability and optimum use of traditional medicine across the world.

He addressed a summit titled 'Global AYUSH Investment & Innovation Summit' on the occasion of the foundation laying ceremony and said, "India's philosophy of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' is the driving force behind the launch of WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) in Jamnagar. The GCTM centre is historic and will prove to be a game changer. The centre is designed to be an engine of innovation to drive the agenda of evidence, data and sustainability and optimisation of use of traditional medicine."

"There is a rising global demand and investment in the AYUSH products across the world. The whole world is coming



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi with WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus during the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit in Gandhinagar. — AFP

to India and India is going to the whole world. Long-term investment in innovation ecosystem in health and development of traditional medicines by innovators, industry and government is needed," said Dr Tedros.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of GCTM, which will come up with \$250 million support from the Indian government. The objective behind it is to build a foundation for evidences and policies to standardise traditional medical

The Global Centre for Traditional Medicine is designed to be an engine of innovation to drive the agenda of evidence, data and sustainability and optimisation of use of traditional medicine

practices and products.

Reason behind the decision to set up GCTM in Jamnagar was because more than 50 years ago the world's first Ayurvedic University was set up there, said the Indian PM and added, "The GCTM is a recognition of India's contribution and potential in this field. India takes this partnership as a huge responsibility for serving the entire humanity."

The use base of traditional medicines is 80 per cent of the world's population that uses traditional medicines. It has been stated in some health reports that 170 countries of the 194 WHO members have reported the use of traditional medicines and have sought the international health body's support to set up a body to generate evidences against each of the traditional medicines.

Can we make circular economy great again?



Khalid Alsafi Al Huraibi
khalidalharibi@gmail.com

The writer is an entrepreneur and innovation adviser

One of the valuable childhood memories for many of us is remembering the way we grew up with families that saw values in everything around us.

Growing up in Salalah, I noticed my family and our neighbourhoods reuse what we have and what is around us and discover new ways it can be brought to life.

For example, worn clothes were reused, fallen tree leaves and branches were reused in furnishing and other home uses, used cans as toys and walkie-talkies. These few examples of many best practices passed from generation to generation are not only considered circular economy opportunities, they can now be also considered a part of purple economy that optimises the value of culture and heritage and what it can add to our lives.

However, the progress and advancement in technology which the humanity has been witnessing in the past and current centuries has led us on a path of consumerism

that impacted the way we see the value of used items. Therefore, the question why today is the right time to start making circular economy great again?

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), a specialised UN permanent intergovernmental body defines Circular Economy as ‘markets that give incentives to reusing products, rather than scrapping them and then extracting new resources. In such an economy, all forms of waste, such as clothes, scrap metal and obsolete electronics, are returned to the economy or used more efficiently.’

Based on this definition, this post-pandemic recovery era provided us with a great incentive to reduce, reuse and recycle because our mobility and supply chains were impacted.

This is why, these times represent a golden opportunity to rediscover and innovate in the way of perceiving value. Our planet can no longer afford over-consumption

SCHOOLS CAN LINK WITH COMMUNITY LEADERS TO TURN IDEAS OF YOUNGSTERS INTO COMMUNITY INITIATIVES THAT CAN BE SPONSORED BY THE MUNICIPALITY

and consumerism that strains our factory assembly lines and our ever-challenged budgets.

We are fortunate that there is an emerging ecosystem by the public, private and civil society sectors that is promising to turn waste into means towards a more sustainable prosperity. Public entities, such the Environment Authority, Ministry of Economy, be’ah along with circular economy and clean technology entrepreneurs and civil society associations started using collaborating to scale up breakthrough reducing, reusing and recycling solutions.

The most significant

breakthroughs include Wakud, the first biofuel refinery in the Sultanate of Oman. It produces 600 thousand litres a month of UCO in accordance with the highest EU standards.

A second example is Recycling Services Company that have been expanded their waste recycling services to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabic this year.

Third, Project Ghost which is a not-for-profit consortium that was led by Environment Society of Oman — ESO’s and Wakud.

This project, that supported the British Embassy and approved by the Ministry of Social Development, collected, sorted and repurposed ghost nets- thousands of tonnes of discarded fishing nets that plague our beautiful oceans every year. Last but not least, Injaz Oman who encourage future entrepreneurs — students companies’ participants to rediscover turning waste into sustainable products.

There are many ways in which we could support this nascent

initiatives’ transition into a full-fledged circular economy that co-creates jobs, business opportunities and descent living standards for our communities.

Neighbourhoods can invest their time in sharing with each other stories about how we are enjoying this life today because of our ancestors’ wise and reasonable consumption.

Schools can link with community leaders to turn the ideas of youngsters into community initiatives that can be sponsored by the municipality. Impact investors can invest their time and money into scaling up circular economy solutions similar and even more innovative than existing reducing, reusing and recycling projects. More importantly, the public sector and government companies can make the most significant contribution to the sector by formulating and implementing innovative circular economy policies that promote competition and prevent monopolies.

Greece eyes bullish tourism season despite Ukraine war

HELENE COLLIOPOULOU

Greece’s pandemic-battered tourism industry is hoping the war in Ukraine won’t derail recovery, with hundreds of thousands cancelling trips as the country lifts Covid restrictions in a bid to revive the key sector.

The war in Ukraine erupted just as tourism in Greece was coming back to life, with officials betting on a strong season following two years of lockdowns and restrictions.

But it has meant the loss of some 600,000 Russians and 240,000 Ukrainians who have cancelled reservations, said Lyssandros Tsilidis, head of the Federation of Travel Agencies of Greece.

He said those losses amount to around \$755 million, for Greece, whose economy depends on tourism for around a quarter of national income. Greece closed its airspace to Russian flights after Moscow’s war on Ukraine on February 24, in line with other EU countries.

Russian national carrier Aeroflot also suspended all its international flights from March 8.

The tourist shortfall is acutely felt on the island of Crete, one of Greece’s premier travel destinations.

Russian and Ukrainian travellers traditionally account for one in 10 visitors to the island “of which Russians are the majority”, says Nikos Halkiadakis, President of the Hotel Union of Heraklion. “This clientele will not be replaced.”

Like much of the world, Greece rolled out various lockdowns and restrictions as the pandemic took hold in 2020, effectively grinding tourism to a halt.

After a benchmark year in 2019 that saw 33 million tourists visit the country, numbers in 2020 plummeted to 7.4 million — a 78 per cent drop, according to the Bank of Greece. Revenues also tumbled 76 per cent to \$4.6 million.

But as the country opened up last year, arrivals jumped by 94 per cent and revenues shot up by 142 per cent, central bank figures showed. In a bid to further boost visitor numbers, the government has once again peeled back restrictions this year. Mandatory screening tests for travellers who hold a European vaccination certificate were scrapped in February.

And vaccine passes will no longer be required in restaurants, and shops from May 1, while mandatory masks indoors will be scrapped from June 1. Though Russia’s war has somewhat dampened hopes of a strong recovery this year, all hope is not lost.

Deputy Tourism Minister Sofia Zacharakis says experts expect a “doubling” of last year’s arrivals.

“The season has already portrayed a very encouraging image, which allows us to be optimistic”, she said. — AFP

Why we admire Zelensky



BRET STEPHENS

The writer is a Pulitzer Prize-winning US journalist, editor and columnist

Why do we admire Volodymyr Zelensky? The question almost answers itself.

We admire him because, in the face of unequal odds, Ukraine’s president stands his ground. Because he proves the truth of the adage that one man with courage makes a majority.

Because he shows that honour and love of country are virtues we forsake at our peril. Because he grasps the power of personal example and physical presence. Because he knows how words can inspire deeds — give shape and purpose to them — so that the deeds may, in turn, vindicate the meaning of words.

We admire Zelensky because he reminds us of how rare these traits have become among our own politicians.

Zelensky was an actor who used his celebrity to become a statesman. Western politics is overrun by people who playact as statesmen so that they may ultimately become celebrities. Zelensky has made a point of telling Ukrainians the hard truth that the war is likely to get worse — and of telling off supposed well-wishers that their words are hollow and their support wanting. Our leaders mainly specialise in telling people what they want to hear.

We admire Zelensky because of who and what he faces. Vladimir Putin represents neither a nation nor a cause, only a totalitarian ethos. The Russian ruler stands for the idea that truth exists to serve power, not the other way around, and that politics is in the business of manufacturing propaganda for those who will swallow it and imposing terror on those who will not. Ultimately, the aim of this idea isn’t the mere acquisition of power or territory. It’s the eradication of conscience.

We admire Zelensky because he has restored the idea of the free world to its proper place. The free world isn’t a cultural expression, as in “the West”; or a security concept, as in Nato; or an economic description, as in “the developed world.”

And the responsibility of the free world is to aid and champion any of its members menaced by invasion and tyranny. As it goes for Ukraine, so,



President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine during a news conference in Kyiv.

eventually, it will go for the rest of us.

We admire Zelensky because he embodies two great Jewish archetypes: David in the face of Goliath and Moses in the face of Pharaoh. He is the canny underdog who, with skill and wits, makes up for what he lacks in fearsomeness and brawn. And he is the prophet who revolts against

ZELENSKY IS ADMIRE BECAUSE HE MAINTAINS A SENSE OF HUMAN PROPORTION BEFITTING A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED LEADER

the diminishment and entrapment of his people — and determines to lead them through trials toward a political culture based on self-determination, freedom and ethics.

We admire Zelensky because he fights. Fighting is not supposed to be a virtue in civilised societies that value dialogue, diplomacy and compromise.

But the world isn’t always civilised: There are things for which civilised persons and nations must be prepared to fight if they aren’t to perish. Zelensky and the Ukrainian people have reminded the rest of the free world that a liberal and democratic inheritance that is taken for granted by its citizens runs the risk of being taken at will by its enemies.

We admire Zelensky because he rouses the better angels of our nature. His leadership has made Joe Biden a better president, Germany a better country, Nato a better alliance.

We admire Zelensky because he maintains a sense of human proportion befitting a democratically elected leader. Note the contrast between his public encounters with journalists, Cabinet members, foreign leaders and ordinary citizens and the Stalinist antics of the Putin court.

We admire Zelensky because he models what a man should be: Impressive without being imposing; confident without being cocksure; intelligent without pretending to be infallible; sincere rather than cynical; courageous not because he is fearless but because he advances with a clear conscience. American boys in particular, raised on preposterous notions of what manhood entails, should be steered towards his example.

— The New York Times

A talk about cooperatives



Ali Al Matani
ali.matani2@gmail.com

There has been a lot of talk about setting up of cooperative societies in governorates and wilayats of the Sultanate of Oman recently. Everybody discussed their importance for the local communities and highlighted their role to promote local

products. Comparisons were also made with the experiences of some other countries in the region.

Today, closed, or limited liability public companies can be established in the wilayats to manage hypermarkets or other businesses and work according to the objectives of the cooperatives which are successful with foreign investors who make huge efforts without any support.

Today, the government encourages investments and setting up of all sorts of cooperatives or public shareholding companies. This is with the vision to achieve progress in the governorates, strengthen investments there and set up private joint stock companies which are put for subscription by investors after some time. This is how national companies enter the retail market. All rules and regulations make way for this. There are no obstacles in the way. Perhaps there is a control system for joint stock companies in place which makes governance of such cooperatives more dynamic when it comes to managing assets and diversification of investments in supply and production chains. It makes local cooperatives a beehive of complementary, purposeful works of mutual benefits.

Lot of investments have been made in retail trade which achieve success and earn credibility and trust in the local markets. This is the approach which should be adopted at a larger scale to include wilayats. This is important so that there are companies which have specialisation in retail and operate hypermarkets and support shops in villages under one brand name. This can

give opportunities to people of the country under a certain mechanism, auditing system and strong management. There are no hurdles in this.

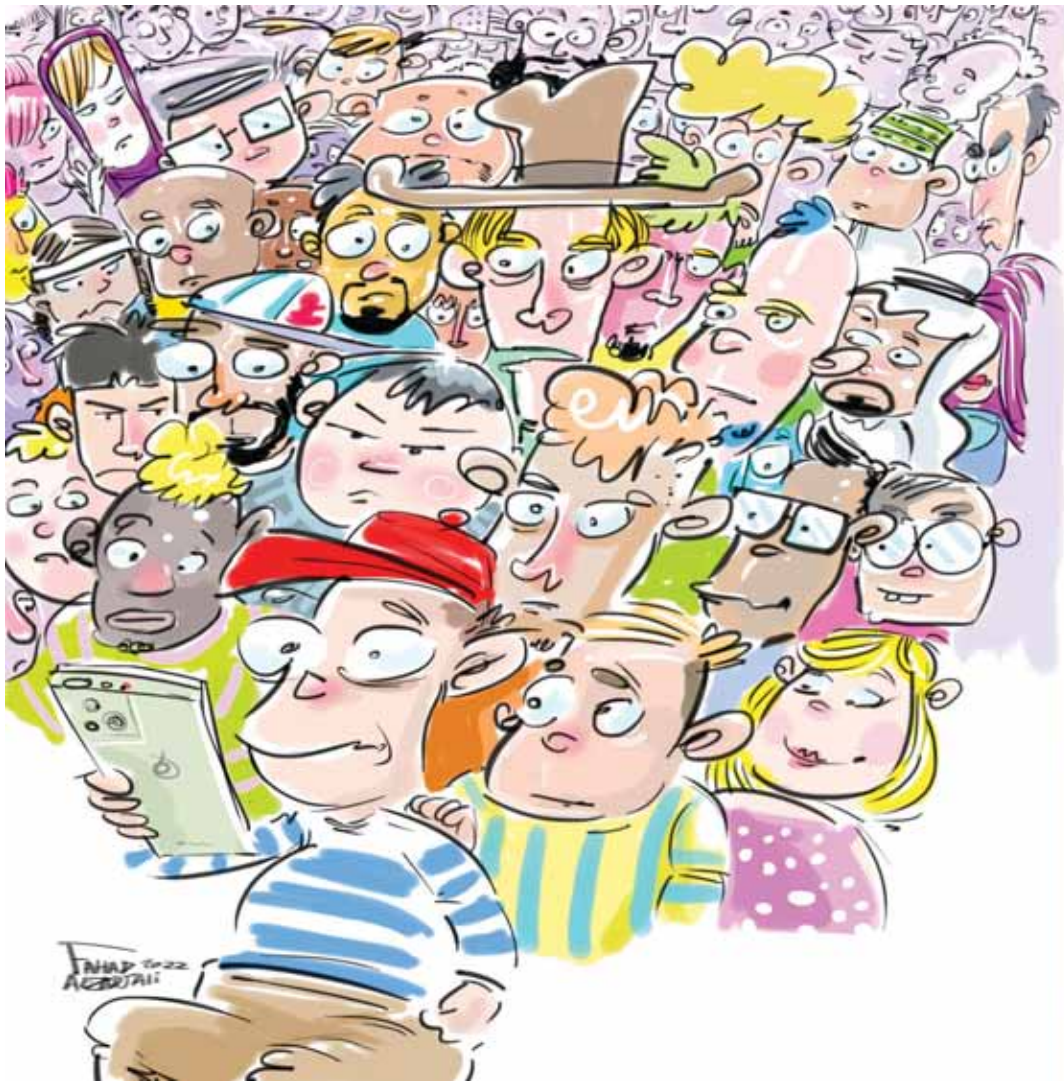
Today, there are hypermarkets established by foreign investors spread everywhere in the country. They are either individual initiatives or cooperatives. They are successful. Such experiments can be made and hypermarkets are opened in all wilayats of the country in a competitive environment and freedom of trade and market economy.

Today, we want to enter into such activities by setting up cooperatives in which the government is also a partner. This is a contradiction which has surfaced after more than 50 years of practicing free economic system and encouraging investment and freedom of trade.

The system of cooperatives on which we are lamenting is not effective and successful in some countries in the region. It is not considered sound for commercial and trade practices. These cooperatives are more like charity organisations which offer prices lower than the markets or absorb products on the basis that they are national. These practices do not develop an economy and do not improve the products and services. Rather, such practices are like the worn-out socialist systems which have already been wrecked in the past as they were useless.

Of course, the government can provide facilities like investments, lands, waiver of fees, taxes and duties to private shareholding companies. But if it tries for partnerships in these cooperatives to practice trade, this is not the place or time for this at least now. We should seriously establish shareholding companies in various businesses and throw them open for subscription after a certain period as per rules and regulations.

We hope that some wilayats will start setting up such companies to work in the retail sector, operations of hypermarkets without waiting for cooperative societies to emerge. We should keep our eyes open and learn from others' experiences also. Repetition of the same experience which have already been done by others and which have led is not wise.



What we need for long-term peace and prosperity



Margaret Kuhlow

The writer is Global Finance Practice Leader at WWF International

Russia's war in Ukraine is a humanitarian catastrophe that violates the United Nations Charter and international humanitarian law, and has exacerbated socioeconomic and environmental crises around the world. It is also the latest manifestation of a global system that does not improve the human condition. Our imperfect responses to climate change, biodiversity loss, the Covid-19 pandemic, rising energy and food costs and war reveal international systems in dire need of redesign.

An economic model predicated on the pursuit of indefinite production and consumption has confronted us with climate and ecosystem breakdown. The latest reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change underscore the severity of the climate crisis and the narrowing opportunity for more climate-resilient development.

Governments need to deliver on pledges to align public support behind clean-energy investments and deployment, and to phase out subsidies for fossil fuels. But the war in Ukraine is increasing pressure on fiscal authorities to maintain and even increase support for fossil fuels and intensive, protectionist agriculture. Policymakers therefore must recognise that the current crisis is an opportunity to invest in a faster transition to clean energy and resilient agriculture — all of which will create green jobs in the process.

Climate finance should focus on those most affected by, and least able to address, climate change. Rising food and energy prices were already creating hardship for poorer countries before the war. Now, even higher prices have threatened a food-security crisis that the World Food Programme may struggle to address, given that it has historically sourced more than half of its wheat from Ukraine.

Peace is necessary to ensure that all societies and nature thrive. But peace and long-term prosperity rely, in turn, on our ability to create an equitable, net-zero, nature-positive global economy. This week and in the months ahead, governments and multilateral organisations like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund will have an opportunity to lay the groundwork for achieving this vision.

The IMF's proposed Resilience and Sustainability Trust can help to ensure that the recently allocated \$650 billion in special drawing rights (the Fund's reserve asset) will channel more cost-effective, flexible finance to the most vulnerable countries. At the same time, increased development finance can help to scale up green industrialisation and employment,

while supporting those countries making the shift away from carbon-intensive industries.

For its part, the World Bank must use its financial leverage to fund a faster and more equitable clean-energy transition. It should support countries suffering from the pandemic, the physical effects of climate change and the economic shocks of war by making a greater commitment to financing adaptation, facilitating concessional lending and deploying its risk-mitigation tools to help crowd in

RECENT CRISES
HAVE EXPOSED THE
SHORTCOMINGS OF
OUR INTERNATIONAL
INSTITUTIONS AND
GROWTH-OBSESSED
ECONOMIC MODELS,
POINTING TO THE NEED
FOR FUNDAMENTAL
REFORMS

more private finance.

Beyond supporting a just transition, transforming the global economic and financial system means changing the "rules of the game." Natural resources and nature's services must be properly valued and externalities properly disclosed, priced and built into financial markets.

We also need to change how we measure progress, because GDP is no longer fit for purpose. Rather than helping us tackle our biggest problems, it contributes to them by encouraging overconsumption. Replacing GDP with

a new yardstick that tracks well-being and prosperity across generations would encourage investment in natural and social capital, as well as a transition to a nature-positive global economy that respects and operates within the biosphere's limits. The UN Sustainable Development Goals were meant to do that, but we have yet to match those commitments with action.

Forging a consensus on new rules will require a new global commission on the economy and nature — a new Bretton Woods to bring together government, business, finance, academia and civil society. We must acknowledge that our economies are dependent on and embedded in nature. And we must update the IMF and World Bank's governance structures to recognise the economic power of emerging markets, giving a greater voice (and more votes) to underrepresented countries.

To persuade businesses and investors to shift capital towards low-carbon, socially inclusive, and nature-positive activities, governments must integrate natural and social systems into their decision-making. That is the only way to align fiscal and other economic policies with international climate, nature, and development goals. This process should include publishing information on natural capital stocks and associated risks, liabilities and investment requirements in annual budget reports. Moreover, corporate reporting on climate and nature-related risks (based on recommendations from the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures and eventually, the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures) need to be standardised and made mandatory for businesses and financial institutions.

© Project Syndicate, 2021



A protester wears a Ukrainian flag mask with the words "No War" during a demonstration outside the Russian Embassy in Bangkok on Wednesday. — AFP

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



MOHAMED SALAH

RANGNICK

SAYS UNITED

'SIX YEARS' BEHIND



THIAGO ALCANTARA

Liverpool go top after Man Utd thrashing

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE AFTER TUESDAY'S MATCH (PLAYED, WON, DRAWN, LOST, GOALS FOR, GOALS AGAINST, POINTS):

Liverpool	32	23	7	2	83	22	76
Man City	31	23	5	3	72	20	74
Chelsea	30	18	8	4	64	23	62
Tottenham	32	18	3	11	56	38	57
Arsenal	31	17	3	11	45	37	54
Man Utd	33	15	9	9	52	48	54
West Ham	33	15	7	11	52	43	52
Wolves	32	15	4	13	33	28	49
Leicester	30	11	7	12	46	50	40
Brighton	32	9	13	10	29	37	40
Brentford	33	11	6	16	41	49	39
Southampton	32	9	12	11	38	52	39
Crystal Palace	31	8	13	10	43	40	37
Newcastle	32	9	10	13	36	55	37
Aston Villa	31	11	3	17	42	46	36
Leeds	32	8	9	15	38	68	33
Everton	30	8	4	18	33	52	28
Burnley	31	4	13	14	26	45	25
Watford	32	6	4	22	30	62	22
Norwich	32	5	6	21	22	66	21

NOTE:
Top four qualify for Champions League; fifth place qualifies for Europa League group stage; sixth place qualifies for Europa Conference League play-off round; bottom three relegated

In contrast to the fine margins separating Liverpool and City, a 22-point gap now lies between the league leaders and United in sixth with only Tottenham and Arsenal's own failings keeping the Red Devils in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.

Rangnick's attempt to plug the holes in the United defence was a recall for Phil Jones, making just his second Premier League appearance since January 2020, as part of a back five.

But it took just five minutes for the visitors to be cut open.

Mane's through ball picked out Salah in acres of space and he found Diaz to apply a simple finish from close range.

"They always try to give us the ball in a one-against-one situations, so it makes our life much easier," said Salah.

SUPPORT FOR RONALDO

Two minutes later, the fierce rivalry between English football's two most successful clubs was set aside in a show of support for Cristiano Ronaldo.

The Portuguese superstar was missing for United after revealing on Monday that his newborn baby son had died.

Supporters on all sides of Anfield stood for a minute's applause, while the Liverpool fans sang their own anthem "You'll never walk alone".

"That was my moment of the game," said Klopp. "So many things are much more important in life than football, we feel for Cristiano and his family."

On the field, the one-way traffic continued with United barely able to get out of their own half.

A second Liverpool goal seemed inevitable and when it arrived, it was of the highest quality. Joel Matip fizzed the ball into Mane's feet and the Senegalese lofted a first-time pass over the top for Salah.

The Egyptian had not scored for Liverpool from open play since February, but showed no signs of a lack of confidence as he cushioned the ball into his path and slotted low past David de Gea.

Liverpool were still the lethal side in attack as Mane coolly steered home the third from Diaz's cross to end any hope of a United revival.

Salah then took his tally for the season to 30, five of which have come in two games against United, as he lifted the ball over De Gea from Diogo Jota's pass five minutes from time. — AFP

LIVERPOOL:

Manchester United interim manager Ralf Rangnick said the Red Devils are "six years" behind Liverpool after being blown away in a 4-0 defeat at Anfield on Tuesday.

Jurgen Klopp's men won 5-0 at Old Trafford in October and expectations of a similar rout were well-founded as Liverpool exposed the massive gulf between the sides with Mohamed Salah scoring twice and Luis Diaz and Sadio Mane also on target.

Liverpool move two points ahead of Manchester City at the top of the table, but still need the English champions to slip up in their remaining seven league games of the season to win the title.

Rangnick will step aside at the end of the season, with Ajax manager Erik ten Hag reportedly set to take over.

And the German said the impact Klopp has made on transforming Liverpool's fortunes is the example for United to follow. "It is embarrassing, it is disappointing, maybe even humiliating," said Rangnick.

"We have to accept they are six years ahead of us now. When Jurgen Klopp came they changed at the club and lifted not just the team but the club and city to a new level. That is what needs to happen with us in the next transfer windows."

Rangnick pleads with Man Utd to follow Liverpool blueprint

LIVERPOOL: Rarely has a 4-0 defeat for Manchester United seemed so inevitable as the thrashing dished out on Tuesday by a Liverpool side sensing their shot at history.

Ten matches now stand between Jurgen Klopp's men and potentially the first ever quadruple of Premier League, Uefa Champions League, FA Cup and League Cup.

They will be lucky if they get another game as easy as the one offered by a United side lacking any quality or fighting spirit, even though the scoreline stopped short of the 5-0 humiliation at Old

Trafford in October. Add in United's two meetings with Manchester City, and the Old Trafford Club have lost all four games to the standard bearers of English football in 2021/22, conceding 15 goals and scoring only once.

United's interim manager Ralf Rangnick spelt out the need for a long-term plan if the Red Devils are to match the sustained excellence that Klopp and Pep Guardiola have brought to Liverpool and City respectively.

"If you look at those two clubs who are currently dominating the Premier League, they brought in



two managers, but not only that, they changed the whole thing with regards to formation. What kind of players do we need? What kind of football do we want to play?

"The headline of everything was 'how do we want to play?' Underneath this headline in every transfer window, they created the team they have in both clubs."

Rangnick described Liverpool's current squad as "25 Formula One racing cars" compared to the lethargy of the squad at his disposal, many of whom may have run their last races for the club.

"The team needs a rebuild, not

because some players have to go but because quite a few players' contracts are expiring," added Rangnick.

"Therefore for me it's clear that there will be six, seven, eight, maybe 10 new players, and before you sign those players, you need to know what kind of football does the new manager want to play."

"Then bring every single player fitting into that profile."

Liverpool are the embodiment of that joined-up thinking.

Seven years on from Klopp's arrival at Anfield, they have never looked better. — AFP



Vaishali named manager of Team Spirit at FairBreak Invitational

DUBAI: Vaishali Jesrani, captain of the Oman women's national team, has been announced manager of Team Spirit at the SDG FairBreak Invitational T20 Tournament scheduled to be held between May 1 and 15 in Dubai.

The ICC sanctioned competition, held in conjunction with Cricket Hong Kong, is the world's first privately funded tournament in women's cricket history with the leading healthcare group Gencor as lead

sponsor. There will be a total of 19 games played between 6 teams, composed of players from all around the world.

FairBreak Global said in a statement, "FairBreak Global is delighted to announce Vaishali Jesrani as the manager of Team Spirit at the SDG FairBreak Invitational T20 in Dubai. Vaishali is an inspirational leader of cricket development for girls at Oman Cricket and is committed to accelerating the growth of



women's cricket in her home nation and globally. She has captained the Oman

national team at an international level and is a veteran #fairbreaker who played at Wormsley in the UK in 2018.

Vaishali is a graduate of the ICC 100 per cent Cricket Future Leaders Programme which is designed to support emerging female talent in cricket across administration, coaching, officiating, broadcasting, journalism and marketing, and was mentored through the programme by Cricket

Australia Executive GM for Fan Engagement, Anthony Everard.

Vaishali has cricket in her DNA, having played since early childhood. She never compromises on physical fitness and is overjoyed to be part of FairBreak's equality movement."

Speaking on the work done by FairBreak, Vaishali enthused, "Fairbreak has connected women in cricket and countries too. It is the first ever platform where all women personalities will be

working together, it's upbeat in all ways. It's exciting and the bond should grow stronger. FairBreak has done a marvellous job, hats off!"

Players from a total of 35 countries will be involved in the event, including those from emerging cricket nations such as Philippines, Japan and Vanuatu, bringing further exposure and knowledge to the women's game and furthering its global growth and development in the process.

Du Plessis hits 96 as Bangalore beat Lucknow by 18 runs

MUMBAI: Skipper Faf du Plessis on Tuesday said an elusive IPL century is "around the corner" after his 96 helped Royal Challengers Bangalore beat Lucknow Super Giants by 18 runs.

The South African made Bangalore fight back with his 64-ball knock after they lost two wickets, including Virat Kohli for a golden duck, in the opening over in Mumbai.

RCB posted 181 for six, a total their bowlers — led by Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood — defended by restricting Lucknow to 163-8.

But the 37-year-old Du Plessis remained the hero after he put on a 70-run fifth-wicket stand with Shabbaz Ahmed, who made 26 and then a brisk 49 with the in-form Dinesh Karthik.

The former Proteas skipper missed out on a hundred after holing out off Jason Holder in the final over of the innings.

"My elusive IPL hundred... I feel it is around the corner," said man of the match Du Plessis, who equalled his previous IPL best of 96 against Punjab Kings in 2019.

"I wanted to make a big impact because the last few games had been quiet for me. I went through my own processes and blueprint for scoring runs so I had a clear mental image going into this match and I am glad that it paid off."

Bangalore, who are searching for their maiden IPL title, moved to second in the table behind



leaders Gujarat Titans. Lucknow slipped to fourth.

Hazlewood returned figures of 4-25, including the key wickets of opener Quinton de Kock for three and Marcus Stoinis, who made a 15-ball 24 before being bowled by his international teammate in the penultimate over.

The KL Rahul-led Lucknow, who are one of two new franchises along with Gujarat, lost regular wickets in their chase, with Hazlewood striking twice in his first two overs.

Rahul made 30 and Krunal Pandya hit 42 off 28 balls but it was Stoinis' late blitz that raised Lucknow's hopes.

"Everyone has chipped in and everyone looks in good form and everyone scored for us," said Rahul. "Important that one or two guys who have a good day need to dig in and take the team through."

Wednesday's match between Delhi Capitals and Punjab Kings has been shifted to Mumbai's Brabourne Stadium from Pune due a Covid outbreak in the Delhi team.

Australia's Mitchell Marsh was admitted to hospital after testing positive for Covid-19 on Monday. Delhi have five positive Covid cases including four support staff members. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES: Royal Challengers Bangalore 181-6 (Faf du Plessis 96; Shabbaz Ahmed 26; Jason Holder 2-25) beat Lucknow Super Giants 163-8 (Krunal Pandya 42, KL Rahul 30; Josh Hazlewood 4-25) by 18 runs.

Overcooked Kohli risks 'fried brain' if not rested: Shastri

NEW DELHI:

Out-of-sorts Virat Kohli could be lost to cricket with a "fried brain" if he is not given a break soon, said former India coach Ravi Shastri after the batsman's latest IPL failure.



months. He has failed to score a century in his last 100 matches in all formats. The former India captain had last year warned about players

getting "cooked" mentally because of relentless cricket in bio-secure bubbles during the coronavirus pandemic.

Former England skipper Kevin Pietersen also backed Kohli to take a break and reset his personal and professional life.

"The guy has had so much to deal with, from marriage to baby to media scrutiny and all on his personal life. He is the biggest star on show," Pietersen said.

"Virat Kohli needs to say: 'Cricket boots, for six months, I will see you later.' Turn off social media, go and get re-energised."

Nicknamed King Kohli, the batsman has played 101 Tests, 260 one-day internationals and 97 Twenty20 matches for India since 2008, during which time he has amassed 23,650 runs across the three formats including 70 centuries. — AFP

LOCAL FLAVOUR

Friendly Stars win by 6 wickets in opener of Pran Frooto tourney

MUSCAT: The Friendly Stars defeated Friends 11 on the opening day of Pran Frooto Ramadan Tennex Ball Cricket Tournament 2022, organised by Al Hail Cricket Team.

In the first match on Tuesday night, Friendly Stars prevailed over Friends 11 by six wickets.

Friendly Stars' Awais Munir top-scored with 21 runs. Jagath scored 11 runs and Tajamual 8 runs. For Friends 11, Senthil took three wickets giving away 2 runs. Bilal of Friendly Stars was declared man of the match.

Khalid al Balushi from Al Hail Cricket Team presided as the chief



guest of the opening ceremony. The tournament is sponsored by the Pran Frooto Drink which is available in all over the Oman market and Baab Al Hail Trading Company.

MRP win in super over, Asfandiyar prevail

MUSCAT: Mohammad Riaz & Partners (MRP) edged Marala XI in the Super Over and Asfandiyar thrashed Ravi Premium by 111 runs in the PSM Ramadan cricket tournament on Tuesday.

In the first match, MRP X1 won the toss and elected to bat first. MRP team scored 110 for 5 wickets in 8 overs. Fahad scored a brilliant 36 in 15 balls (6x3, 4x3). Naqas hit 18 runs in 8 balls towards the end.

M Kashif took 3 wickets in 2 overs for 29 runs. Waseem Ali took 2 wickets for 25 runs.

In reply, Marala X1 was going great with their opener M Majid hitting 63 runs with 9 towering sixes and a boundary. After the departure of Majid things were not going well for Marala as wickets tumbled at one end.

Last ball of the penultimate over they need 4 runs to victory. Batters took three runs to tie the totals and match went into super over. Fahad bowled the super over for MRP and gave only 3 runs. MRP reached the



target with 2 balls to spare. Fahad was adjudged the man of the match.

In the second match, Ravi Premium won the toss and decided to bowl first. The decision was too costly for Ravi as Asfandiyar X1 batters Saqib and Umer smashed Ravi bowlers to all parts of the ground.

Saqib scored a blistering 71 with 10 sixes and a four, while his partner Umer scored 59 runs in 15 balls as Asfandiyar X1 posted the highest total of the event so far by reaching 181 for 1 wicket in 8 overs.

In reply, Ravi Premium scored 70 runs for 5 wickets in the 8 overs. Asim got 2 wickets for 3 runs. Saqib was declared the man of the match.



‘Gazi 19’ sports activities conclude

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

The Ramadhan sports events ‘Gazi 19’ concluded at the Sur Sport Complex on Wednesday.

The events were organised by Department of Culture, Sports and Youth in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate with the support of the Oman Liquefied Natural Gas Company.

Dr Yahya bin Badr bin Malik al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah Governorate was the chief guest of the closing ceremony in presence of Dr Amer bin Nasser al Muta’ani, CEO of Oman LNG Development Foundation.

The futsal final was held between the Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) and Oman Sail, and ended with the victory of the OCO team 7-6 on penalty kicks after a goalless draw in the original time.

The OCO team were crowned champions and Oman Sail team finished runners-up.

In the chess competition, Omar al Alawi claimed the top spot. India’s Krishna came in second place and Ahmed al Balushi finished third.

The beach volleyball competition ended with the victory of the General Directorate of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources team against the General Directorate of Housing and Urban Planning in the final.

Al Habsi inspires Oman U-17 team players

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Oman’s sports icon Ali al Habsi delivered an inspiring speech to the Oman national (U-17) football team players during their preparatory camp in Muscat.

During his meeting with the players, Al Habsi highlighted on his successful journey in football as a professional player. He communicated to the players on different stages that he moved during his soccer career as a goalkeeper.

Then, he talked to the players on importance of wearing the national team jersey and delivering top efforts towards representing Oman at the international level. He motivated



all the squad members to have their own ambitions and goals in the near future and to work hard to accomplish the desired goals. He ended the conversation on the challenges and difficulties and best practices to overcome with it.

On the other hand, the Sultanate of Oman (U-17) football team concluded late on Tuesday their first domestic camp under supervision of the newly

appointed head coach Pablo Herrero Fernandez and his assistant Anwar al Habsi.

It was the first gathering camp for the recently appointed coaching staff. The four days camp focused on enhancing the physical and fitness sides in the players. Also, the Spanish coach and his assistant coach implemented some technical and tactical practices to evaluate the



selected player’s performances.

The first assignment for Oman U-17 team will be taking part at the qualifiers of AFC Asian Cup U-17 Championship which will be held earlier in October. The new Spanish coach will aim for different show of the team in the forthcoming appearance at the Asian qualifiers.

Head coach Pablo Herrero Fernandez opted 26 players for the initial short camp and the list included: Qusai Jameel, Fernas al Jabri, Awad al Mashakhi, Helmi al Balushi, Al Harith al Mashakhi, Momen al Soli, Anas al Ghadani, Tamim al Buraiki, Jasim Fakhri, Nibras Nasseb, Emad Faraj, Al Hussain al Balushi, Abdullah al Maqbali, Al Bara al Raqadi, Mohammed al Balushi, Abdullah al Rawahi, Adnan al Mushifri, Taha al Hinai, Ahmed al Saadi, Hamed al Shuraiqi, Ayman al Toobi, Al Haitham al Shukaili, Mohammed al Sameen, Seyaf Mafoudh and Abdullah al Hindasi.

AS'SIR CONTEST

2 Toyota Yaris, 2022
YM, S/D 1.5 Classic

VALUABLE
PRIZES
UP TO RO
35000

For participation
90458
Send to SMS

Presented by
Nada Al Balushi

MCT **13:00**

Comes through General Radio & Shabab Radio

@ShababRadioOman

@GeneralRadio

business

MUSCAT
STOCK
EXCHANGE
4,262.425



CRUDE
OIL PRICE
Oman Crude \$105.54
Brent Crude \$108.02
Light Crude \$102.87



Follow us on
omanobserver.om/business



TIME TO GET HIGHER RETURNS WITH MAISARAH FIXED DEPOSIT ACCOUNT

For more information visit: https://www.maisarah-oman.com/Fixed_Deposit

05375777 | www.maisarah-oman.com | [f/MaisarahOman](#) | [@MaisarahIslamic](#) | [@MaisarahIslamic](#)

UP TO
4%
EXPECTED
PROFIT RATE.



MAISARAH
FIXED DEPOSIT

Al-Futtaim IKEA set to open flagship store in Oman

AFFORDABLE LIVING: Spanning 25,000 square metres, the two-level flagship store is set to launch in Lulu Group's Oman Avenues Mall

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Swedish home furnishings giant IKEA has announced the opening of its first store in the Sultanate of Oman in June 2022. Spanning 25,000 square metres, the two-level flagship is set to launch in Lulu Group's Oman Avenues Mall. Bringing customers affordability and a comfortable shopping experience, the new IKEA will feature inspirational room setups and creative solutions for visitors with over 9,000 articles across Living Room, Bedroom, Kitchen, Bathroom and other home furnishing accessories. The new IKEA store will

be home to some of the most innovative customer experience solutions, including wall projectors to facilitate planning and product selection. Throughout the main showroom, digital signage and in-store technology will help customers find the right furnishings, visualise room setups and schedule deliveries in simple, easy steps. Oman's first IKEA will also comprise a 394-seat restaurant, directly connected to the shopping centre for easy access and convenience. As one of the world's largest food providers, IKEA is taking the next step towards making healthy and sustainable food more affordable and accessible to the many people. The retailer hopes to inspire better food choices at its Oman store, with a food and beverage range that includes IKEA's popular plant-based meatballs, ASC-certified salmon, and UTZ-certified coffee.



Featuring self-service kiosks, the IKEA restaurant extends into the mall for more seating options for customers. Customers can shop from the Swedish Scandinavian ingredients and

enjoy fresh pastries, cookies and more at the IKEA Bistro. Vinod Jayan, Managing Director – IKEA UAE, Egypt, Qatar and Oman, said, "Al-Futtaim IKEA's first store in the Sultanate of Oman reflects

our commitment to making sustainable living affordable and accessible, while creating a better everyday life for the many people. As part of the Al-Futtaim Group, we live by the same ethos of enriching the lives and

aspirations of our customers at every turn and we aim to do this for our customers across Oman. We are now closer to our Omani customers and are confident that the experience and home furnishing ideas we provide at IKEA will inspire our customers to refresh their homes." The new IKEA store will also provide its customers with the Click and Collect service to enjoy a convenient and contactless shopping experience. The "Click & Collect" works in three simple steps. First, customers need to choose their preferred time and place for delivery. Secondly, they receive an email and an SMS once the order is ready and finally, they can have the order picked up from the store on the same or next day, without getting out of the car. Customers can access the "Click & Collect" service through the IKEA website and mobile app. This service is available for all online paid orders.



CORRIGENDUM

In the heading of **Board of Directors' Report** appeared on Wednesday 20.4.2022 (Page 13), in **Oman Daily Observer**, kindly read as

Board of Directors' Report for the quarter ended 31 March 2022

instead of **Board of Directors' Report for the year ended 31 March 2022**

Fibre optic infrastructure for Sorouh integrated neighbourhoods

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning has signed an agreement with Oman Broadband Company for the laying of passive fibre optic infrastructure across the Souruh integrated neighbourhoods planned in the Sultanate of Oman. As per the agreement, Oman Broadband will establish, operate and lease the passive fibre optic and communications infrastructure. The goal is



to provide communications and fibre optic services to anyone requiring an internet connection. The agreement was signed by Eng Hamad Ali al Nazwani, Under-

Secretary for Housing, and Said Abdullah al Mandhari, Chairman of Oman Broadband. Eng Saud al Hashimi, Director General of Real Estates Development in the

Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, said the agreement comes within the framework of providing services for the "Souruh" initiative. Al Hashimi added that three new integrated neighborhood projects will be established within the "Souruh" initiative in Al Amerat, Bidbid and Halban. Those initiatives will contribute to reducing the cost of housing units and making them accessible for all people. **(With inputs from ONA)**

MAFWR says 627 fisheries violations recorded in March



QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Over a tonne of Omani lobster fished illegally in the waters of the Sultanate of Oman outside the designated harvest season were seized by authorities during the month of March 2022.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MAFWR) recorded a total of 627 fishery-related violations in the different governorates of the country during March 2022. Many of the offences pertained to fishing without a valid licence. Instances of expatriates being employed in fishing activities without proper licenses were recorded as well. In other breaches, the Ministry initiated action against those found operating fishing

MANY OF THE OFFENCES PERTAINED TO FISHING WITHOUT A VALID LICENCE.

boats without proper registration plates, or installing prohibited devices or equipment onboard.

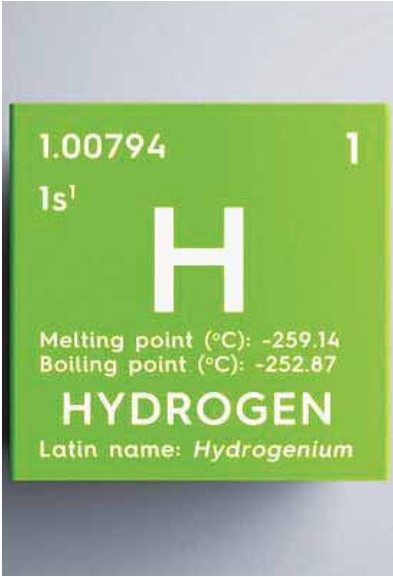
A total of 109 seizures were reported too. They include seizures of boats (10), outboard engines (10) and illegal fishing nets (25). A total of 64 expatriates working illegally in the sector were arrested as well.

Authorities also seized a quantity of Omani lobster that was harvested outside of the designated season. In a statement, the ministry has urged everyone operating in the fisheries sector to abide by regulations and laws to help sustain the country's marine resources.

Scatec, Acme's Oman project gets world's first green hydrogen certificate

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Leading international inspection services provider TUV Rheinland has issued the world's first green hydrogen and green ammonia certificate to a production facility with a capacity of 1.2 million tonnes of green ammonia that Norway's Scatec ASA and India's ACME Group plan to build in the Sultanate of Oman. Last month, the Norwegian renewable power producer and ACME unveiled a plan to jointly build and operate a large-scale



green hydrogen and ammonia production facility in the Duqm Special Economic Zone (SEZ). The electrolyzers will have a capacity of 300 MW and will be powered by 500 MW of solar. The project will be implemented by Green Hydrogen and Chemicals SPC, an equally owned joint venture founded by the partner companies. Following an assessment, the Germany-based inspection company concluded that Green Hydrogen and Chemicals SPC meets all criteria based on defined production methods, transport methods and the applications of

hydrogen. The certificate proves that ammonia and hydrogen produced from green energy have significantly lower levels of greenhouse-gas emissions than conventional hydrogen or fossil fuels. "This certificate will enhance our capability to cater to international markets across Europe, America and Asia region for the supply of Green Ammonia. We have already started work on the Oman plant and are on track to commission the world's first large-scale green ammonia project," said ACM's chief executive Rajat Seksaria.



Volkswagen honours women customers

MUSCAT: Premium Motors, the official dealer for Volkswagen brand in Oman organised a special event — ‘A Day with Premium Motors’ — exclusively designed for its women customers. The occasion provided an opportunity for women to network over coffee, get a tour of Premium Motors facility and know their car.

Christian Nehme, General Manager of Premium Motors Oman said, “We were honoured to host this event dedicated to our very special customers. The participants described the outing as ‘inspirational; and we were touched by their kind words and enthusiasm. We are happy to provide them with important experiences with regards to owning a Volkswagen.”

The visit provided the women a chance to know the inside and outside of the Volkswagen they own. By the end of the session, the participants were equipped with lessons to change a tyre, check the oil, top up fluids and check tyre pressure. They also appreciated the importance of regular servicing and better understood ‘mechanic speak’.

Volkswagen models stand out for their latest technology, outstanding design, connectivity, safety features and excellent German quality. Located at Alfardan Heights at Ghala, Premium Motors is spread across three floors and designed in accordance with global standards and corporate identity.

Get assured gold coins at Malabar Gold & Diamonds

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, one among the largest jewellery retailers globally with a strong retail network of 280 outlets spread across the globe has announced the much-awaited festive season offer, ‘Gold Promise’ giving customers a chance to get assured gold coins on their Gold & Diamond Jewellery purchases.

This offer will be valid across all stores of Malabar Gold & Diamonds from April 21 to May 3. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also unveiled the Festive Jewellery collection, featuring the most eye-catching and unique trends in gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery, bound to captivate jewellery lovers at the best price.

The ‘Festive Jewellery’ collection presents an array of exclusive and stylish designs that are sure to entice jewellery enthusiasts of all age groups and ethnicities. These include Era — Uncut Diamond Jewellery,



Precia — Gem Jewellery, Divine — Indian Heritage Jewellery and Ethnix — Handcrafted Designer Jewellery.

Further, the brand has also launched trendy and unique designs within the ‘Bella’ and

‘Elegance’ collections housing a range of dazzling jewellery set in pure gold, for an enhanced shopping experience.

Through the ‘Gold Promise’ by Malabar Gold & Diamonds, customers can get a free 1

gm gold coin on purchase of diamond and precious gem jewellery worth RO 500 and ½ gm gold coin on purchase of diamond and precious gem jewellery worth RO 300.

“In anticipation of the upcoming festive season, we wanted to be at the forefront of our offering by introducing new and varied collections in gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery, along with special festive offers.

We are also currently running the gold rate protection offer as an added advantage for this festive season through our ‘Be Gold Smart’ campaign, providing customers with the best opportunity to invest in gold and block the gold rate by paying just 10% of the overall value in advance. We wish everyone blessed and safe festivities,” said Shamlal Ahamed, Managing Director — International Operations, Malabar Gold a& Diamonds.

Nissan Oman offers special Ramadhan scheme with attractive starting EMIs

MUSCAT: Nissan Oman from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA), is offering a wide range of benefits for Nissan patrons as part of its special Ramadhan offer.

The offer, which is available on all models purchased for personal use, will go on till May 19, 2022. As part of the special scheme, Nissan Oman is offering free periodic vehicle service package, Free Insurance, Assured Gift Voucher, Free Registration and many more. Vehicles purchased with commercial registration will not be eligible for the scheme.

Vehicles bought for taxi, driving school, ministries, fleet and rent-a-car usage will not be eligible for this scheme.

A senior official of Nissan Oman, from the house of Suhail Bahwan Automobiles (SBA)



said, “At Nissan Oman every Ramadhan we try to offer the best possible value proposition for the benefit of our esteemed customers.

We would like to emphasise that this is the best time to buy Nissan cars. Nissan Oman has always made genuine efforts to offer world-class facilities and services to its valued customers.

We are happy to launch a special promotion on the wide range of Nissan vehicles in celebration of the holy month of Ramadhan.”

Customers can avail starting EMI rate as part of the offer. Starting EMI for Nissan Sunny 1.5L is RO 59, Nissan Sunny 1.6L is RO 69, Nissan Kicks is RO 77, Nissan X-Trail is RO 118, Nissan Altima is RO 120, Nissan Maxima

is RO 166, Nissan X-Terra is RO 133, Nissan Pathfinder is RO 171, Nissan Patrol Y61 Super Safari is RO 207, Nissan Patrol Y62 is RO 230, Nissan Navara is RO 103 and Nissan Urvan is RO 102.

These starting EMIs are calculated on the price of the base model with 20% down payment, 2.75 % rate of interest for 10 years loan tenure through Bank Muscat.

Subject to credit approvals. Conditions apply.

All customers purchasing Nissan vehicles during this scheme period except GTR, 370Z will be eligible for free periodic maintenance service package for three years/60,000 kms (whichever is earlier), limited to six services only. This offer includes only the service intervals of 10,000 kms.

Look forward to Mondays with Ooredoo’s Nojoom programme

MUSCAT: Rewarding loyal customers and making weekdays more fun, Ooredoo’s Nojoom programme makes every Monday a more memorable experience. With lots of fantastic offers available, Nojoom members can take advantage of the exclusive ‘Buy 1 Get 1 Free’ deals to enjoy quality time with friends and family at a host of shopping, spas, dining, leisure destinations and more.

Making it even more convenient, users are able to redeem their points for telecoms benefits and bill payments, all through the Ooredoo App. Recently added to the list are a range of cafes including Lino’s Coffee, Richoux, Tamrah, Mooyah Burger, Buffalo Wild Wings, Domino’s Pizza, Illy Café,



Ayadina, sports and lifestyle partners Nespresso, Engym Zone, V-Kool, Bluzion Oman, Shoe Palace and Al Hareef Store, as well as Oman Adventure Club, City Season Hotel and Majlis and Oman Aquarium as entertainment partners.

To begin enjoying Ooredoo Mondays, customers can subscribe and enjoy reward offers by downloading the award-winning Ooredoo App.

OTE Group holds skills competition for service advisers

MUSCAT: A first-of-its-kind skills competition, conducted by OTE Group for its sizable contingent of service advisers, provided a robust validation of the superior customer service standards espoused by the group’s various automotive departments and its leasing arm VLC.

The competition, implemented in three stages over a period of four weeks, witnessed the participation of a total of 52 service advisers. Their role as ‘Customer Service Champions’ — liaising between customers and the technical teams — is pivotal to OTE’s goal of sustaining and building enduring customer loyalty across its automotive brands.

During the phased competition, the contestants showed off their tried-and-tested skills as service



advisers. The strength of their customer-centric mindset and convictions was also evaluated by a panel of stalwarts from the industry.

From 52 advisers who entered the contest in the preliminary

round, only 17 progressed into the second round.

They were invited to attend a written test to assess their knowledge of the six-step customer care process — the essential toolkit of customer service champions.

Also as part of this stage, the shortlisted candidates were asked to role-play their responsibilities when receiving customers with their vehicles, and at the time of delivery of the vehicles.

The role-plays helped evaluate

their Interpersonal skills, politeness and overall approach towards the customers.

Only six of them made it into the third and final round where, through a series of brief role-plays, they were gauged for their aptitude, interpersonal and communication skills, attention to detail and ability to handle a customer’s queries, concerns and even distress over unmet expectations.

Emerging triumphant from the weeks-long competition was Bahiya bint Said bin Khalfan al Wahaibiyah, a young Omani woman, who outperformed her peers at every stage of the stringent evaluation process. She received a splendid trophy for her efforts, along with a gift voucher.

First runner-up was Mohamed Abdelhady Abass Mohammed,

who collected a trophy and gift voucher as well. All six finalists also received appreciation certificates for their commendable performance.

“The results were heartening — our service advisers showed that they were consistently at the top of their game. Given the fast-paced automotive service environment that they find themselves in, it’s imperative that they are suitably motivated, well-enthused and fully customer-oriented in their interactions with our valued customers”, said Dileep Kaul, Senior General Manager, OTE Group.

OTE Group is committed to ensuring that its business delivers an outstanding service at all times, with the goal to enhance the customer’s experience every time.



Valor Hospitality announces first hotel in Oman

New landmark: Global hospitality management firm expands portfolio by announcing a new hotel in Muscat in partnership with Ocean Hospitality, a subsidiary of Mustafa Sultan Enterprises

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Valor Hospitality Middle East, a full-service hotel acquisition, development, management and asset management company, announces its first hotel in Muscat (Sultanate of Oman), adding to its portfolio in the Middle East.

The upscale, full-service hotel in Muscat is scheduled to open in Q1 2024, after complete renovation, refurbishment and rebranding.

When open, the hotel will feature 201 guest rooms, ballroom



and conference facilities, leisure and fitness amenities and multiple bars and dining venues.

Located in the centre of Muscat, in Qurum, the hotel will offer a great location and diverse

room mix for both short and long stays, corporate and leisure travellers.

"After our recent hotel opening in Dubai, UAE, it gives us great pleasure to expand our third-party

hotel management services in the Middle East by partnering with Mustafa Sultan Enterprises for our first of, hopefully, many hotels in Oman", said Julien Bergue, Co-founder and Managing Partner,

WHEN OPEN, THE HOTEL WILL FEATURE 201 GUEST ROOMS, BALLROOM AND CONFERENCE FACILITIES, LEISURE AND FITNESS AMENITIES AND MULTIPLE BARS AND DINING VENUES.

Valor Hospitality Middle East.

"We are working closely with the ownership on the full renovation plan and in identifying a suitable brand fit for the fully revamped hotel" Bergue continued.

Shabeer Mustafa Sultan, Chairman of Mustafa Sultan Enterprises, said, "We are thrilled to partner with Valor Hospitality for operating an international branded hotel in Muscat, Oman and to provide the best possible guest experience.

This collaboration points to a full renovation and rebranding investment that supports our mission to create long-term value

for the tourism, real estate and leisure sectors across Oman.

With our shared values and Valor Hospitality's global expertise in managing hotels, we are confident the hotel will add great value to the vision of Oman's leaders, particularly in the upscale hotel segment. We look forward to delivering an engaging and positive experience for all our guests".

Valor Hospitality Partners is a leading global third-party hotel management company, headquartered in Atlanta, GA, USA. With over 85 hotels in its portfolio across The Americas, UK, Africa and Middle East, Valor is now rapidly expanding further within the Middle East, CIS and Indian Ocean regions.

Ocean Hospitality LLC was established by the Mustafa Sultan Enterprises Group in 2015 for the purpose of strategic investments in Oman's real estate and hospitality sectors.

Mazoon Electricity holds workshop on OES

MUSCAT: Mazoon Electricity (member of Nama group) organised its first workshop for its staff, licensed electricians and construction consultants as part of a series of workshops it has launched on the implementation of Oman Electrical Standards (OES) relating to electrical connections to buildings.

The workshop was organised for the benefit of Mazoon Electricity employees in Al Batinah South Governorate and Al Suwaiq Wilayat to apprise them with the latest update of standard 4 of OES and methods of its implementation, along with discussing existing challenges.

Standard OES-4 is a binding specification for electrical installations in buildings, whether residential, agricultural or industrial and other fixed and temporary low-voltage connections. It sets out the technical and safety requirements to be observed by distribution companies, engineering offices and contracting companies when designing, implementing and inspecting electrical installations in



buildings.

The first workshop was attended by customer service staff who are divided into three groups over a period of three weeks, while other participants including licensed electricians and construction consultants will attend the upcoming workshops.

The move aims to keep pace with the continuous updates of OES, enhance communication channels with stakeholders using the approved best practices, and identify existing challenges and approaches to address them. Eng Khalil bin Ali al Qarni, Head of Customer Services in South Al Batinah leads these workshops.

ATM to focus on aviation and future of transport

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

The Middle East's aviation industry is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of more than 6 per cent during the period 2022-27, according to data from research firm Mordor Intelligence.

The news comes as the global travel and tourism community prepares to gather in Dubai for Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2022, which will take place at Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) during May 9-12, 2022.

Although the recovery estimated for international passenger traffic is gradual, Mordor Intelligence shows that the Middle East's private and domestic aviation segments remained resilient during the pandemic and are continuing to display signs of growth.

Danielle Curtis, Exhibition Director ME — Arabian Travel Market, said: "The Middle East's aviation sector has witnessed high demand for private travel during recent years, thanks to corporations and high-net-worth individuals (HNWIs) opting for business jet and helicopter journeys during the pandemic."

PDO deploys GE Digital's advanced energy management system



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

Leading technology multinational GE Digital says it has supplied its advanced energy management system to Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) designed to help the latter keep its oil production plants operating reliably and efficiently.

PDO delivers the majority of the Sultanate of Oman's crude oil production and natural gas supply. The company runs its own electric network — a microgrid — to serve their business.

A microgrid is a local controllable grid which can run autonomously from the main grid. By using a microgrid, PDO can be more resilient, potentially lower costs and run more efficiently. Conversely, when connected to Oman's main grid, PDO can supply power back to the country.

PDO strives to operate in an environmentally responsible and sustainable fashion. To be a more sustainable business, PDO has launched a Lean program to streamline operations, cut waste, eradicate inefficiency and avoid duplication of activities.

"Our goal is to meet our electricity needs and support a stable grid. To do that, we needed an effective system management that allows us to be proactive", said Zahir al Busaidy, Infrastructure Power Systems Department Manager

PDO DELIVERS THE MAJORITY OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN'S CRUDE OIL PRODUCTION AND NATURAL GAS SUPPLY. THE COMPANY RUNS ITS OWN ELECTRIC NETWORK — A MICROGRID — TO SERVE THEIR BUSINESS.

for Petroleum Development Oman.

"The addition of GE Digital's software will support the efficient management of our microgrid to keep our business operating and assist in the preparation for challenges and opportunities with renewables in the future."

GE Digital's AEMS is designed to integrate with electric utility functions, such as plant and field management, asset and maintenance management, IT internal services, security services, substation automation systems, HVDC line control, power plant control systems and other EMS interchanges.

"The global economic landscape will change rapidly in the next 10 years and it is critical to incorporate renewable energy sources into all grids", said Jim Walsh, General Manager of GE Digital's Grid Software business.

"Industrial companies like Petroleum Development Oman are utilising contemporary digital tools to deliver a reliable, more sustainable microgrid to support their core operations."

APICORP receives Sustainability Rating from Moody's ESG Solutions

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, APRIL 20

The Arab Petroleum Investments Corporation (APICORP), a multilateral financial institution, has announced that it has become the first MENA financial institution to receive a solicited sustainability rating from VE, part of Moody's ESG Solutions.

In its report, Moody's ESG Solutions noted that the 'A2' assigned to APICORP is based on its capacity and willingness to integrate ESG factors into its strategy, operations and risk management, which were formalised in its ESG policy framework.

Commenting on the rating, Dr Ahmed Ali Attiga, CEO of APICORP, said: "I am proud

MOODY'S ESG Solutions

that APICORP's extensive work in mainstreaming sustainability across its operations has been recognised with this 'A2' Sustainability Rating.

Having such a reputed, independent, third-party assessment of our progress positions us as an exemplar for best practices in ESG integration and a prime enabler of green financing to achieve a balanced, responsible energy transition across the MENA region."

Notably, Moody's reported that APICORP's share of project financing in renewables and other areas of climate finance has increased over the last three years

by 10 percentage points to reach 13 per cent, indicating continued future growth.

The near-term progress is buoyed by its successful debut green bonds in 2021, which aligns with its strategic dedication is to combat climate change through its lending and financing practices.

With good governance and its energy transition agenda, APICORP developed new protocols to oversee its green financing work, including establishing a cross-functional green bond committee to ensure that projects funded through its green issuances are properly aligned.

IMF’s search for Ukraine help should start at home

The International Monetary Fund’s response to the Ukraine crisis is wanting. The Washington-based lender describes at length, in its latest report, the lasting damages that Russia’s war on Ukraine will inflict on the world economy and exhorts governments to mount a coordinated response. Its call to action, however, should begin at home.

The fund’s report on Tuesday lays bare the severe fallout from the Ukraine war. The global economy will only grow by 3.6% this year, 0.8 percentage points below the previous forecast.

Inflation will be much higher for longer. Yet nearly two months after the war, the IMF has allocated just \$1.4 billion of its “rapid financial instruments” to Ukraine, and set up a special account to receive funds from donors to help the country’s reconstruction.

That falls way short of the current needs of a country whose economy, the fund reckons, will shrink by 35% this year.

Ukraine will lose the equivalent of nearly 9% of GDP in tax revenue this year — and that can only be considered a conservative estimate. Based on last year’s GDP, that would translate into a loss of fiscal receipts of nearly \$16 billion.

Put differently: The IMF’s help so far amounts to barely more than a month of lost tax revenue for the Kyiv government.

True, the IMF was created to help countries with balance of payment problems design sound economic policies. That narrow focus and cumbersome structure means it cannot act as a “financial firefighter” in bigger crises like the Covid-19 pandemic or the current war, as US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen pointed out last week.

The IMF’s weak response will reinforce critics, like Yellen, who are beginning to wonder if its governance is the bigger problem. The risk is that in a polarised world, an organisation where China and Russia together have nearly the same voting rights as Germany and France will become paralysed. — **Reuters**

Nearly two months after the war, the IMF has allocated just \$1.4 billion of its “rapid financial instruments” to Ukraine, and set up a special account to receive funds from donors to help the country’s reconstruction.



NEW ENERGY SOURCE

Workers sweep away water at the bio-CNG (compressed natural gas) plant in Indore. India is tapping a new energy source that promises to help clean-up smog-choked cities and is already providing a vital revenue stream for poor Indian farmers: Truckloads of bovine manure.

— AFP

Sustaining affordable healthcare is an imperative



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

Micro, small and medium enterprises are the economic backbone of many countries of the world. Nations depend on them to support economic, help employ citizens and keep local markets supplied with all kinds of products and services.

An integral part of this ecosystem are healthcare centres that every individual in society needs from the moment they are born until their death. Small healthcare facilities serve low and middle-income patients.

Today, health centres are a facet of life in many countries around the world – the result of either local or foreign investments. With the availability of modern medical technologies and other health services, supporting small and medium-sized companies in the field of healthcare is essential is key to enabling affordable healthcare access to everyone.

Several countries, including some Latin American countries, have begun to engage in these small and micro-enterprises in the health field.

These projects enable patients to

obtain the necessary services, while small healthcare owners and providers, doctors and health professionals can reach their goals by supporting the investments of financing institutions.

This policy aims at strengthening the health system, supporting greater flexibility in the market, and addressing the ongoing challenges of diseases, the most important of which is the Covid-19 pandemic.

On the other hand, international financial institutions have begun to expand their financing of micro, small and medium health care institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean with working capital and funding for the purchase of medical equipment.

This is done by providing social loans with the aim of mobilising private investment to fill the healthcare supply gaps caused by the Covid pandemic in those countries.

This reduces the burden on government health institutions, some of which have been unable to cope with the consequences of the Covid-19 epidemic.

These services also consist of providing expertise and credit solutions to hospitals,

healthcare operators and centres, the manufacture of medical equipment, medicines, diagnostic centres and others.

This policy help to stimulate the development of services by increasing the availability of medical equipment and in modernising and expanding the coverage of healthcare services in those countries, at a time when we see pressure on government healthcare systems.

For example, one of the strategic priorities of the International Finance Corporation in Brazil is to support access to high-quality and affordable healthcare. The role of the private sector is to bridge the gap and support healthcare services.

Officials in those countries see corporate loans as having a stimulating effect, expanding access to medical technology and deepening the domestic health care ecosystem for corporate borrowers.

Such social loans promote development in developing countries, in addition to their beneficial impact in creating business and job opportunities for their citizens, besides alleviating poverty, promoting shared prosperity, developing local economies and sustaining these projects.

Global economic forecasts are dropping fast



ANA SWANSON

The author writes about trade and international economics for the ‘New York Times’. She previously covered the economy, trade and the Federal Reserve for ‘The Washington Post’.

The world economy has entered a period of intense uncertainty, as a capricious pandemic and the fallout from

Russia’s war in Ukraine are fuelling inflation and weighing on an already fragile global recovery.

These colliding challenges are confronting policymakers and central bankers in the United States and Europe as they seek to bring down inflation without slowing growth so much that their economies tip into recession.

In the last week, international organisations and think-tanks have begun slashing their forecasts for growth and trade as they assess the war’s disruptions to global energy, food and commodity supplies, as well as China’s sweeping lockdowns to contain a renewed coronavirus outbreak.

The pall over the world economy was underscored on Tuesday by the International Monetary Fund, which said in its World Economic

Outlook that global output was expected to slow this year to 3.6%, from 6.1% in 2021. That is a downgrade from a January forecast of 4.4% growth this year.

“Global economic prospects have been severely set back, largely because of Russia’s war on Ukraine”, Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas, the IMF’s chief economist, said at a press briefing on Tuesday. “This crisis unfolds as the global economy has not yet fully recovered from the pandemic.” The economic concerns are a central topic for policymakers convening in Washington this week for the spring meetings of the IMF and the World Bank.

The meetings will provide an opportunity for the United States to show solidarity with Ukrainian officials who will be in attendance and to demonstrate that Russia will remain isolated on the international stage as long as its invasion continues.

Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen plans to attend an opening session

on Wednesday that will include Ukraine’s finance minister, as the US looks to stand with allies in opposition of Russia’s war, a Treasury official said. Yellen will not attend some G-20 sessions, such as those on international financial architecture and sustainable finance, if Russians are participating.

The impact of Russia’s war on the global economy will dominate the meetings.

Gourinchas said the war was slowing growth and spurring inflation, which he described as a “clear and present danger” for many countries. He added that disruptions to Russian supplies of oil, gas and metals, along with Ukrainian exports of wheat and corn, will ripple through commodities markets and across the global economy “like seismic waves.”

He acknowledged that the trajectory of the global economy would depend on how the war

proceeded and the ultimate breadth of the sanctions that the United States and its allies in Europe and Asia imposed on Russia.

“Uncertainty around these projections is considerable, well beyond the usual range”, Gourinchas said. “Growth could slow down further, while inflation could exceed our projections if, for instance, sanctions extend to Russian energy exports.”

Ukraine and Russia are facing the most dire economic consequences from the war. The IMF expects the Ukrainian economy to contract by 35% this year, while Russia’s economy is projected to shrink by 8.5%.

Gourinchas noted that Russian authorities have so far managed to contain a collapse of its financial system and avoided bank failures but that further sanctions targeting its energy industry could have an even more significant impact on its economy.

Russian sanctions imposed

by America and its allies are the main factor contributing to the downward revision of the IMF’s global growth outlook, Gourinchas said, adding that a tightening of restrictions that targets Russian energy exports would represent an “adverse scenario” that would further slow output around the world.

Rising prices around the world show no signs of abating, the IMF said, even if supply chain problems ease. It expects inflation to remain elevated throughout the year, projecting it at 5.7% in advanced economies and 8.7% in emerging markets.

Other organisations and research groups have also pared back their forecasts. At the Peterson Institute for International Economics, a Washington think-tank, economists expect global growth to decline from a rapid 5.8% in 2021 to 3.3% annually in 2022 and 2023.

— **The New York Times**

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

Muscat 9014 6672, 9679 0684
Sohar 9731 6218 Salalah 9429 9325
www.orbit-oman.com

Fleet of 2,000 vehicles
Choose from a wide range of brands & models
PDO, OXY and BP spec vehicles available
Attractive rates for short-term & long-term lease

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

Ask For Free Demo

Cloud Computing Services

For Tally Sales, Services or Customization

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
ASIA SOLUTIONS

https://www.asiasolutions.net

Tally FOR VAT
TallyPrime

THURSDAY **APRIL 21, 2022** **RAMADHAN 19, 1443 AH**

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

SIT VACANT

VISA available.
Wanted **Housemaid**, preferably Indian, age less than 35, must know cooking along other house works.
Contact 91907863.

BIN Management supervisor

1. Can handle team of 30 employee.
2. IT knowledge.
3. Knowledge of Telemetry system.
4. with 4 years of experiene.
Please send the updated CV to the following e-mail IDs:
Ahmed.Alisae@imdaadab.om, HR@imdaadab.om

SALES Executive, male, with valid driving licence, 1-2 years experience in Oil and Gas industry. Contact: 99358615/ 93559800. Email: kirit@dhiyahilal.com

OFFICE Assistant, male, Contact: 99358615/ 93559800. Email: kirit@dhiyahilal.com

SIT. WANTED

21 YEARS of experience in Oman as an Accountant in different industries with 14 years of continuous service in a real estate company. Oman D/L and NOC available. Contact 92583726. Email: georgetvm@live.com

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact 79256679.

PREVIOUS Oman experience in Outdoor Sales & Operations looking for suitable job opportunity. Oman Driving Licence. Expected Salary 850/. 00918281058000 igin.tom@gmail.com

FOR RENT

FROM the owner, Commercial shops and high status finished flats in Al Khoudh 2nd phase. Contact 99311767.

SERVICES

A LEGAL translation office needs **Marketeers**. Contact E-mail: oman4n@gmail.com

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP part/full-time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Announcement of Capital Reduction

IN accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company **Modern Open Line LLC**, which is registered with the Commercial Registration No **1114333**, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from RO **50,000.000** to **5,000.000**. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car AMAZING OFFERS

- Rentacarfor10 days and get an extra free day.
- Rent for one month and get 5 days free.

All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. ☎972494490.

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/ monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

FOR RENT

FLATS, 2BHK and 1 BHK in Mumtaz ☎99341138/ 90991079.

FLATS, 2BHK in Ghubra near Indian School. ☎99341138/ 90991079.

VAT REGISTRATION, RETURN FILING, TAX CONSULTANCY

Contact: 9246 9602 / 9723 0025

WhatsApp
99851366
92495068

VIGAS CARGO
WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR

Transportation, Packing & Cargo Services

- CARGO SERVICES BY AIR & SEA WORLD WIDE
- DOOR TO DOOR DELIVERY IN INDIA, INDONESIA & UK
- PROFESSIONAL PACKERS & MOVERS
- MUSCAT - DUBAI - MUSCAT REGULAR TRANSPORT

H.O. Ruwi
99851366
92495068

Ghubrah : 93571703
Falaj : 93571704
Store : 93571823
Misfa : 98119561
93260956
vigas.cargo@yahoo.com

M M T CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR SERVICE

MUSCAT: 95605353, 95605454
BARKA: 95893242, 93743308
SOHAR: 96773031, 95347988
FALAJ: 94002341, 95136067
SALALAH: 94575905, 97858656
DUQUIM: 97218831, 94002341

ROAD, SEA & AIR TRANSPORT WORLD WIDE

GTC Building, Near Badr Al Sama Hospital, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman
E-mail: mmtcargo@yahoo.com
Customer Care: 96773031 / 97695454

Sea Cargo **800 Bz/Kg** Express Cargo to Kerala 5 to 7 days*

Driving School

Special offers for those wishing to learn driving in (Aziba - Khwair Qurum - Ruwi Al Amirat)

Contact No: 99074072

Quality Comes First

Tower Cranes & Passenger Lifts:

- Sales and Rental Services
- Installation
- Maintenance Service
- Breakdown Service
- Spare Parts Supply
- Hoist & Lowering
- Support Fixation
- Dismantling

Steel Fabrication Works

NEW MANARA TECHNICAL SERVICES LLC
Mobile: +968 9853 1975, 9853 1970
E-mail: info@newmanara.com / newmanaratechnical@gmail.com
Website: www.newmanara.com

Al Eman Dental Clinic

Flat 22, Floor 2
Abu Zaki Trading Building
Opp. Al Nahda Hospital
Sultan Qaboos Street

+968 24834113
+968 97454854
+968 96438854

Our Mission: To preserve your teeth and smile for a lifetime

AL KHOORY EQUIPMENT EST.
P.O.Box 545, P.C. 117, Al Wadi Al Kabir Area, Sultanate of Oman

Official distributor of **Schneider Electric**

Stockist & Wholesaler of Low Voltage Switchgear Products and a One Stop Solution for all Switchgear Products and Assembly

Schneider Electric, Lowato, DAB, WEG, Franklin Electric, alfanar

Tel: +968 24832474, +968 79474556
E-mail: alkhoory@omantel.net.om + www.alkhooryoman.com

مركز السلامة الطبيه د. نور باركات
modern Al Salama Polyclinic
DERMATOLOGY AND AESTHETICS MEDICINE SPECIALIST

د. نورا باركات
الخصائية في الأمراض الجلدية والعلاجات التجميلية

CONSULTATION AVAILABLE SAT TO WED 10AM TO 6PM THU 8AM TO 2PM

CONTACT US
+968 24451726 - +968 79235354
AL MARBLAH (NEAR TRAFIC SIGNAL) - SULTANATE OF OMAN
E: ALSALAMAMANGMAIL.COM

EMERGENCY NO
+968 94502100

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

Supply of Pesticides, Gel (crocoraches), Public Health chemicals, Agriculture chemicals, Snake repellent, Rodent baits and other insect repellent from UK & USA

PROFESSIONALS in Pest Control Service, Bedbug Treatment, Rodent Treatment, Snake Treatment and Termite Treatment [Pre & Post Construction]

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

JOB SEEKING

Indian Male. 16 years working experience in senior position in finance and accounts in Oman. Able to work independently upto finalization, banking, tax matters etc...

GSM: 95392251
Mail ID : regi.lukose@gmail.com

OMAN OBSERVER

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,
WhatsApp
-your name- to
96473232

www.omanobserver.com

SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: 24501568, 24502479 • Fax: 24503566
Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

SITUATION VACANT

Required for Ras Al Hamra Recreation Centre (PDO Club)

SWIMMING POOL LIFEGUARDS/ATTENDANTS (Male & Female) OMANIS ONLY

Qualification & Skills: Accomplished swimmer with recognized Life Saving and First Aid qualifications and certifications. Must be fluent in written & spoken English.

Experience: 2 years working as Life Guard & Pool Attendant.

Job Responsibilities: Supervise swimming activities, children and other weak swimmers and ensure pool and safety guidelines are followed. Must be willing to work shift duties and on weekends.

Note: A swimming test will be conducted to test the candidates swimming and rescue skills

Please email CV to: oceanint@omantel.net.om

AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRILANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

FREE PICK UP 24/7
t: 95587410, 9988 1554, 99638698, 94940231, 98523831
Branches : Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Seeb, Barka, Soqat, Sohar

Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office
Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahd86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office
Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office
Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suham Office
Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

His Majesty Administers Oath to New Minister

STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN

NEW 50 SO BANKNOTES FROM THIS MONTH

#Living_with_COVID19



How to enhance your family's nutrition during Ramadhan

By Lakshmi Kothaneth

Ramadhan is usually the best opportunity to do a reset whether it's in lifestyle or spiritual life. At times, however, wrong habits can keep you away from the benefits of the holy month. While almost everyone is well versed in the way of fasting, it is equally important to break the fast right and prepare for the fast in the right manner. Clinical Dietician and Diabetes Educator at Apollo Sugar-IMC, Sumaira Fatima Mirza explained the right and healthy way to break the fast at iftar. "The healthy way to break the fast is with dates, water and a few pieces of fruits. Dates provide instant energy and vital nutrients like vitamins, minerals and fibre. People with diabetes should restrict themselves to one to three dates as excess consumption can cause an increase in blood glucose levels", she explained. When choosing fruits, think colours says the clinical dietitian. Eat a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables as you like. She

highly encourages using mixed fruits at iftar and vegetables during suhoor. She also noted that whole fruit is better than juice as it provides fibre. While iftar has been discussed a lot, she said that the timing of suhoor and what's on the plate plays a significant role in keeping a healthy lifestyle. "Suhoor is a blessing, meaning it provides strength for the day's fast. It prevents hunger, low blood sugar, headaches and cravings during the day", she noted. Most importantly, according to her, it prevents excessive eating at iftar. "Proper suhoor meal comprising of whole grains, proteins with some healthy fats and water is needed to provide energy, satiety and to overcome hunger. In some cases where you are late or cannot have a proper meal then dates, milk and water can be preferred", she advised. Some people habitually refer to eating suhoor meal at night, for instance, two hours post-Taraweesh and then proceed to sleep. To this, Sumaira said, "suhoor meal is sunnah it should be eaten in the second



half of the night close to Fajr prayers. It is a source of nourishment to the body during fasting. Eating a meal post Taraweesh does not help as suhoor increases hours of fasting which can result in fatigue and hunger during the day. It increases the risk of hypoglycaemia among people with diabetes. And that brings into focus people with diabetes who fast during Ramadhan. Do they require a different diet? "People with diabetes do not need a special diet. They need to eat healthily. The key is portion control, eating the right portions at the right time. A few things to keep in mind is to encourage the consumption of

whole grains while avoiding refined cereals. Instead, add up proteins like eggs, nuts, low-fat cheese, low-fat milk, lentils, sprouts or lean meats like chicken fish in iftar and suhoor meals, choose whole fruit and avoid juices with added sugars and shakes. Cut down desserts and sweets with added sugars which causes a spike in blood sugars levels", she advised. A common concern is how insulin users should break their fast. "Insulin users should break their fast with water, one to three dates and a few pieces of fruits as they provide instant energy. Proceed with salah Maghrib, inject insulin and take the full balanced meal avoiding white bread, savouries and sweets. If needed evening meals can be divided into

main meal and post-Taraweesh snack." So how can we make meals of Ramadhan nourishing? Sumaira said Ramadhan is the month of worship and fasting with a small window period for eating. "During Ramadhan combination meals makes work easier, save time and enhance nutrition like oats meal with milk nuts and fruit, whole wheat sandwich with low-fat cheese or eggs and vegetables. "Some of the widely known and healthy options are Shourbah — a dish made with either lentils or lean meats with vegetables. It is commonly eaten with bread like chapati or whole wheat pita bread which is widely preferred and eaten among many nationalities. It can be used either at suhoor or iftar meals. Harees, a dish made with cracked wheat, or harees cereal and lean meats. Thareed a dish made with lean meats cooked with a variety of vegetables. Harira, a Moroccan dish cooked with lean meats, vegetables and lentils or fava beans. Easy and commonly available bread like whole-grain breads, Chapati, whole pita bread (lebnani qubz), bran cereals, Omani qubz raqaa and some salads like a chicken with vegetable salad, sprouts salad, taboulleh, fattoush etc makes meals convenient and healthy." To top it all is the need to maintain a healthy sleeping pattern during Ramadhan. Time management is the key to achieving a good amount of rest and night sleep during Ramadhan, according to Sumaira. What is needed is to keep meals simple and easy to cook and stomach-friendly. "Try to finish the main meal at the earliest in order to get 4-5 hours of night sleep. Avoid eating heavy meals and junk foods late at night which can cause indigestion. Prepare ahead of your suhoor meal. People can cover up their night's sleep by taking a nap during the day. Night sleep is essential to avoid stress and to perform better during the day."

QURAN

VERSE OF THE DAY

When there comes God's victory, and conquest. And you see the people entering God's religion in multitudes. Then celebrate the praise of your Lord, and seek His forgiveness. He is the Acceptor of Repentance.

(An-Nasr)

**HIS EMINENCE
SHAIKH AHMED
BIN HAMAD AL KHALILI
GRAND MUFTI OF OMAN**

FATWA

QUESTION:
An elderly sick, who is very poor, couldn't fast in the past two years and he is not able to feed others to compensate his lost fasting days during Ramadhan. What should he do?

ANSWER:
If he cannot feed people because of certain inability, Allah will forgive him. "Allah does not burden a soul beyond that it can bear". (sural Al Baqarah/verse 286)

HADITH

A GUIDE FOR THE FAITHFUL

Anas and Abu Hurayrah, may Allah be pleased with both of them, reported that the Prophet, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him, said: "None of you will attain perfect faith until I am more beloved to him than his child, his parent, and all people".

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



hudanabeel_
Salma Plateau

Follow



CONFINED



yuliyaphotographyoman
Muscat, Oman

Follow



DANCE WITH THE WIND



el3noud
Bandar Khayran

Follow



BEAUTIFUL VIEW

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

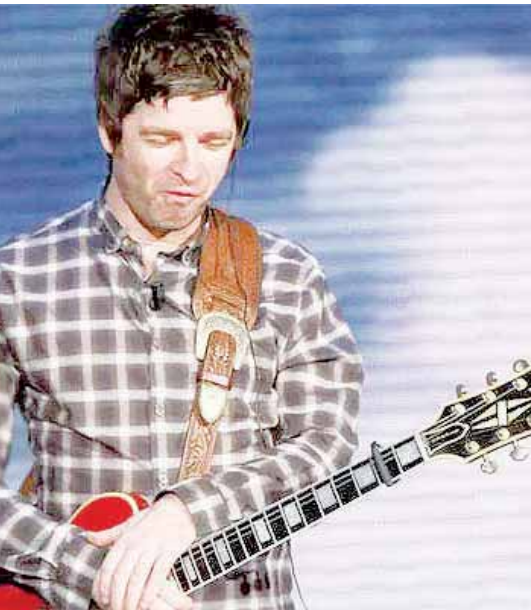
0

We select three photos daily for our Instagram Top Picks of the Day. The rules are simple. Follow us on Instagram. Upload your photos. Tag us and use **#OmanObserver** and **#BeAnObserver**.

AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Guitar that broke Oasis up for auction in Paris



A PARIS AUCTION house will next month sell a guitar smashed backstage at an Oasis concert in an incident that triggered the break-up of the British super-group and a long-running fraternal feud between star frontmen, Liam and Noel Gallagher.

Later repaired, the red Gibson's destruction at the French capital's Rock en Seine festival in 2009 was "a cult moment" in music history, said Jonathan Berg, a guitar expert and cofounder of the Artpeges gallery holding the auction.

With a starting price at 150,000 euros (\$160,000), the auctioneers say bids for the guitar could reach 500,000 euros (\$540,000) in the sale on May 17.

A flagship of the 1990s Britpop movement built around the notoriously fractious Gallagher brothers, Oasis scored global success, selling 60 million albums and birthing hits like "Wonderwall" and "Don't Look Back In Anger".

The band had been slated to play at Rock en Seine in 2009 towards the end of their year-long "Dig Out Your Soul" global tour -- named for their album of the same name.

But "things had been brewing for a while between the two brothers," Berg said.

"It exploded backstage, one of Noel's guitars got broken and that led to the group breaking up."

An eager crowd waiting for the pair to appear were stunned to get the message that Oasis was history.

The dramatic split set off years of public barbs between the brothers via the press and social media that have gradually cooled off.

Both have continued making music since they parted ways, but have repeatedly ruled out getting Oasis back together.

- Painful reminder -

Noel said in 2015 that solo work was "more rewarding, it's more fulfilling. I like being in charge of everything."

"I just write songs and I collect the songs together and I make an album out of them."

Following the band's split, Noel sought out a guitar-maker to repair his smashed instrument, a Gibson ES-355 built in 1960 that he called the best guitar he ever played.

A London-based French luthier, Philippe Dubreuil, managed to put it back together two years later, and Noel played it again for a while with his group Noel Gallagher and the High Flying Birds.

But the musician "got rid of it in the end, because it reminds him too much of Oasis," said gallery founder Berg's partner, Arthur Perault.

Also on the auction block, but expected to fetch much lower bids is a set of bondage gear worn by Depeche Mode's Martin Gore in a 1980s photoshoot.

And a rare vinyl signed by both Jimi Hendrix and beloved French rocker Johnny Hallyday is up for grabs.

Hendrix signed the record after a 1966 concert in eastern French city Nancy, when a fan of "Johnny" sought out her idol in a cafe, but found only his supporting act, the then-unknown Jimi Hendrix Experience.

Some 45 years later, in 2011, French Jimi Hendrix expert Yazid Manou put the owner in touch with Hallyday to finally complete the autograph collection.

Both items are expected to sell for up to 12,000 euros. — AFP

MUSIC

Chanters in Cyprus carry on 'rich heritage' of Byzantine music



CHANTING RESONATES through a church in the Cypriot resort town of Ayia Napa, darkened but for a few low lights and mobile devices displaying the singers' Byzantine melodies.

"This music aims to touch people's souls," said Thomas Anastasiou, 35, a Greek Cypriot chanter from a nearby district. "Singing with people around us is something very important for us."

The UN's cultural agency UNESCO inscribed Byzantine chant on its list of intangible cultural heritage of humanity in late 2019 following its nomination by Greece and Cyprus.

UNESCO describes the tradition as a "living art that has existed for more than 2,000 years", and an integral part of Greek Orthodox Christian worship and spiritual life, "interwoven with the most important events in a person's life", from weddings to funerals and religious festivals.

Shortly after, the coronavirus pandemic outbreak halted or put limitations on everything from concerts to church attendance.

But now as restrictions continue to ease in Cyprus and elsewhere, celebrations this Orthodox Easter on the eastern Mediterranean island are moving closer to normal.

One Sunday evening in the lead-up to Holy Week, dozens of people gathered for vespers in the Panagia Church in the heart of Ayia Napa, a seaside resort better known as a rowdy party town in summertime.

Boys and men, including members of the Cypriot Melodists Byzantine choir, carried the verses, sometimes to the drone of a bass note, as elderly women prayed, mothers rocked babies and visitors lit candles at the church entry.

"You fall in love with this music," said choir director

Evangelos Georgiou, 42.

The music teacher recalled chanting alone in the church of his home village of Athienou at Easter two years ago, in the early days of the pandemic.

"We missed this a lot," he said. "Now we are back."

- 'TREASURE' -

In the archive of the archbishopric in the Cypriot capital Nicosia, Father Dimitrios Dimosthenous examines a thick, 14th-century Byzantine chant manuscript, its fragile pages of mostly black writing pockmarked and stained by age, insects and humidity.

Picking up his phone, he scrolls through an electronic version of the score's modern transcription, and the room falls silent as he begins to sing.

"This is the old way of writing the Byzantine music," he says, pointing at the carefully crafted lines.

A new system introduced in 1814 expressed the notation in far greater detail. Byzantine chant is monophonic and unaccompanied, and based on a system of eight modes.

"It's very difficult to know the notation made before 1814 because it was like one sign was a whole melodic line," explained Christodoulos Vassiliades, a teacher at the Kykkos Monastery Byzantine Music School, noting the importance of the aural tradition.

The manuscript and others in the archive testify to the centuries-old practice of chanting on the island.

Its original owner was the neighbouring former cathedral of St John, where Father Dimitrios served for 24 years and was the director of its choir.

The old manuscripts are "a treasure for Byzantine music", he said, noting hymns to Cypriot saints. "I'm looking at my history."

- 'PERPETUAL STUDENT' -

In the church of St John, Ioannis Eliades gestures towards one of the 18th-century paintings covering the walls and roof -- a scene from the Old Testament of people chanting.

It is "the only depiction (of chanters) that we have all over Cyprus", said Eliades, director of the Byzantine Museum in Nicosia and a member of Cyprus's UNESCO committee.

The designation means Byzantine music "is appreciated not only in Cyprus but worldwide", he said enthusiastically.

"It's a rich heritage... and it's important to safeguard it," he said.

While chanting is a predominantly male tradition, women sing in monasteries and sometimes in churches.

Among them is graphic design student Polymnia Panayi, who has been studying at the Kykkos music school in Nicosia since 2018.

Chanting "makes me happy and... helps me to pray", said the 22-year-old, who sometimes sings with other women at a local church.

The school has 60-70 students a year, aged around 10 to 60. Some 40 per cent are female, a representative of the school said noting "increasing interest" among women.

Panayi expressed hope that more churches would open up to female voices.

"There are women that chant but they just don't have a chance yet," she said.

Back in Ayia Napa at the end of the vespers, chanter Anastasiou said "learning Byzantine music never ends".

"You are a perpetual student, even if you are a teacher, as the sources of Byzantine music are... unlimited," he reflected.

"It's a never-ending tradition." — AFP

HEALTH

Florence Nightingale Museum to reopen on International Nurses' Day



THE DIRECTOR of London's Florence Nightingale Museum has said fighting to reopen after the pandemic has been an "emotional roller-coaster".

The museum celebrating the most famous figure in British nursing history will open again on May 12.

It marks the 202nd anniversary of her birth and International Nurses' Day.

David Green said it has been a "long and tiring time" fighting to save the legacy of Florence Nightingale, who became known during the Crimean War as The Lady With The Lamp, because she would check on British soldiers throughout the night.

He told the PA news agency: "It has been a real emotional roller-coaster."

"Certainly for me, I've never worked so hard in my life, especially those first few weeks after we closed, it was just so strange."

"We had to accept the fact that ultimately, as a central London location very reliant on international tourists, that market had collapsed."

"But also as the leading nursing museum in Europe, it also means we attract a lot of nurses and clearly they were just so busy with the pandemic, it meant they weren't visiting us."

"Then the real work kicked in with the fundraising to keep the place going, even with grant applications, they're hard work, you've got no guarantee of success."

"I think we've got a real sense of achievement that we've pulled it out of the bag, we've managed to keep it going."

"We've been closed a while but I'm pleased to say that we've fought back and May 12 we go again."

The museum, which opened in 1989 and is in the grounds of St Thomas' Hospital, will be open five days a week.

"We want to give it a go and on Florence's 202nd birthday, what better time to

do it.

"It is celebrated throughout the world as international nurses day soliterally every country in the world will be honouring their nurses on that day."

"The whole legacy of a professional nursing career comes down to what Florence Nightingale started back in the Crimean War. So ultimately it's a huge day for the profession."

"We thought it would be a great opportunity to actually celebrate nursing by getting the museum open again, which nicely it fits in with the tourist calendar," Green added.

The Florence Nightingale Museum, an independent charity, had begun to celebrate the 200th anniversary of her birth when the pandemic hit in March 2020.

Celebrations of the bicentenary, which had been years in the making, had to be scrapped but will now resume, including the "Nightingale In200 Objects, People And Place" exhibition.

Highlights will include the "lamp," in reality the Turkish lantern she carried during the Crimean War, her medicine chest, containing glass jars of home-made remedies and her writing case.

Green said: "At the time of the forced closure, we were at our busiest, in the early stages of bicentenary celebrations."

"The closure stopped us in our tracks and was immensely costly and the extended lockdown put the museum at risk."

"We are now on a surer footing and absolutely delighted to open our doors again, hopefully for good this time."

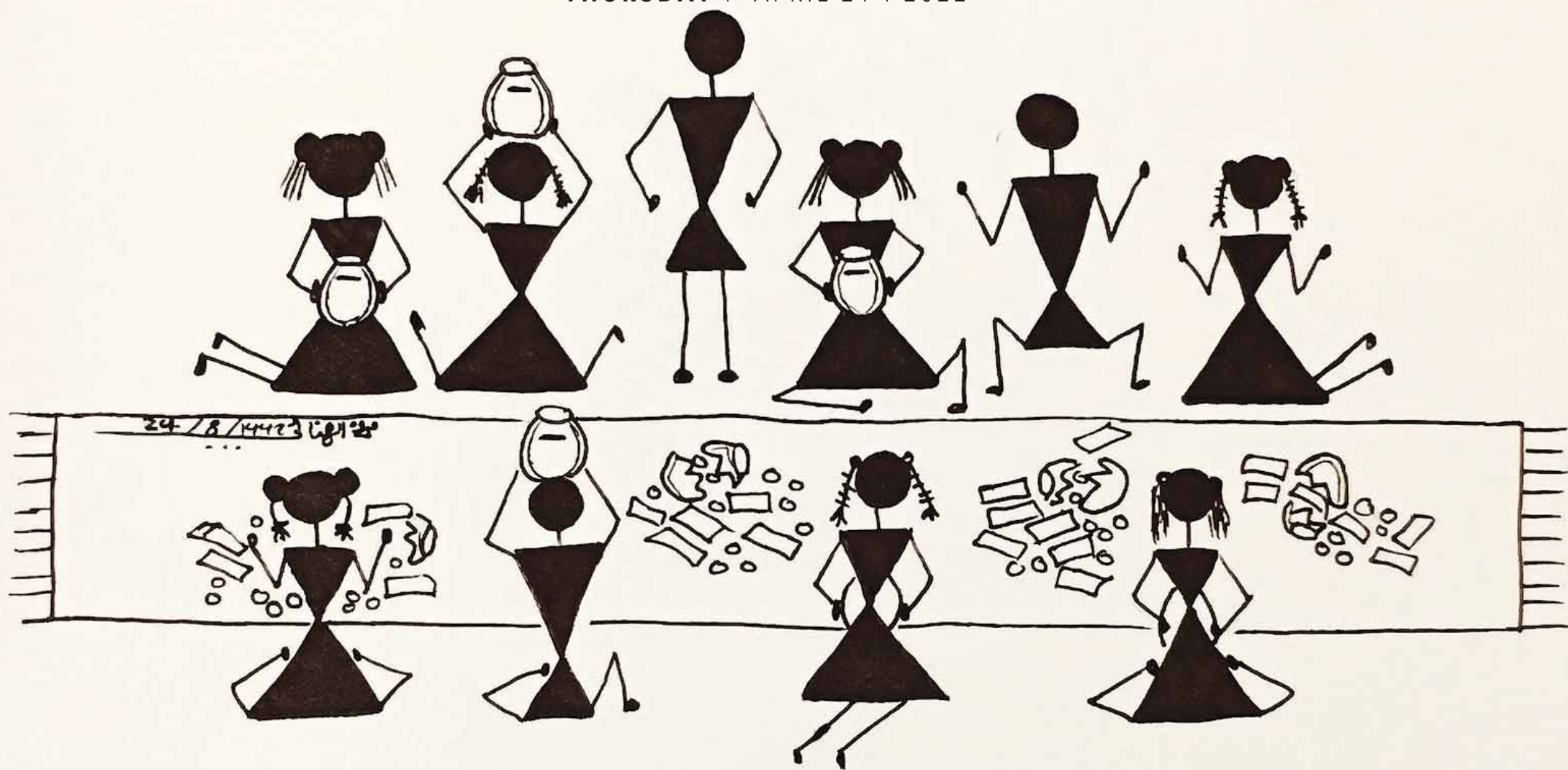
Among new features of the museum will be a celebration of Nightingale's legacy in statistics, featuring Sir David Spiegelhalter, and her certificate into the Statistical Society of London marking its first female member in 1858. — PA Media/dpa

Ramadhan

Local Scene

f t i y u @omanobserver

THURSDAY | APRIL 21 | 2022



An art easily explaining Ramadhan traditions

By Ruqaya Al Kindi

The month of Ramadhan is known as the month of the Quran, where Muslims use their time to complete reading the holy book more than once, understanding its meanings, and asking God for a great reward.

Some religious institutions adopt Ramadhan competitions for memorising the Holy Quran for all age groups and for both sexes, male and female and valuable prizes are allocated in order to motivate them to do so.

Muslims are raised since childhood to pay attention to the Holy Quran and appreciate it.

One of the Omani customs that motivates children to complete reading the whole Holy Quran is "Al-Tuminah".

"Parents send their children to learn the Quran and memorise it with Omani teachers. Before the end of the holy month, the children who seal the Quran (either read or memorise) are honoured in a festivity called "Al-Tuminah" (name can vary from region to region)," shared Omani artist Marwa al Hinai who embarked on a journey to document some of the most important Ramadhan traditions through her art of Warli – a folk-art painting used by the Warli tribe of Maharashtra in India where the technique of the drawing is very basic using simple graphic vocabulary that usually includes triangle, rectangle, circle, line... etc.

"One of the warli I created is this custom of Al-Tuminah. What is fascinating about this practice is that the teacher roams with his students in the village or neighbourhood, chanting an anthem that says at the beginning (Thanks to God who guided us to Islam) and the children chant after him (Ameen). The children repeat these simple and beautiful words while carrying some lanterns, wearing the most beautiful clothes and the Quran teacher in the middle joining in the fun and happiness," she explained.

Marwa shared that she remembered this ritual as a kid and therefore has a special place in her heart.

At the end of this celebration, "Sweets and popular foods are distributed to the children in an organised manner, with supplications from which the children learn the meaning of the good values and principles that Omani society adheres to, and which derives from the true Islamic religion," Marwa said.

Another custom associated with the "Al-Tuminah" is also that at the end of the roaming, the student's family give a gift to the teacher, which is often clothes of the most

luxurious and finest types. The celebration, hence, was called "Hiba" as one of its names (which means "the gift"). The celebration may take place inside the school or the student's home, as it happens these days.

Asked what other traditions she has documented, Marwa added that Tarawih prayer is one of the spiritual rituals on the nights of Ramadhan and is performed immediately after the evening prayer and it is a Confirmed Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

"Sunnah means that it is not obligatory, but rather optional, as the one who performs it is rewarded and the one who leaves it does not sin, and this is from the ease in the Islamic religion," she clarified.

She added, "In mosques, Imam who has memorised the Holy Quran and have a good voice and morals are employed, so that Muslims gather behind them to feel the spirituality of the holy month and relieve themselves from the worries of life and seek reward from God."

She added, "Many complete the recitation of the Quran at the end of the month, as he divides its parts for thirty days. After completing the Tarawih prayer, The Imam stands for supplication, and the Muslims who have completed the prayer repeat behind him "Ameen" asking that God grant them the success, forgiveness and heaven."

Marwa also touched on Itikaaf, which usually happens in the last ten days of Ramadhan. She explained this is a favourite ritual for many people where Muslims lock themselves in the mosque or at home and devote themselves to worship, such as prayer, supplication and recitation of the Quran, but he does not deprive himself of nutrition and body comfort. It is possible for a Muslim to perform Itikaaf on any day throughout the year, but during Ramadhan, the hope is to get a great reward.

"In Oman, sports and cultural tournaments are organised at the level of clubs and neighbourhoods, and the families and competitors gather after Tarawih prayers in the designated areas and continue to play until midnight, then return home to rest, pray Tahajud (worship), eat Suhoor, and prepare for the dawn prayer," she said.

Marwa added, "Suhoor is a meal that Muslims eat in Ramadhan and before the dawn call to prayer, and it is usually a light meal that helps reduce the impact of the day on the fasting person. It is associated with the profession of "Almousaharati" that no longer exists except on a very, very small scale. It is a name given for the person who wanders on the streets after midnight (around 3:00 AM) while beating a

drum and calling sleeper to wake up, have suhoor and pray."

Musaharati is usually accompanied by kids who enjoy helping him in carrying the lantern or beating drums. The popular words of Musaharati calling mean "Awake, oh faster and praise Allah. Welcome to you Ramadhan, the month of forgiveness."

Firing the iftar cannon was a common custom used to mark the end of the fasting period. Iftar cannon is considered to have a great influence on those who are fasting in the past. The Maghrib call to prayer has become the official and popular time for the end of a day of the month and the start of a night full of Ramadhan activities and religious worship.

"Iftar cannon is a traditional habit in some Islamic countries at Ramadhan and the story says that this habit started in Egypt. It is just a sound used to announce to residents about the time of Iftar before Maghreb's prayer at the time of sunset. This operation happening under the supervision of the army," she mentioned.

There are many more traditions that Marwa covered including the Ramadhan series and competitions on TV and shopping where Muslims usually buy what they need as preparation for Eid. Muslims in Eid usu-



ally wear beautiful clothes and adornments as an expression of joy that they have completed the fasting in Ramadhan and asking God to accept it, and it is a Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, the prophet Muhammad peace be upon him.

Marwa enjoys sharing some Ramadhan rituals and customs through warli "For the ease of presenting the idea and an invitation to understand our customs and religion for non-Muslims."

Marwa said that warli as an art can be traced to the 10th century and what she

loves about it is that as the artist, she can position and control the movement of the characters in the art.

"This art is very minimal with colours mostly using a lot of white space. The contemporary artists, nevertheless, were able to transcend the boundaries and utilise this art in the proportion of their artistic needs," she noted. Marwa explained that this kind of art (Warli art) is a modern style of pre-historic cave paintings.