

P7

THOUGHTS,
FEELINGS
SPELLED OUT IN
PHRASES



P12

FAST POWER ENABLES
FAST ECONOMIC GROWTH
ON OMAN'S SCENIC
ARABIAN SEA COAST



P18

POLAND'S
MERONK DOWNS
SCOTT TO WIN
AUSTRALIAN OPEN



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO FINLAND PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Sauli Niinisto of the Republic of Finland, on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Niinisto. His Majesty also wished the people of Finland further progress and prosperity. — ONA

SINGAPORE

OMAN, SINGAPORE REVIEW RELATIONS

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, met Vivian Balakrishnan, Foreign Minister of Singapore. The meeting comes within the framework of Sayyid Badr's visit to Singapore to hold the first strategic dialogue between the two countries. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations explored area of cooperation in the fields of economy, investment and culture. The two sides also exchanged views on a set of regional and international issues of common interests.

DETAILS ON P3


OMAN OBSERVER
FIRST DEDICATED ENGLISH NEWS APP IN OMAN
DOWNLOAD TODAY


INSIDE

FRANCE'S SARKOZY SEEKS TO
OVERTURN GRAFT CONVICTION

P5


REPUBLICANS AND
THE UKRAINE WAR

P6

Official advertising agency ‘Izdihar’ to ensure quality promotion



ZAINAB AL NASSRI
[@zainabalnasseri](#)

The Commercial Department of the Ministry of Information on Monday celebrated the launch of ‘Izdihar Agency’, the first official advertising agency in the Sultanate of Oman, during the first advertising forum held at the W Hotel- Muscat under the

auspices of Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, in the presence of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information, and a number of high-level officials.

The agency looks to provide media and advertising services at the local and global levels, and keep pace with the variables of

the advertising market.

The forum was organised to strengthen partnership between the ministry and various private sector institutions in Oman by providing media and advertising services and benefiting from the ministry's services through its visual, audio and print channels, besides electronic platforms.

TURN TO P2



CROATIA BEAT JAPAN

Croatia's midfielder Ivan Perisic celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 football match between Japan and Croatia at the Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah, south of Doha, on Monday. Croatia beat Japan on penalties to reach the World Cup quarter-finals. — AFP

Private investors keen on hydrogen economy

OMAN TO OFFER INCENTIVES FOR HYDROGEN PROJECTS

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

The private investors' interest in the hydrogen sector has been encouraging, and all efforts will be made to ensure that the Sultanate of Oman is an ideal hub for its production.

According to Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals: “We will be talking about the future over the next three days with the aim of making the Sultanate of Oman an international hub for hydrogen production – be it for renewable energy, ammonia for exports, and hydrogen as a replacement to fossil fuels.”

Al Aufi said the focus given to green hydrogen is to create an economy parallel to the oil and gas economy. He added that there had been good participation from local and international companies, which motivates us to move in the right direction.

He added, “We have a vast spread of land for solar and wind plants, while hydrogen production plants can be situated close to local ports with international connections and free zones at Salalah, Duqm and Suhar. The government will be offering



Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi at the Green Hydrogen Summit.

investors incentives for hydrogen projects such as minimum land fee and waiving of land fee during developing stages.

“The initial two blocks provided to investors will be in Duqm outside the free zone, and the remaining four will be offered in Thamrait. For phase 1, the first projects will be awarded by first quarter of 2023, and developers will be expected to deliver integrated projects, but common infrastructure will be tendered separately.”

The Vice President of Sustainability at Asyad Group said that ports are an incubator for the green economy through free

zones and their adjacent areas.

Saud Bahwan Group, which is displaying the hydrogen-fuelled Mirai car at the Green Hydrogen Summit and Exhibition, which kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, said the model has been doing well in Japan since its launch, but its availability will depend on the setting up of related infrastructure.

HYDROGEN ECONOMY

At the Oman-South Korea hydrogen forum, it was revealed that several private companies have started to invest in the hydrogen economy, including big players such as Hyundai.

TURN TO P2

Sudan military, parties sign deal for civilian-led transition

KHARTOUM: Sudanese political parties and the military signed a framework deal on Monday that they said would pave the way for two-year civilian-led transition towards elections and end a sometimes violent standoff triggered by a coup in October 2021.

The deal could mark a new phase for Sudan, but has already faced resistance from protest groups opposed to negotiations

with the military and from factions loyal to the regime of Omar al Bashir.

Several thousand people protested against the deal in the capital Khartoum, with some facing off against security forces who fired tear gas and stun grenades about a mile away from the signing ceremony.

Under the framework deal, the military — in charge since the coup — agreed it would only

The outline pact set no date for a final agreement or the appointment of the prime minister, and left sensitive issues including transitional justice and security sector reform for further talks

be represented on a security and defence council headed by a prime minister.

The outline pact set no date for a final agreement or the appointment of the prime minister, and left sensitive issues including transitional justice and security sector reform for further talks. After signing the deal, military leader Abdel Fattah al Burhan said civilians should control politics and guide foreign

policy. Signatories applauded when he repeated a slogan used by protesters to call for the army to exit politics: “Soldiers belong in the barracks, and parties go to elections.” Last year's military coup halted a power-sharing arrangement between the military and the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) coalition, and Sudan has been without a prime minister since the start of the year.

SEE ALSO P5



Private investors keen on hydrogen economy

FROM PAGE1

The Green Hydrogen Summit is expected to address all aspects of the hydrogen value chain, encompassing production, transportation, and storage challenges and applications.

Other topics highlighted during the event include Carbon Capture, Storage, and Utilization (CCUS). Electrolyzer Technologies, Certificates of Origin, Carbon Pricing and Carbon Credits. Policy Frameworks and Bankability Criteria. Safety Requirements, among a host of other key themes.

The conference will include 12 discussion sessions and several technical workshops, where the themes will focus on the hydrogen economy strategy and green hydrogen infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman and the value added in the green hydrogen chain, partnership, and investment in this field as well as green hydrogen projects in the Sultanate of Oman.

Jindal Shadeed Group has announced that it will produce green steel at its upcoming factory in Duqm, which will supply products to the automobile and renewable energy sectors.



Official advertising agency 'Izdihar' to ensure quality promotion

FROM PAGE1

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion stressed that the launch of the 'Izdihar' agency came at a very appropriate time to organise advertising work between companies, institutions and various media channels to get the best type of advertising at competitive prices.

Mohammed bin Said al Balushi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Information for Radio and Television, indicated that the launch of the 'Izdihar' agency would be the beginning of an upcoming advertising market to provide the ministry with many advertisements that will contribute to increased revenues.

MEDIA CHANNELS

Fatima bint Muhammad al Kalbani, Director of the Commercial Department at the Ministry of Information, said: "This forum is the first one for the advertising market in the Sultanate of Oman. It was adopted by the ministry as it is the media umbrella for content to which advertising belongs. This comes within the aim of promoting and developing the advertising market, whether in terms of organisation or content."

She said that this department



serves as a link between advertisers and the ministry. The Business Department has already gained experience in handling all kinds of radio, press and TV advertising campaigns, both traditional and digital.

She added that 'Izdihar' is the first advertising agency in Oman that derives its message from the Presidency of Oman Vision 2040 in investing in the advertising field and the vision of the Ministry of Information in providing highly efficient advertising services. It provides a channel with integrated marketing communications through a single point of contact on all channels for the advertisers. The advertiser can manage campaigns through 'Izdihar', as it allows the advertiser to design campaigns with many options that the agency has, whether TV, radio reports,



advertisements, sponsorships, coverage and photography of the advertiser's website, as well as the production of advertising content and the management of public relations.

'Izdihar' is the first advertising agency in the Sultanate of Oman that derives its message from the Presidency of Oman Vision 2040 in investing in the advertising field and the vision of the Ministry of Information in providing highly efficient advertising services.

During the forum, the Ministry of Information signed eight agreements with a number of private sector institutions, at a total value of approximately RO 400,000, to benefit from the media and advertising services provided by the ministry.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef felicitated the top 10 companies that posted the largest number of advertisements via the ministry's channels this year.

Big data is 'oil of present and the future'

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

The Sultanate of Oman's 2nd Big Data and Analytics Meet, COMEX series, began on Monday under the auspices of Dr Ali al Shidhani, Under-Secretary for Communications and Information Technology, Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The morning session had two panel discussions on Advanced Infrastructure and platforms. Other panel discussed Advanced Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and Data Security.

"On Tuesday, we will be discussing Data Policy, Strategy, Building an Intelligent Business and Monetisation. We are discussing some of the important areas, and everyone talks about data being the oil of today and the future. This is what we are discussing in these two days. We are supported

by the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology," said Sadiq Ahmed Khan, COO, OITE & Arab Research Bureau.

He said last year, a conference was held on Artificial Intelligence and this year the focus is on Advanced Artificial Intelligence. He said that it is understood that computers have become much more complex, making Machine Learning highly significant.

The panel discussion covered topics such as data infrastructure and its importance; Artificial Intelligence — how to adapt and why it is not easy to adapt.

Maqbool al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park, said Cloud and AI are connected and explained that without the cloud it is not easy to reach AI.

"That is why we are now talking about connected clouds today. That is what multinational companies are doing currently. There is centralisation of data and economy

of scale. But it all starts with data sources," pointed out Al Wahaibi.

During the panel discussion Saud al Zakwani, Head of Data Science, PDO, said, "Machine Learning is critical if organisations want to invest in AI and at the same time relearning is extremely important as technology is continuously evolving." "We are in the age of change and having a plan for the next five years without having adaptability embedded in it, then you are building the future with your current vision," pointed out Al Zakwani. Panelist Khalid al Huraibi, Founder and Managing Director of Impact Integrated, said there had been good work on policies; however, there is a need for further development in disruption to elevation.

"It is a bit fragmented. We need moonshots. Something that will make investors put money into people and projects. Examples of moonshots in the country are Oman Satellite and Green Hydrogen," Al

Huraibi pointed out.

The Senior Associate and Vice President of Global Forum IKED & Global Forum, Ingrid Andersson, stressed the importance of skills.

"If you do not have skills, we cannot take up the opportunities. Technology is changing faster than education. We need to move outside the classroom. We need to have robust infrastructure and satellite clouds. Much has been done, but we need to continue to work," Andersson explained.

The experts explained that the hybrid cloud is becoming the dominant deployment becoming part of multi-cloud systems.

Mohammed El — Shanawany, Regional Sales Leader, Hybrid Cloud, Data and AI and Automation, IBM noted that collecting, analysing and infusing data is what should be invested in and not just part of it. "Companies should be able to collect, connect and practice virtualisation of data."

High parents' surveillance can backfire, warns WHO

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

An increased parental surveillance and parental control of the online activities of children can sometimes backfire, according to a World Health Organization (WHO) official.

In an exclusive interview with the Observer in the backdrop of 'What works to prevent online violence against children?' online discussion, Sabine Rakotomalala, Technical Officer, Violence Prevention Unit, Department for the Social Determinants of Health (SDH) at the WHO, said that such increased restrictions and constant, excessive monitoring by parents can dissuade children from sharing their experience from their time spent online.

"Parents can be influential by

helping their children acquire skills to stay safe online. But the inclination to impose restrictions and increase parental surveillance can sometimes backfire and lead to children being unwilling to share activities with parents and seek their help when needed," she said, adding that "One of the skills parents can most help children with is helping them to differentiate relationships that are healthy and mutually rewarding and those that are problematic, unequal and exploitative."

Although it is said that online violence against children has shot up manifold during the pandemic despite repeated warnings, she said the evidence is not yet clear about the relationship between the pandemic and children's violence exposure because of the lag in data collection, so terms like "shot up"



One of the skills parents can most help children with is helping them to differentiate relationships that are healthy and mutually rewarding and those that are problematic, unequal and exploitative

SABINE RAKOTOMALALA
SDH, WHO

may be unnecessarily alarmist.

The Sultanate of Oman ensures that all possible measures are taken to protect child rights online and no perpetrators on child abuse will be spared as the country considers any form of abuse against children, be it mental or physical, is a grave concern.

According to Child Protection Act, a child is entitled to various rights including, but not limited to education, health, civic, economic, social, cultural and opinion rights and Oman observes zero tolerance against child abuse. It ensures the protection of children and their well being is guaranteed with the support of the parents and other relatives.

"If children are spending more time online, then more of everything positive and negative might be expected to happen there,

so an important caveat is, if some forms of violence have gone up, is it proportional or disproportional to the increased engagement time."

In order to keep all children safe from online threats, WHO will continue to advocate for life skills interventions, delivered by parents, in community settings or in schools. The main life skills include assertiveness, resistance to peer pressure, conflict resolution, problem-solving and empathy.

"We at WHO will continue to work with UNESCO and the Ministry of Education to scale up school-based violence prevention programmes. In addition, WHO will continue to advocate, within Ministries of Health, for health staff based within the school settings to keep their children safe from any harm from online interactions," she said.



Italian cuisine week concludes

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

‘Italian cuisine Week — The extraordinary Italian taste’, an initiative of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to promote cultural, social, and environmental dimensions of gastronomy, concluded on Sunday.

The event had an exclusive lecture on ‘Women’s nutrition before and after childbirth.’

Prof Stefania Ruggeri, a Researcher from CREA, the Italian Agriculture and Food Research Council, delivered a lecture shedding light on healthy lifestyles. She called for attention to the environmental dimension of food consumption, as the week aimed at promoting the Italian gastronomic culture by presenting the various regional specialities.

She cited studies suggesting that a pregnant woman would need approximately 300 extra calories daily to maintain a healthy pregnancy, and it should come from a balanced diet of protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains.

A woman, during her pregnancy, should choose foods and drinks with less added sugars, saturated fats, and sodium. While

keeping sweets and fats to a minimum, she should also limit refined grains and starches, which are widely found in foods like cookies, white bread, and some snack foods. She should also avoid raw, undercooked or contaminated seafood.

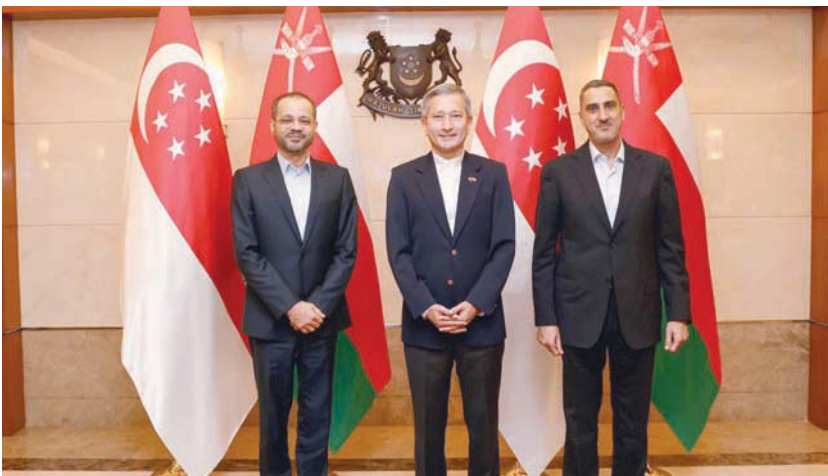
The event was organised by the Italian Embassy in Muscat.

“The Italian cuisine week was an opportunity to raise the awareness of the public on authentic Italian food, culinary traditions, and diversity of Italian regional cuisine as well as the importance of using quality ingredients, following a healthy lifestyle and of being responsible consumers, thus avoiding food waste,” said Federica Favi, Ambassador of Italy to the Sultanate of Oman.

The Italian Cuisine Week, which began on November 26, is part of the celebration of the 7th edition of the ‘Italian Cuisine Week’ in the World under the theme ‘Conviviality, Sustainability & Innovation: The Ingredients of Italian Cuisine for the Health of Individuals and Protection of the Planet’ by the Embassy of Italy in Muscat. It helped the visitors to experience the culture of land through cuisine.



OMAN, SINGAPORE EXPLORE COOPERATION



Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, met Vivian Balakrishnan, Foreign Minister of Singapore, in Singapore on Monday. The meeting comes within the framework of Sayyid Badr’s visit to Singapore to hold the first strategic dialogue between the two countries. The meeting reviewed bilateral relations explored area of cooperation in the fields of economy, investment and culture. They also exchanged

views on a set of regional and international issues of common interests. The meeting was held with the participation of Maj Gen Idris bin Abdulrahman al Kindi, Secretary-General of the National Security Council. It was attended by Khalid bin Hashel al Muslehi, Head of the Minister’s Office Department and Anwar bin Ahmed Muqabil, Consul General of the Sultanate of Oman in Singapore.

— ONA

Wadi Dayqah Dam opens today

MUSCAT: Wadi Dayqah Dam will be opened for 13 days starting from Tuesday to release 20 million m3 of water to recharge groundwater in Daghamr and Hail al Ghaf regions.

“The ministry will open the Wadi Dayqah Dam to drain about 20mn m3 of water. The dam has a storage capacity of 100mn m3 and a height of 75m.’ The ministry explained that the aim of opening the dam was to feed underground reservoirs for the farms of the people of Daghamr and Hail Al Ghaf regions, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) tweeted on Monday.

The ministry called on citizens to stay away from the wadi and abide by safety instructions.

The dam gates will remain open till December 19.

Located in Qurayat, 75 km from Muscat, Wadi Dayqah is home to one of the largest dams in the Arabian Peninsula.

Dayqah Dam was built in 2012 to collect rainwater from the surrounding mountains and control the water flowing through the villages below. The result is a stunning fresh water lake and a stream flowing 7 km from the main body of the dam.

The annual renewable water resources in Oman are estimated at 1,318 million cubic meters and demand for these resources is increasing, particularly in agriculture. The water deficit



in Oman is estimated at 316 million cubic meters each year. Groundwater represents 83 per cent of water sources in Oman, followed by desalination water at 10 per cent. Surface water constitutes only 5 per

cent, while treated wastewater represents only 2 per cent. The ministry pointed out that dam projects of various types were implemented in Oman due to their importance in feeding the aquifer and limiting the mixing

of sea water with groundwater aquifers. The number of dams in Oman reached 174 by the end of 2021. The number of new permits issued in 2021 reached 1274, including 876 for digging new water wells.

Agreement signed to teach English to Duqm students

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, DEC 5

The Ministry of Education signed an agreement with the Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Company, OQ8, to fund the third edition of the English language development programme for students of Duqm schools, grades (10-12) in Al Wusta Governorate.

The agreement was signed by Majid al Sinawi, Director General of the Directorate-General of Education in Al Wusta Governorate, and Jasim al Ajmi, Head of Corporate Identity and Work Culture of the company, in the presence of Majid bin Said al Bahri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Nasiha bint Mohammed al Falahiyah, Executive Vice-President for Affairs of Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries OQ8. The signing of the agreement took place in the office of the Undersecretary for Administrative and Financial Affairs yesterday morning.

In the current academic year

2022/2023, the programme targets sixty students from the schools of Duqm and will last for seven months. It is implemented during the evening period by the Department of Educational Studies and International Cooperation at the Ministry, in partnership with the British Council, to provide qualitative support in learning the English language, represented in providing students with English language skills, self-development, time management, teamwork and other twenty-first century skills.

The agreement aims to strengthen partnership with private sector institutions, develop cooperation with these companies in international educational initiatives, programmes and projects, support student learning in Al Wusta Governorate, and develop their English language level, given its importance in their professional future.

The Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in Al Wusta Governorate stated, saying: “The Ministry of Education appreciates the initiative of the Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries Company OQ8 in



supporting efforts aimed at finding educational opportunities for students in the English language, and keeping pace with the rapid transformation in the curricula and skills of the labour market, indicating that this partnership comes to emphasise the important role and desired effective contribution of the private sector in the next stage, and to achieve

Oman Vision 2040.”

Al Ajmi, Head of Corporate Identity and Work Culture at Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries OQ8, said: “This initiative is part of the company’s social investment initiatives, which are primarily based on strengthening the capabilities of human cadres, developing them, and raising their efficiency. As part

of our commitment to developing the capabilities and skills of students in Al Wusta Governorate and encouraging them to exert more efforts for the advancement of our country, Duqm Refinery seeks to play a leading and effective role in the field of local community development, through its social investment programme, training, and rehabilitation programmes,

as well as initiatives developing and supporting entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.”

Ellie Kennedy Maclean, Director of the British Council in Saudi Arabia, and Acting Director of the British Council in Oman, said: “We are pleased to support the implementation of the Schools Development Programme in the Wilayat of Duqm, which aims to enhance the English language skills of students in the Sultanate of Oman. As part of our commitment, this initiative will support the aspirations of a promising vision by creating educational opportunities and providing Omani youth with essential English language skills to thrive in life, work, and society.”

This agreement comes to translate the standpoint of social responsibility and sustainability, as education is one of its most important pillars, which comes within the framework of achieving the priorities of Oman Vision 2040, represented in the strategic direction “towards comprehensive education and sustainable learning, and scientific research that leads to a knowledge society and competitive national capabilities.”



Al Dakhiliyah marks Int’l Day of the Disabled

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, DEC. 5

An open day was hosted celebrate the International Day of the Disabled for the year 2022 in Al Naseem Park in the Wilayat of Bahla recently. The event was organised by the Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, represented by the Department of Special Education and Continuing Learning.

The event, which came under the slogan (From them we learn hope), was under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Khamis bin Ali Ambusaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education. Saif bin Mubarak al Julandani, Director-General of the Directorate General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, and Dr Thuraya bint Hamad al Rashidiyah, Director General of the Directorate of Special Education and Continuing Learning were present.

The event aims to involve the community in serving this group and educate the community on the International Day of the Disabled.

The ceremony began with the National Anthem in sign language, performed by students of audio integration from Hafsa Bint Omar School for Basic Education and Al Maamoura School for Basic Education.

This was followed by reciting of Holy Quran by Mohammed Awlad Wadir, a 12 grade student of audio integration at Sultan Bin Saif School for Basic Education, and welcome performance by Ahed Al Nahda School for Basic Education students.

Faisal bin Said bin Khalid al Hinai, Director of the Department of Special Education and Continuing Learning, in a speech said: “Our celebration of the International Day of Disability is a remind about caring important group of society. We



must motivate them to overcome their disability and integrate them into mainstream society as they represent 15 per cent of the world’s population with various disabilities. Based on that, this Directorate, represented by the

Department of Special Education and Continuous Learning, strives to integrate this group into society. Here, the biggest role lies with the general public, who must be very careful in dealing with this group and not make them feel that they

are different from the rest of society for any reason, as their disability is beyond their control and ability.”

This Directorate has been and is still making tremendous efforts to serve this segment of society. “

Al Hinai concluded his speech:

“In line with Oman’s Vision 2040, which believes that the human capital is the greatest wealth of society, this directorate works to develop plans and strategies that will help the disabled to engage in community life and contribute to

building it, invest their capabilities and talents and strengthening their productivity. This is one of their rights, and there is no doubt that it is an effort that yield results, as shown by the statistical indicators.”

During the celebration, student Jassim al Azwani, from Musab bin Omair School for Basic Education, presented a poem. After that, Dr Nasser bin Mohammed al Aufi, a senior educational researcher, gave a presentation on “The Vocational Empowerment Project in Improving the Quality of Life for Persons with Mental Disabilities.” In it, he talked about the importance of the Tamkeen project, funded by Sultan Qaboos University and with the full cooperation of the Department of Special Education and Continuing Learning. This project has yielded successes and good results, which will be a good omen for serving the disabled.

After that, Sultan Bin Saif School for Basic Education students presented a silent theatrical sketch.

The celebration also included the opening of the exhibition of the vocational empowerment project and student talents. The attendees of the ceremony toured the exhibition. Shaima bint Masoud al Hataliyah of Zainab Bint Ali School for Basic Education, presented her pottery skills while Hazaa al Shuraiqi of Mohammad bin Jaafar School for Basic Education drew pictures with mouth. The students of Hafsa Bint Omar School for Basic Education and the student Taifal Shukaili, from Amna Bint Al Arqam School for Basic Education presented their paintings. Audio integration students at Sultan Bin Saif School for Basic Education also gave a presentation on content creation. Laia bint Salim al Salmiyah presented her skills in the field of photography.

The ceremony concluded by honouring the supporters and sponsors for holding this celebration.

Conference throws light on blood cancer



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, DEC 5

Muscat Family Physicians group in association with Global Treatment Services held an International Medical Conference that threw light on the issues of haematological disorders like thalassemia, sickle cell anaemia and haemophilia.

The event was held at Crown Plaza Hotel, Qurum, last week Dr Sunil Udhire, consultant haematology, paediatric oncology & BMT physician, presented 20 cases for discussion, which included benign haematological disorders like Thalassemia, Sickle cell anaemia & Haemophilia. He went on to discuss cases on

more serious blood cancers like leukaemia, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, hemoglobinopathies etc. All these blood disorders are very commonly found in Omani population.

Dr Mahesh Rajshekhariah, consultant haematology and bone marrow transplant physician, elaborated conditions in which a patient has to be referred for bone marrow transplant.

He discussed in detail about the selection of patient, preparation, procedure, post BMT care & complications. He also spoke about patients who will need autologous, allogenic or haplo transplant of stem cells.

“It’s a teamwork. Many doctors are involved in deciding the

treatment after discussing it. This reduces errors / complications to the minimum& gives best results” both speakers told the audience.

Despite long weekend marking the Sultanate of Oman’s National Day Holidays more than 50 doctors from oncologist, haematologist, paediatricians, internists and family physicians attended the meeting.

Dr Sanjay Dalal, founder of Muscat Family Physicians’ Group, thanked the international speakers for sharing their experience and expertise. He expressed happiness over educative sessions of the conference and participation of good number of doctors who are practicing in the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman takes part in Big 5 Exhibition in Dubai

DUBAI: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, is participating in the Big 5 exhibition, which is being held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Oman’s participation at this event aims at promoting non-oil Omani exports, exploring export opportunities and attracting foreign capital and investments to the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman is taking part in the exhibition, which will continue until this Thursday, with a number of Omani companies specialising in the construction sector.

This year’s edition of the exhibition focuses on the role of technology in shaping the features of a better future, in conjunction with the construction sector’s endeavours to meet challenges related to aspects of climate resilience and sustainability.

The 43rd session of the annual exhibition hosts diverse regional and international exhibitors to highlight their latest innovations in the field of building technology. The event agenda, with its various activities and content sessions, focuses on the role of technology



in transforming the sector and strengthening its position as one of the most prominent tributaries of sustainability.

Lubna bint Mohammed al Harthiyah, Director of the Export Development Department at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, said “Participation in such specialised exhibitions provides Omani companies with an ideal opportunity for their continuity and enhance their competitiveness and commercial activity in foreign markets.” She added that the exhibition is an opportunity to inform the owners of Omani companies about the products

of their counterparts and the development they have reached in terms of modern technologies used in manufacturing.

The participation is also an opportunity to obtain agents and ink new contracts and deals that guarantee the expansion of their business abroad, Lubna pointed out.

This annual exhibition brings together the most prominent experts in the sector, developers, innovators, suppliers, stakeholders and consultants in the field of environmental, social responsibility, governance and policy makers at the international level. — ONA



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

TUESDAY | DECEMBER 6 | 2022

5

Sudan's military, civilian factions sign initial deal

KHARTOUM: Sudan's military and civilian leaders signed on Monday an initial deal aimed at ending a deep crisis caused by last year's military coup, prompting sceptical protesters to cry betrayal.

Army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan seized power in October 2021, derailing a rocky transition to civilian rule that began after the 2019 ouster of veteran ruler Omar al Bashir. The past year has seen near-weekly protests and a crackdown that pro-democracy medics say has killed at least 121, a spiralling economic crisis exacerbated by donors slashing funding, and a resurgence of ethnic violence in several remote



Protesters march in Khartoum on Monday during a rally against signed framework deal that provides for a two-year civilian-led transition towards elections and would end a standoff triggered by a coup in October 2021. — Reuters

regions. Divisions among civilian groups have deepened since the

coup, with some urging a deal with the military while others insist on

“no partnership, no negotiation”.

The deal was signed by Burhan, paramilitary commander Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo and multiple civilian groups, most notably the Forces for Freedom and Change (FFC) — the main civilian faction that was ousted in the coup.

As the key players put pens to paper, hundreds of citizens rallied in Khartoum to protest against the deal. “The settlement is betrayal” and the FFC “sold our blood,” demonstrators cried. “We reject this deal as it overlooked street demands for justice for the people killed since the coup,” said one of those protesters, Mohamed Ali. If

the deal plays out as planned, the civilian signatories will agree on a prime minister who will steer the country through a 24-month transition.

“The ceremony today is a culmination of the sustained efforts of Sudanese stakeholders over the past year to find a solution to the political crisis and restore constitutional order,” said UN special representative Volker Perthes.

The initial deal was described as “welcome” by the United States, Britain, Norway, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — all key players in Sudan — in a joint statement by the US State

Department. During the signing ceremony, Dagalo reiterated the military's purported commitment to exit the political scene, saying “it is essential to build a sustainable democratic regime”.

Other signatories included the Islamist Popular Congress Party, a faction of the Democratic Unionist Party and some ex-rebel groups who signed a 2020 peace deal. The agreement — based on a proposal by the Sudanese Bar Association — was negotiated in the presence of officials from the UN, Western diplomats as well as Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, according to the FFC. — AFP

Russia renews attacks on Ukraine

KYIV: Ukraine said Russia had destroyed homes in the south and knocked out power in the north in a new round of missile attacks as the West tried to limit Moscow's ability to finance its war by imposing a price cap on Russian seaborne oil.

Air alerts sounded across Ukraine and officials urged civilians to take shelter from what they said was the latest in waves of Russian missile strikes since its February 24 war.

Two people were killed in the Zaporizhzhia region where several houses were destroyed, the deputy head of the presidential office, Kyrylo Tymoshenko, said in one of the first reports of the damage.

Buildings had been hit in the suburbs of the city of Zaporizhzhia and some Russian missiles had been shot down, a city official said.

The governor of the Kyiv region said its air defences were working there, and told residents to remain in shelters. An energy provider said power



An elderly woman pulls a trolley bag past a destroyed building in Bakhmut, Donetsk region, on Monday. — AFP

had been knocked out on the northern region of Sumy in the latest missile strikes.

Russian forces have increasingly targeted Ukrainian energy facilities in recent weeks as they faced setbacks on the

battlefield, causing major power outages as winter sets in. “Don't ignore the alarm,” said Andriy Yermak, head of the Ukrainian presidential staff.

Ukraine had only just returned to scheduled power

outages from Monday rather than the emergency blackouts it has suffered since Russian strikes on November 23, the worst of the attacks on energy infrastructure that began in early October. — Reuters

Sarkozy seeks to overturn graft conviction

PARIS: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy sought to convince a Paris court to overturn his March 2021 conviction for bribery and influence-peddling in an appeal hearing that started on Monday.

The initial trial saw Sarkozy sentenced to three years in prison, two of them suspended, in a stunning fall from grace for a man who served as president from 2007 to 2012 but is now



facing a string of judicial investigations and trials.

The 2021 ruling found that

Sarkozy, 67, had tried to bribe a judge after leaving office, and to peddle influence in exchange for confidential information about an investigation into his 2007 campaign finances.

“I'm here to defend my honour, which has been violated. I'm here to convince the court that I did nothing,” Sarkozy, a tremor in his voice, told the appeals court on Monday.

“The words are strong:

corruption, influence peddling. I am a former president of the republic, I have never corrupted anyone,” said Sarkozy, who has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

“Am I a serious offender because I'm calling...my lawyer and friend?” he said, referring to phone tapping of conversations with his lawyer, who was also found convicted, that were critical in the original trial. — AFP

SULTANATE OF OMAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH ANNOUNCEMENT

Ministry of Health, Directorate General of Health Services in the Governorate of Dhofar, in coordination with the Sultan Qaboos Hospital, announces a public auction will be held as follows:

1. Government vehicles.
2. Office and residential furniture, electronic devices, medical supplies, equipment and apparatus and miscellaneous equipment.

The auction will be held at 4:30 pm on Thursday corresponding to 8/12/2022 at the Warehouse's Yard, the campus of the Sultan Qaboos Hospital, Salalah. The items can be inspected during official office hours in the aforesaid place in accordance with the following requirements:

1. The buyer is to pay a subscription fee amounting RO 100 in cash, refundable if the auction is not won otherwise.
2. The successful buyer is committed to pay the value of purchase in cash on the date and time of sale.
3. The successful buyer is committed to pay brokerage fee amounting to 3 per cent of the purchase's value.
4. The successful buyer is committed to move the items after paying the amount in full no later than 7 days from the date of the auction. In case of non-fulfillment, no responsibility is to be held against the DG.
5. The displayed items are sold as is.
6. The Directorate General does not provide a warranty against any defect in the sold items.
7. The DG will not hold responsibility after placing the auction against any defection, addition, or loss of the purchased items.
8. The buyer is committed to move the movables after their values have been paid in full according to the period stated above. Failing to do so will incur redoing the sale on the buyer's expenses where all expenses of the resale are to fall on them.



سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN INTERNATIONAL TENDER

Tender No.	58/2022/ MHT/HQ-40 Recall	Tender Name	Appointing a company to represent Oman as a tourist destination in Gulf Collaboration Countries (MARKET BASED REPRESENTATIVE) for 2023
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)	O.R 25		
Tender Document Sales End Date	19/ 12/ 2022		
Last Date for Bid Submission	4/ 1/ 2023		
Grade	International and excellent grade companies registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board and their registration is valid		
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om		

International companies and institutions that are not registered in the Sultanate can participate in international tenders through the E- tendering portal of the Tender Board at the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) provided that it registers under the regulations in force in the Sultanate within thirty working days from the date of being notified of the acceptance of its bid.

Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by a tender bond from a local bank or international registered bank that has a branch in Oman of not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission (ONLINE ONLY)

- Any bid that does not meet the required tender bond will not be considered
- The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids

The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

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

Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos Private School

Madinat Al Sultan Qaboos PVT School is currently seeking teachers to fill the following vacancies:

1. Math teacher
2. English teacher.

Requirements: candidates must have

- B.Ed. in the subject .
- Minimum 3 Years experience.
- Must be resident in Oman.
- Minimum score 6 in IELTS

Send your CV to the following email: schooolhr@gmail.com

Note. CV from outside Oman will not be considered

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.

SALE OF ASSETS

Hamad Al Sharji, Peter Mansour & Co., Advocates, Legal Consultants and Arbitrators (Law Firm Partnership), in their capacity as Liquidator of Hasan Juma Backer Trad. & Cont. Co. LLC is offering for sale the following:

- **Office Furniture** - 200 Staff Work Stations, Filing Cabinets, Office Tables, Chairs, Meeting Tables, CEO Office Furniture etc...
- **Gymnasium Equipment** - Treadmill, Multi Gym, Stepper, Cross Trainer, Exercise Bicycle, Dumbbells, Bench Press etc...
- **27 nos.Sewage Pumps** - Submersible & Horizontal Centrifugal Pumps of different capacities in packed unused condition.

For a list of the above materials and its inspection, please contact **Mr.U.S.Tipnis** (Mobile # 99327259) or by email unmesh.tipnis@gmail.com. Offers to be submitted to the Liquidator's office located in Bait Hoor Bldg, Next to First Abu Dhabi Bank, 3rd floor, CBD or by email to lawyer@sharjimansour.com no later than 28th December 2022.

Sale will be on "where is as is basis". The Liquidator is not obliged to sell to the highest bidder.

Hamad Al Sharji, Peter Mansour & Co.
Advocates, Legal Consultants and Arbitrators (Law Firm Partnership)
Tel.No. 24780333 / 24780335

Be you and face life...

Saw her after 11 years, she was beaming as she explained all that she has been achieving over the decade. But the big one was that which brought out changes in the last four years.

“I learnt to accept my situation instead of trying to meet expectations on how life ought to be and should be. The minute I did that my career began to fall in place too,” she added.

A journalist, now her area of interest also includes tourism. Her confidence is infectious and she is brimming with full of possibilities and is exploring countries and are promoting them.

This does not happen overnight. We cannot reach this stage by just reading books or listening to audio series as we wish to. The scenario is different when we go through a path with thorns, twists and turns. We might think we are heart broken and lost only to know later that it is these situations that engraved in us the power of resilience. It also takes time for us to realise we have that power in us to thunder the storms and then find the calmness.

Many of us might get stuck in the mode of tackling every battle, but it takes maturity to realise not every battle is worth fighting and it is not important to prove your point all the time. If it gives the other person the satisfaction to have had the last word, then let it be. But for this we need tame our ego, for most of the time we become insanely restless until we get the chance to have our say. Then there are some of us who never get the right responses at the appropriate time. It is only much later when we have supposedly the quiet me time (although voices inside the head could be screaming) when it dawns on us the variety of responses that could have been uttered during the crises.

“I was just caught off guard,” we say to ourselves consoling the bruised ego.

Later we also realise that carrying hurt only wound us further.

I was recollecting an incident with



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor

MANY OF US MIGHT GET STUCK IN THE MODE OF TACKLING EVERY BATTLE, BUT IT TAKES MATURITY TO REALISE NOT EVERY BATTLE IS WORTH FIGHTING AND IT IS NOT IMPORTANT TO PROVE YOUR POINT ALL THE TIME

a friend that happened a week ago and he said, “I do not look back. That was a Monday and today is Tuesday.”

A lovely wisdom don't you agree?

The only problem as I thought about it, is that days keep coming back and so do people and problems.

So why shouldn't we expect them over and over? The answer is simple, because we want to look forward to the future with joy and hope. The two friends we must have in our lives. It is a good idea to include them in our daily conversations no matter how many challenges life throws at us. It needs practice but the beauty is that more we practice the more we gain expertise.

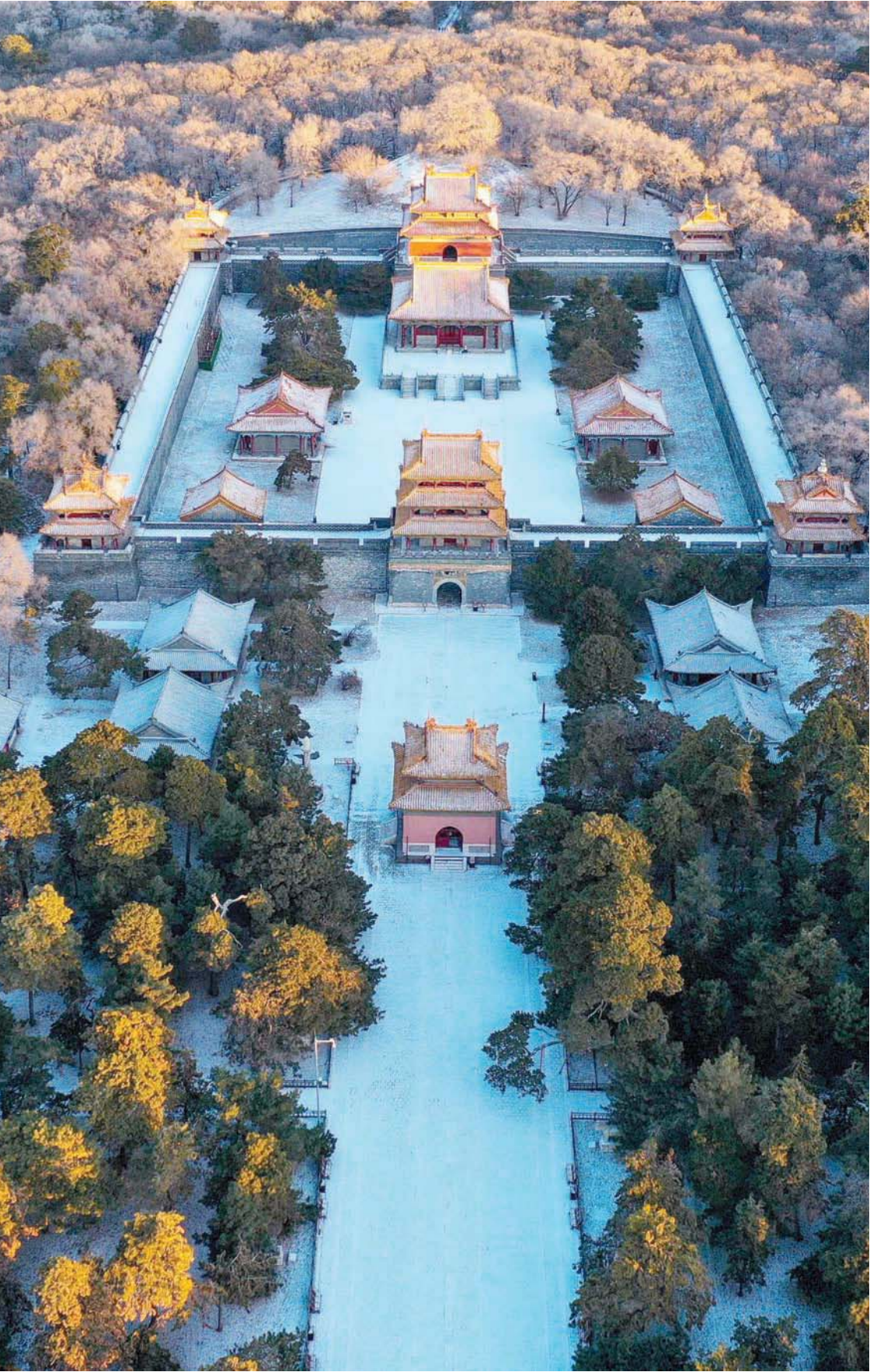
Came across a bright eyed four-year-old whose eyes were not so twinkling before he got implants for hearing. And when they switched on the device, his expression was priceless. Sitting at a function to celebrate it the child could not resist the beauty of sound. He could not help but bang the cutleries. Each sound (which we might refer to as noise) was beautiful for him. He was fascinated with the microphone. A few weeks ago this instrument would have meant nothing to him.

When there is technology why not use it and give everyone an opportunity to hear. Silence is Golden, but not a life time. When we see what others are going through we begin to question ourselves on what we have been defining on as our challenges. This might be an opportunity to think are there ways we can contribute, in our own small ways, to the society.

It was one person's decision to help and skills of another person that made this child hear the sounds of this world.

What sets them apart? The capability and ability - these two reasons allowed them to make a difference in another person's life. Can you imagine the satisfaction of the parents when the child responds to their call. Father is eagerly waiting for him to pick up speaking.

SNOW-COVERED PARK



Aerial photo shows a view of Beiling Park after snowfall in Shenyang, in China's northeastern Liaoning province. – AFP

Republicans and the Ukraine war

With a single vote lead for Democrats in the Senate and the House effectively in the grip of Republicans with 7 seats lead, President Joe Biden, it seems, will be stuck in a serious dilemma for the remaining two years of his stint at the White House.

At the moment, President Biden is confronted with two pricking questions: one, how to extinguish the Ukraine war and tighten the noose around Moscow's neck, and two, how to defuse the economic and military belligerency of Beijing without creating new flashpoints – or a new Cold War for that matter. On both the subjects, despite having similar stance as Democrats on key points, Republicans are likely to give a tough time to the Biden administration in the coming days. The most crucial matter, however, is the scope and quantum of financial and military support for Ukraine.

Ever since the Russian tanks rolled into the Ukrainian territory in February this year, the US Congress has sanctioned \$68 billion in financial and military aid for Kyiv and the Biden administration has again resorted to the Congress to grant an additional amount of \$37 billion



Dr Imran Khalid

The writer is freelance columnist on international affairs

EVER SINCE THE RUSSIAN TANKS ROLLED INTO THE UKRAINIAN TERRITORY IN FEBRUARY THIS YEAR, THE US CONGRESS HAS SANCTIONED \$68 BILLION IN FINANCIAL AND MILITARY AID FOR KYIV

two weeks back. Till now all such proposals by the Biden administration have received the bipartisan support in the Congress. In May, the largest tranche for Kyiv was approved with overwhelming support and only 57 no votes in the House of Representatives – interestingly, all of them belonging to the Republican Party – indicating the existence of small bunch of extreme rightists within the Republican legislators.

Some of mainstream leaders of Republicans, including Kevin McCarthy, the House minority leader and the expected next House Speaker to replace Nancy Pelosi, have been questioning the financial support to Ukraine.

McCarthy, during the midterm campaign, threatened that there would be no “blank cheque” for Ukraine under the Republican majority in the House.

Though, later on, McCarthy backtracked on his blank cheque comments in his private conversations with national security leaders and clarified that he had no plans to put breaks on support for Ukraine, but other extreme right elements among Republicans are still keeping

their voice loud against the US involvement in the Ukraine imbroglio. Marjorie Taylor Greene, the far-right conspiracy theorist Congresswoman, was also very hawkish on this subject and during her election campaign also vowed that “under Republicans, not another penny will go to Ukraine.”Just after the midterm results, Greene has introduced a resolution in the Congress calling for an audit of US spending on Ukraine. As soon as the midterm results were announced, Greene, along with a bunch of like-minded Republicans, has been

campaigning for tight audit of the US aid programme to Ukraine.

Obviously, such anti-Ukraine voices emanating from Republicans folds have caused anxiety in Kyiv. But in view of the bipartisan support on both sides of the divide in the US Congress, it is highly unlikely that the US aid to Ukraine will face any significant change in its flow.

The far-right group within the Republican Party is expecting that with the skyrocketing inflation and economic downturn, a Ukraine fatigue would soon envelope the Oval Office as well as Congress

and the public pressure will start mounting if Washington continue to pour tens of billions of dollars into funding the war in Ukraine at the expense of aggravating cost of living crisis at home. So, even if the far-right group is still a small bunch, but they may start buttressing support for their views if the Biden administration stumbles in handling the energy and inflation crisis. Nonetheless, Republicans, despite agreeing in principle on supporting Kyiv, will not let President Biden to have an easy run on the matters pertaining to the Ukraine war.





In the Japanese culture, artists use white and black more. It further transforms and diversifies in search of harmony between black and white, the energy of lines, and the expression of pure heart. In her works, Ingrid also tried to unite the theme to keep it calm

Thoughts, feelings spelled out in phrases

MAI AL ABRI

TWO JAPANESE ARTISTS joined hands with a Belgium artist to demonstrate that relations can survive and people can meet and part in mysterious ways. The natural world has always been made of immeasurably deep connections between all things. The connection of the three artists resonated on "Karma" exhibition in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, and the Embassy of Japan.

The Karma exhibition displays contemporary Japanese calligraphy to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Japan.

Calligraphy has been recognised as the finest art in the East since ancient times due to its technique and expression of spirituality. Japanese calligraphy is one of the oldest traditional art forms appreciated for many years, and uses brush and ink to bring out the beauty of the Japanese alphabets. Across the schools, students are given an opportunity to learn calligraphy as it is incorporated in school curriculum. Many adults also enjoy it in their pastime and is considered that peace of mind and spiritual concentration are required to finish up the calligraphy art. Modern calligraphy has been influenced by pure sensitivity, energy, and

the abstract beauty of the West, transforming it into a global art.

In addition to Japanese calligraphers Kawaguchi Yuho and Kawaguchi Seiren, Visual Artist Ingrid Van Heyden from Belgium participated with some works that show the contemporary western art.

Ingrid's abstract work of art is made with ink and paper, gesso, gauze, and glue under the theme of nesting. She uses mark making and lines to passionately express re-connection with natural forces.

The collaboration explores new artistic possibilities by combining calligraphic imagery and techniques with modern form of conceptual and performance art.

Explaining one of her works, Ingrid said "I actually started to make brush strokes and all of the sudden I saw it is actually wood, so I continued and started to bring the structure of wood out. It wasn't planned but it came out as wood.

Demonstrating her connection to the Japanese artists, she said "I know the Japanese artists for 20 years and we are still cooperating together. It is all about connectivity so Karma brings you together which is the philosophy of the exhibition. We come from different backgrounds but we both share together is the soul. No matter what language you speak or form of art you work with, we have this common thing together".



In the Japanese culture, artists use white and black more. It further transforms and diversifies in search of harmony between black and white, the energy of lines, and the expression of pure heart. In her works, Ingrid also tried to unite the theme to keep it calm. As colours are important in some works, lines can deliver the meaning in other arts.

The Belgium artist also focused on nests in her exhibited works saying that she started to make nests during the pandemic because she and her children were separate during that period. "It was a spontaneous feeling to feel home together with the whole family. It is more like showing the safety feeling and warmth", the artist said.

"Nature has always been made up of deep connections between everything that exists. The Japanese people generally express gratitude for these connections with a word 'En', or karma. Joys, sorrows and sufferings are all based on En," a note from the calligraphers said.

During the six-day expo titled 'En(Karma)' People unexpectedly meet and say goodbyes', the two visiting calligraphers will display contemporary calligraphy works that has had an emotional impact in them.

The exhibition will end on December 10 at the Omani Society for Arts at a glittering ceremony.



INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



AROUND THE WORLD

CELEBRITIES

George Clooney, Amy Grant, Gladys Knight, U2 receive Kennedy Center Honors



ACTOR GEORGE CLOONEY, singer-songwriter Amy Grant, singer Gladys Knight, composer Tania León and rock group U2 were celebrated on Sunday for their contributions to the arts at a White House reception and a music-filled Kennedy Center Honors show.

The Kennedy Center event, now in its 45th year, recognises stars from music, stage and screen for their contributions to American culture.

At a reception for the five honourees at the White House, President Joe Biden addressed each artist personally, praising their individual talents and saying they embodied the spirit of the country.

"Tonight, we celebrate a truly exceptional ... group of artists who embody the very spirit of 'We the People,'" Biden said.

The room was packed with celebrities, the White House's second star-studded event in recent days. Actors Julia Roberts and Matt Damon were seated next to each other, in front of journalist Katie Couric. Former Washington, D C police officer Michael Fanone, who was beaten defending the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, was seated next to singer Eddie Vedder in the front row.

Inside the Kennedy Center opera house where the show was later held, House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi and her husband, Paul, who has been recovering after he was attacked in October in their San Francisco home, appeared in a balcony and got a standing ovation when they were recognised from the stage by David Rubenstein, the Kennedy Center's chairman.

The show highlighted the five artists' work, and represented a return to the times before the coronavirus pandemic began; on Sunday night, there was no requirement for testing or masking to attend, though many continue to die of the disease in the United States.

Clooney, an actor and film-maker who played a doctor on the popular NBC television show "ER" before launching a movie career that earned him two Academy Awards, said becoming a Kennedy Center honouree was a little daunting.

"I grew up in a little town in Kentucky and I watched it on TV," Clooney told reporters about the Kennedy Center Honors, referencing previous winners Jimmy Stewart and Robert Redford. "That's an exciting fraternity to be a part of."

Roberts and Clooney's father, Nick, along with actors Damon, Don Cheadle and Richard Kind appeared on the Kennedy Center stage to honour the film-maker. "George's best and most important work is still ahead of him," his father said.

ENVIRONMENT

How bringing back lost species revives ecosystems



HOW BRINGING BACK lost species revives ecosystems

Washington, December 1, 2022 - Scientists often study the grim impacts of losing wildlife to hunting, habitat destruction and climate change. But what happens when endangered animals are brought back from the brink?

Research has shown restoring so-called "keystone" species — those with an outsized impact on their environment — is vital for the health of ecosystems, and can come with unexpected benefits for humans.

Here are some notable examples from North America.

Wolves

Few species evoke the American wild as much as wolves.

Though revered by Indigenous communities, European colonists who arrived in the 1600s embarked on widespread extermination campaigns through hunting and trapping.

By the mid-20th century, fewer than a thousand gray wolves were left in the contiguous United States, down from at least a quarter million before colonisation.

Extinction was averted in the 1970s when lawmakers passed the Endangered Species Act, helping revive the apex predator in parts of its former range.

Then, in the mid-1990s, the government took wolves from Canada and reintroduced them to Yellowstone National Park.

This generated a wealth of

data that scientists are still working to understand.

The new arrivals kept elk numbers down, preventing them from over-browsing vegetation that provides material for birds to build nests and beavers to build dams — a phenomenon known as a trophic cascade.

The recovered vegetation helped stop soil erosion into rivers, changing their course by reducing meandering.

While building their dams, the beavers also create deep ponds that juvenile fish and frogs need to survive.

When they embark on hunts, wolves focus on weak and diseased prey, ensuring survival of the fittest.

A recent paper even found that wolves brought back in the midwestern state of Wisconsin kept deer away from roads, reducing collisions with cars.

Amaroq Weiss, a biologist and senior wolf advocate for the Center for Biological Diversity compared ecosystems to tapestries, "and when we take out some of the threads, we weaken that tapestry," she said.

It's thought there are now more than 6,000 gray wolves in the contiguous United States. The main threat is legalised hunting in some states.

Buffalo

The story of the American buffalo — also known as bison — is inextricably linked to the dark history of the early United States.

From an estimated 30 million, their number plummeted to just hundreds

by the late 19th century as the US government sought to wipe out plains tribe Indians whose way of life depended on the animal.

"It was an intentional genocide to remove the buffalo, to the remove the Indians and force them onto reservations," Cody Considine of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) said.

Buffalo, he explained, are an integral part of TNC's efforts to re-establish prairies in the Nachusa Grasslands of Illinois.

The buffalo, who were introduced there in 2014 and now number around a hundred, favour eating grass over flowering plants and legumes, which in turn allows a variety of birds, insects and amphibians to flourish.

"Some of these species without that grazing simply just disappear off the landscape due to the high competition of the grasses," added Considine.

Sea otters

As the dominant predator of marine nearshore environments, sea otters play a hugely important role in their ecosystem.

Historically they spanned from Baja California up the West Coast up to Alaska, Russia and northern Japan, but hunting for fur in the 1700s and 1800s decimated their numbers, which were once up to 300,000.

They were thought for a while to have been completely exterminated off California, but a small surviving population of around 50 helped them partially recover to some 3,000 today. — **AFP**

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

World cup mania

WHEN THE WORLD Cup Started, Sham the helper appointed himself as our sports' analyst and gained the nickname Sham Shobair (Shobair is a famous Egyptian goalkeeper from the 90s who later became a football programme host.

He's famous for being ill-tempered, shouting and attacking other guests occasionally. Pure entertainment!). Being the youngest in our household, Sham's enthusiastic multilingual football commentary falls on deaf ears. When he starts his blabber in front my 82-year-old dad -who was never a football fan- he'd brush him off with a hand wave before asking slyly: "How's your girlfriend?"

As for my mom, she couldn't care less and would occasionally interrupt him with orders "Pass me the onions!" "Chop the garlic finely!". Yet her attitude would never deter him as he turns to the two semi football fans that understands his enthusiasm: my brother and I. Just pop the question: "So who's playing today?" and he'd get into a long monologue about famous team players and their chances of winning based on their performance in previous world cups.

Sham is a big fan of Messi and follows all European football league games; and that of cricket too. He was truly disappointed when Saudi beat Argentina and kept sulking the minute my brother and I teased him about it: "So Sham! What happened to your World Cup winning team? Where was Messi then?" Of course, these questions provoked a long commentary and analysis of teams' performances that made my mom cut him off and tell him to pray for their win! Sham's fanatic enthusiasm is shared among his own countrymen, where many literally lose their lives for the love of the game. His great-uncle died of a heart attack while watching a football match. Sham also reports football related deaths that varies between seven and ten daily. These deaths also include stabbing incidents between different team supporters especially among young men. To me, hosting the World Cup in our part of the world

has been an interesting experience. It started with plenty of negative Western reaction that was shared openly on social media and news channels. It seemed that France 24's main mission was exposing Qatar's corruption, while completely ignoring the multi-million dollars' worth of Qatari investments in Paris, not to mention their Qatari-owned football club Paris Saint Germain.

Ironically, while Europeans preached freedom of believes and tolerance, they failed to practice it. They kept imposing issues that were against our religious beliefs; especially those related to homosexuality. The number of threats were ridiculous, especially those received on social media of hanging rainbow flags and wearing similar arm bands or t-shirts.

When German team members covered their mouths during their photoshoot, Arab spectators did the same on their following game while holding pictures of Mesut Ozil. Moreover, Arab sports' commentators covered their mouths and waved their hands goodbye when Germany left the championship. Videos of English supporter storming in Qatar's airport in their crusader costumes was intimidating, given their bloody history in this region were hundreds of thousands of Muslims were massacred in the name of religion.

But all these minor Western attacks didn't affect most fans who were here to enjoy the football festival. Videos of the Saudi's reaction to their first win ever over Argentina was priceless especially the slogan chanted: "Where is Messi? We humiliated him!" (Trust us Arabs to come up with rhyming slogans!). Many videos shared on WhatsApp are of foreign fans blending into the culture by wearing local outfits and trying typical Gulf dishes which reflects the World Cup's true message: respecting others and celebrating cultural diversities.

(To be continued...)

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and the author of The World According to Bahja. rashabooks@yahoo.com



Transfer your salary and enjoy attractive interest rates starting from

For more information:
<https://bit.ly/ShortTermPersonalLoanEN>

HOUSING LOAN
4.95%

PERSONAL LOAN
4.99%

CAR LOAN
4.95%

بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

the best bank for you 24/7 1111 www.bankdhofar.com

South Korea steelmaker mulls hydrogen, green steel venture in Oman



CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, DEC 5

South Korean steelmaking giant POSCO Holdings has announced that it is weighing investment in a mega green hydrogen project, alongside a green steel mill, at Duqm in the southeast of the Sultanate of Oman.

The revelation came at the Korea-Oman Green Hydrogen Strategic Forum 2022 held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Monday, December 5, 2022. The forum was organised by the Embassy of the Republic of Korea in the Sultanate of Oman with the support of H2Korea, the hydrogen convergence alliance of Korea.

Speaking at the event, Juik Cho, Executive Vice President (Hydrogen Business) at POSCO Holdings, said a heavyweight consortium is being assembled to bid for available acreage offered up by the Omani government under a newly launched public auction programme for the development of green hydrogen projects in Oman.

“Based on the results of our feasibility study performed in Duqm, we are going to submit our (proposal) for the land acquisition auction,” said Cho. “We are not alone in this endeavour; on the contrary we are going to put together the most competitive consortium by forging a partnership of POSCO Holdings and Korean companies with a sizeable demand for hydrogen, as well as global IPP (Independent Power Project) companies and engineering companies.”

Oman’s Duqm zone, the official said, is among six “strategic locations” around the world that are being keenly investigated by POSCO Holdings as potential sites for green hydrogen projects.

Green hydrogen from these investments, or its derivatives, will primarily go towards decarbonising POSCO’s industries in South Korea. But, in addition, POSCO is also exploring the potential for establishing plants for the production of green hot briquetted iron (HBI) — the primary raw material for steel mills — in cost-competitive locations.

“We are planning to produce 7 million tonnes of hydrogen per year by 2050. That is to cover 5 million tonnes of our captive demand, while over 2 million tonnes of hydrogen will be earmarked for sales.

For this reason, we have selected six strategic locations or countries — Korea, Malaysia, the Middle East, India and Australia. Among these six strategic locations, Oman is one of the most important for POSCO Holdings,” Cho stated.

“If the hydrogen production cost in Oman is found to be competitive enough, we can also consider having green HBI production in Oman as well. And to that end, we are conducting a study with one of the most competitive iron ore companies in the world.

Together with our steelworks and power plants in Korea, we are also looking into the possibility of building hydrogen infrastructure, for which a feasibility study is going on as well,” he further noted.

Royal Decrees set to ignite growth of Omani mining sector

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, DEC 5

Minerals Development Oman (MDO) has welcomed the issuance of 12 Royal Decrees ratifying mining concession agreements granting the company 12 concession areas from exploration to mining.

The pacts are in line with newly adopted strategy of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals to develop the minerals sector through concession agreements including legal, technical, and financial terms to be signed between the ministry and investors as an investment management method to lead the mechanism of managing the exploited minerals identified in concession areas.

The total size of the concession areas included in the agreements is around 21,480 square kilometres. They include a number of potential minerals, mainly strategic minerals (metallic) such as Copper, Gold, and Chromium.

The agreements cover eight sites mostly located in Al Batinah North and South, Al Dhahirah, Al Buraimi, Al Dakhiliyah and Al Sharqiyah North and South.

All are exploration-to-mining concession areas, one site located in the Wilayat of Yanqul with an area size of 20 square kilometres is a copper concession area that reached an advanced exploration phase to be ready for mining.

Eng Nasser bin Saif al Maqbali, CEO of MDO, said: “It’s a significant day for MDO as we are witnessing a historic moment with the issuing the 12 Royal Decrees that approved mining concession agreements. Through this, MDO will be able to promote its plans to invest in exploration programmes for a number



THE PACTS ARE IN LINE WITH NEWLY ADOPTED STRATEGY OF THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERALS TO DEVELOP THE MINERALS SECTOR THROUGH CONCESSION AGREEMENTS INCLUDING LEGAL, TECHNICAL, AND FINANCIAL TERMS .

of strategic minerals, which will be the cornerstone of an Omani mining industry that will be vast and advanced in its operations.”

He added: “It is hoped that this will enable Oman to attract strategic partnerships, take full advantage of the mining sector, and position Oman for global mining investment. Besides enhancing the role of mining-related sectors, it will also promote sustainable development and social responsibility, building national capabilities, rehabilitating mining forces, and realising that the mining sector plays a significant role in developing local communities and supporting small and medium

enterprises”.

By identifying the concession areas in the minerals sector, the ministry aims to overcome the challenges facing the licensing mechanism through:

1 — Contributing to creating an integrated database includes geological, geophysical, and exploration surveys that cover most of the Sultanate of Oman in order to create an organised and sustainable source of mining opportunities in Oman where the investor can explore all the minerals available in the concession areas.

2 — The concessions include all the terms related to the competent government entities such as environmental conditions, which will enable investors to obtain these approvals from these entities to smoothly move from exploration to mining phase.

3 — Providing the required size and quantities of the primary metallic ores so it can be commercially invested in the minerals processing operation to increase the concentration levels, and consequently increase its market value.

These quantities of minerals reserves will facilitate the creation of in country value to the mineral ores available in the Oman through establishing downstream mining and manufacturing industries.

4 — Facilitating funding from the bank sector for investment in mining sector through developing a long-term agreement with the investor.

5 — Focusing ministry efforts resources in the high strategic minerals (metallic minerals) especially the ones related to Fourth Industrial Revolution, while enhancing industrial mineral production (non-metallic minerals) through attracting international specialised companies and enable the establishment of mining industries and creating various job opportunities.

Earlier, MDO announced the start of the airborne survey for exploration of metallic minerals, which is conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals (MoEM) and a number of government entities.

Oman, South Korea explore cooperation in green energy

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, DEC 5

The Korean Embassy and the H2KOREA (Hydrogen Convergence Alliance of Korea) cohosted the Korea-Oman Green Hydrogen Strategy Forum 2022 at the OCEC (Oman Convention and Exhibition Center) on December 5, 2022 on the sidelines of the Green Hydrogen Oman Summit. Omani and Korean sponsors including HyFly, Birba Energy and KOTRA

supported the Forum.

Eng Salim al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, graced the forum along with officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other public authorities. A number of high profile firms of Korea and Oman including POSCO, Samsung Engineering, EDO, OQ, and Oman LNG, to name just a few participated in the Forum.

The Forum proved to be an effective platform to exchange perspectives and strategic insights



of the key public and private stakeholders in Korea and Oman.

The participants reached a common perception on three

important matters. First, they agreed that green hydrogen economy represents a huge industrial and environmental opportunities.

Second, they recognised the collective progress in pursuing solutions for creating an enabling environment to realise the green hydrogen industry while addressing challenges.

Third, they acknowledged that the shared priorities and commitment of Korea and Oman to

the development of green hydrogen industry would open up yet another promising opportunities. Kim Kiejoo, Ambassador of Korea to the Sultanate of Oman underlined that “building on the traditional energy bridge, Korea and Oman could further create a “green hydrogen bridge” by sharing their respective priorities of exploring green hydrogen economy and leveraging corresponding advantages in a mutually-beneficial way.”

OPAZ services record 82% customer satisfaction

MUSCAT: The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has recorded around 82% customer satisfaction rate as of end of November 2022.

The rate included evaluating a number of services provided by OPAZ in its affiliated zones, such as services for providing building permits, demarcation, environmental permits, amending building permits, project plans, and investors relation management system.

OPAZ Call Centre (1919), which was launched in September 2022, received more than 270 calls in addition to other inquiries received via online communications. All calls and inquiries have been managed and communicated with the concerned departments.

Further, the Call Centre issued regular reports on all complaints and recommendations as well as conducted customer satisfaction

evaluation for the services provided. The Centre is equipped with relevant systems that assists in handling all the complains received and managed internally with the concerned departments.

It is worth noting that the Call Centre serves all special economic zones and free zones by providing the key guidelines and information to investors, customers, entrepreneurs and the community.

OPAZ is keen to provide all facilities that contribute to achieving highly efficient and quality services to investors, whether local or international, and provide sufficient information and tools that ensure smooth performance and quick response.

Moreover, OPAZ has received a number of ideas and recommendations via the internal portal “Share Your Ideas”, which exceeded 170 ideas.

However, the opportunity



was also given to public to share their ideas and suggestions, which are being evaluated and brought to discussion for further clarification and way forward.

On the other hand, the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones announced last August of this year that it will stop all paper-based transactions and documents at the one-stop shop in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm.

This comes as part of its environmentally-friendly initiative to stop paper-based transactions. This initiative was launched to reduce the use of paper documents in the zones affiliated with OPAZ and to enhance efforts towards digital transformation and expedite transactions.

It is worth noting that OPAZ accords attention to improving the level of services provided to investors and customers and meeting their aspirations, as well as seeking to enhance their online experience. Over the past years, OPAZ launched a number of electronic services that highly contributed to facilitating access to many services online without the need to visit OPAZ headquarters in Muscat or the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

The Call Centre of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones extends its working hours from 08:00 am to 08:00 pm, unlike before where calls had been received during the official working hours only.

Besides, the Call Centre Team are very well trained and qualified to be able to respond to the different calls and provide relevant information. Also, the Centre is supported by systems to track the process of transactions, as the Centre equipped with latest technical systems in order to ensure quality and efficiency and provide quick response.

NBO’s Rawabit Programme builds strong connections to better serve its customers



MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) recently completed its Rawabit Programme, a thorough series of interactive workshops focusing on reinforcing the bank's values to deliver superior services.

In total, 241 NBO employees including the executive management team, took part in 14 workshops as NBO continues to shape the future of banking in Oman.

The Rawabit Programme focuses on how NBO employees interact with the bank's values and shape the workplace culture by promoting teamwork and collaboration, embracing change and engaging effectively. The programme also aims to promote professional conduct in the workplace, integrate the Bank's values into day-to-day operations, and create linkages between employees from different regions.

Sherifa al Maskari, Head of Brand at NBO, said, “We are always pushing the boundaries of what is possible

and by sharing new initiatives with employees in all departments we are able to ensure staff live NBO's values of authenticity, connection, simplicity and pioneering everyday and help customers maximise their potential.

By taking this step we are passing the benefits to customers by highlighting the opportunities available to them when we work together as one.”

NBO strives to connect, build and grow with its customers, and for 50 years the bank has built strong bonds with customers by delivering more intuitive and seamless banking.

Enhancing the capabilities and effective deployment of NBO's people through empowering career development programmes have been identified as key to achieving and delivering the bank's strategic and business objectives. The bank will continue to equip its employees with the skills required to better serve its customers.

Sohar International and its Islamic window finance Sanvira Carbon FZC LLC

MUSCAT: Dedicated to driving sustainable growth in the Sultanate of Oman, Sohar International has been at the forefront of supporting key national projects that add value to the economic landscape.

In line with the same, the bank participated at the official opening ceremony of Sanvira Carbon FZC LLC (SCL) – a large-scale manufacturing project for which Sohar International and Sohar Islamic are the financing partners.

The inauguration of the factory, which is located at Sohar Port and Freezone, was held under the auspices of Salim bin Nasser bin Said al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals. Representing the bank at the inauguration was Abdulwahid al Murshidi, Chief Islamic Banking Officer, Sohar International, along with other senior members from the bank.

The milestone opening ceremony also witnessed the presence of several business leaders associated with the project, key government delegates, and representatives from the media.

Ahmed al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International commented, “Sohar International is committed to supporting



mega national projects that contribute to the Sultanate of Oman's economic development and diversification while simultaneously boosting the country's energy independence, self-reliance, and resilience.

Such projects are not just critical to the development of manufacturing industries, but also have the potential to strengthen the local communities by generating new job opportunities, creating in country value and new value chains. The support to this project is a reflection of the bank's alignment with Oman Vision 2040 and reiterates our determination to take concrete steps to achieve integrated development in the country.”

Sanvira Carbon was incorporated in December 2018, to set up, own, and operate a Calcined Petroleum Coke (CPC) manufacturing

facility in Sohar in the Sultanate of Oman, with an effective aggregate capacity of 440,000 metric tonnes per annum and was geared at bridging the value chain manufacturing gap between the availability of Green Petroleum Coke (GPC) in Orpic's Oil Refinery and the requirements for CPC at Sohar Aluminium, both of which operate in Sohar.

The total cost of the project, estimated at \$155.90 million, was to be financed by equity of \$51.45 million and term loan of \$104.45 million while maintaining a Debt Equity Ratio (DER) of 67:33 (~2:1).

As the trusted finance partners of the project, Sohar International had split the term loan facility between conventional and Islamic tranches of \$83.66 million and \$20.79 million, respectively.

Sanvira Carbon had already

commenced operations of its Vertical Shaft Kiln unit in January 2022, thereby, earning cash accruals of approximately \$15 million by September 2022.

The company is also already supplying finished CPC to Sohar Aluminium and BP Europa, along with high-grade sulphur GPC under a 3-year supply contract to OQ Refineries. Given its strategic location and proximity to the port, the company also has the scope to capture the regional aluminium smelter market in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and Africa.

As a progressive, agile, and dynamic bank, Sohar International, through its thoughtfully crafted product and service offerings, has been driving socio-economic progress in the Sultanate of Oman and will continue to finance projects that have a long-term, positive impact.

Bank Muscat organises special customer meets in Nizwa

MUSCAT: In line with the bank's customer-centric vision and commitment to further strengthen its communication channels with customers, Asalah Priority Banking and Al Jawhar Privilege Banking from Bank Muscat recently hosted special customer events in Nizwa to introduce to them various exclusive services, banking facilities and offers.

The events were attended by Abdulnasir al Raisi, General Manager, Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, bank officials and a large number of Premier Banking customers. It was the latest in a series of customer meets organised by the bank this year to strengthen its partnership with customers and get their feedback regarding new services, products and offers.

Speaking on the occasion, Taya bin Eid Bait Sabeea, Deputy General Manager, Bank Muscat, said: “We are delighted to host our valued customers today as we constantly endeavour to listen to their feedback and comments on new services and products which are constantly launched by the bank. Promptly responding to customer feedback and having a strategy of keeping pace with global trends are key to Bank Muscat's continued leadership in the financial services sector in Oman and the bank continues to working on constant betterment of the customer experience as part of its mission to provide a world-class banking experience.

We take this opportunity to thank each one of our valued customers



for their strong confidence in the bank and their continued patronage.”

Asalah Priority Banking customers enjoy

a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 39 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre.

Exclusive lifestyle benefits for its clientele include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 “Buy 1, Get 1 Free” offers in Oman and at international destinations as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments. The Asalah Debit Card offers access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 1,000.

Meanwhile, Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges

worldwide, and a 24/7 global concierge service. The Credit Card also offers 1% cashback on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members.

Cardholders can also enjoy complimentary chauffeur service to and from the Muscat International Airport.

Asalah customers also enjoy access to an integrated wealth management platform that allows them to invest in global asset classes through a single touchpoint and get the latest updates on local and international investment opportunities. Please visit <https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/premier-banking/Pages/asalah-priority-banking.aspx> for other details about Asalah Priority Banking.

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

- 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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

شوبين جفت Shoppinggift

GET FREE SHOPPING VOUCHER with every purchase of TallyPrime single user

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
<https://www.asiasolutions.net>

ASIA SOLUTIONS
TALLY GOLD PARTNER
TALLY FOR VAT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 6, 2022 JUMADA AL ULA 12, 1444 AH

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Ali al Maashari: 99639264
ali.almaashari@omandaily.com

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

REQUIRED MALL MANAGER

A Commercial mall opening in Muscat requires a Mall Manager (Male / Female)

An engineering background will be preferred. Interested candidates may apply to email id: recruitmentmct@gmail.com

Rig For Sale

FAILING JED – A Model Rig in stacked condition for sale, on As Is Where Is Basis. Rig is available for inspection. (Contact: +968 95364097 for Location map)

Interested parties can submit your Offer on accounts@killultan.com

CABINS FOR SALE

3No. Cabins in excellent condition, mounted on an oilfield Skid are for sale. (Units are available for inspection. (Contact: +968 95364097 for Location map)

Interested parties can submit your Offer on accounts@killultan.com

Job Opportunity

A vehicle service follow-up employee is required, whose task is to submit repair offers to insurance companies, provide spare parts for repairing process, then follow up procedures for recovering amounts due to the garage from insurance companies. Experience is required for the candidate for the job and full knowledge of where the best and lowest-priced spare parts are available in Oman and UAE. Salary will be determined according to experience.

To contact on WhatsApp (+96892601001)

Now get news on the go

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

SIT. WANTED

Logistics/Finance/ Operations/ Warehousing 22 years of Gulf experience in Oman with various fields in Finance, Operations and Logistics with valid Oman D/L. Working experience in Orion/ Dolphin/E-Promise ERP. Looking for a suitable position. Contact: 95271876 E-mail: lidrosh1823@gmail.com

PLANNING engineer, PMP. Indian male Civil Eng. Around 10 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com, Call: 78002582.

SERVICES

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full- time. Contact WhatsApp: 97103168.

BUILDING of 1.500 sqm 3 stories, accommodation, store and office at Misfa. 99432177, 99010964.

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

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA • BANGLADESH NEPAL • SRI LANKA • INDONESIA PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER 80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

95587410, 9888 1554, 99638698, 94940231, 98523831
Branches : Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Seeb, Barka, Suwaiq, Sohar

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT? Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

LAMASAT BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Accounting Services, VAT and Consultancy Services

Contact: 24571454 GSM: 95392251

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN female (M Tech Civil Structural Engineering) having 7 years experience as Quantity Surveyor cum Quality Control Engineer, looking for suitable position. Contact: 96154505.

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

GENERAL manager with 16+ years experience in Oman, MBA — BE, seeks suitable placement. Contact: 94008034.

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: 97239696 95355638

Gulf Center Consultancy & Audit
Muscat, Sohar, Salalah, Sur

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

FOR RENT

FLAT for rent 1. Darsait, near Indian School. Two bedroom flat, bath attached, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat, hall, kitchen and toilet. 2. Al khuwair, near Rawasco. One bedroom, bath, kitchen, AC, curtains. 3. Al Ghubrah, near Mars Hypermarket. Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. 4. Al Ghubrah, near Indian School. Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. *All flats provided with air conditioners. Contact GSM: 91473374, 97886085

FOR RENT

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

Flats 2bhk and 1 bhk in Mumtaz. Contact 99341138 and 90991079.

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car
AMAZING OFFERS

- Rent a car for 10 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

ROOM for rent in Darsait with bathroom and kitchen. The electricity and water is free. The room is with sea view. Rent RO 100. Contact 99315986.

SITUATION WANTED

Well experienced Indian Finance Manager. M.com with 20 years experience in Finance, Accounts, Tax Matters and Reports. Noc and DL available. GSM : +968 95392251

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

Please Contact our Team

95210257

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om

@omanobserver

we shall overcome

Observer

Top Story

BREAKING NEWS

86 new Covid-19 cases in Oman, Muscat crosses 1,000-mark

Fast power enables fast economic growth on Oman’s scenic Arabian Sea coast

Over the course of millennia, wind and rain have created a natural sculpture garden of fantastically shaped rocks located not far from Oman’s central coastline on the Arabian Sea.

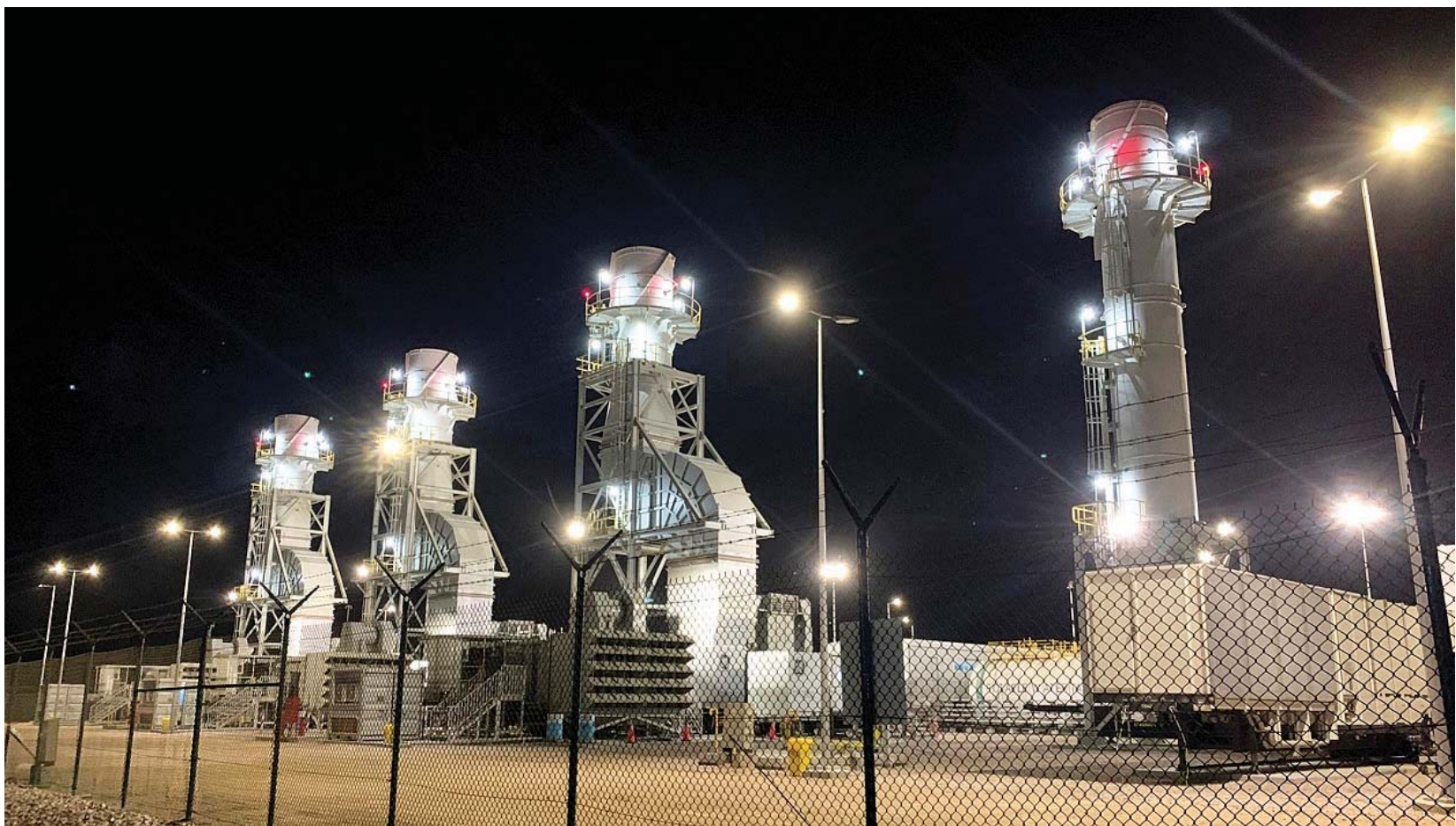
Many of the formations are large boulders impossibly balanced on tiny rock pedestals. Others evoke the shapes of birds, human heads, loaves of bread, and mushrooms.

The fascinating site doesn’t get too many visitors today, given that it’s located more than 500 kilometres south of Oman’s capital Muscat, in the dramatically scenic and sparsely populated Al Wusta Governorate.

However, visits to the Rock Garden in the town of Duqm are growing, in part because of what’s taking shape nearby, on a 2,000 square kilometres stretch of coastal desert.

Called the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), one of the Middle East and North Africa’s largest economic zones contains a wide range of services and features, including a multi-purpose port; a dry dock for ship repair; a fishing port; an international airport; a tourist district featuring 18 kilometres of coastline; a logistics district; and light, medium, and heavy industrial zones.

Located on modern maritime sea routes linking Asia, Africa, Europe, and beyond, the economic zone is quickly adding new tenants,



new industrial projects, and an expanding list of manufacturing operations.

This rapidly growing economic zone, which has made sustainability a key pillar, requires a reliable supply of electricity that will meet the needs of industry, residents, and tourists, but also protect the nearby natural environment.

Because of its location, Duqm has not yet been connected to the national grid. Initially, diesel-powered generators provided power to the development but in 2021, GE signed an agreement

THIS RAPIDLY GROWING ECONOMIC ZONE, WHICH HAS MADE SUSTAINABILITY A KEY PILLAR, REQUIRES A RELIABLE SUPPLY OF ELECTRICITY THAT WILL MEET THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY, RESIDENTS, AND TOURISTS, BUT ALSO PROTECT THE NEARBY NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

to build, own, and operate a power plant equipped with four of its TM2500 aero-derivative gas turbines to provide up to 80 megawatts (MW) of power.

GE built the plant for the Centralised Utilities Company, Marafiq, which will sell the electricity to the Rural Areas Electricity Company, Tanweer, which provides power to regional users, including SEZAD.

“With development moving quickly at SEZAD and connection to the grid several years away, the speed with which GE delivered this fast-power project was critical

to our ability to serve SEZAD and ensure they continued to have access to the electricity required to facilitate their ongoing expansion and growth,” said Victor Ogg, General Manager of Project Development and Delivery for Marafiq.

In less than 200 days, GE started exporting power, helping Marafiq, Tanweer, and SEZAD transition to a lower-emission power source quickly and smoothly.

“Working with Marafiq and Tanweer, GE transported the four TM2500 gas turbines to Duqm, set up the 80 MW mobile

power plant, and connected it to Tanweer’s island grid in a rapid timeframe, despite the Covid-19 pandemic and related logistics constraints,” said Ahmad Elsayed, Senior Project Manager, GE Gas Power.

Nearly as important as the speed with which the plant was installed, was the significantly positive impact on the environment.

By replacing the diesel generators with cleaner-burning natural gas turbines, the facility is dramatically cutting carbon dioxide emissions by up to 90,000 tonnes per year. That is equivalent to taking up to 20,000 vehicles off Omani roads.

Idrees Sheikh, Project Management Director for Europe and the Middle East with GE Gas Power, added, “By supporting Marafiq in switching from diesel or other liquid-fuelled power generation to gas, GE is helping to generate more sustainable electricity, while delivering reliable, flexible, and affordable power supply that is crucial to the successful expansion of the economic zone.”

The plant will be operated for a minimum of three years, until the area is connected to the main 400 kilovolts (kV) grid.

The number of visitors to the Rock Garden is sure to steadily rise, attracted to the area by many factors, including reliable access to electricity delivered by the four GE aero-derivative gas turbines, which truly embody the technology’s nickname, “power plants on wheels.”

The Central Bank Digital Currency: Between the reality and the future

Money and payment systems have changed constantly over time. From barter economy to digital currency through different forms of money: bills and coins, checks, plastic money (credit and debit cards), etc. This development was motivated by two main objectives: low transaction cost and improvement of economic efficiency, and consequently more opportunity for economic growth.

In the era of digitalisation, this is still valid. With the rise of cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin, the idea of central banks launching their version of a digital currency has been on the horizon for quite a while.

The Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) is a digital form of fiat currency issued by the central bank of that country. The issuance of this form of currency circumvents commercial banks and creates accounts for its’ citizens directly controlled by the central banks. For instance, cryptocurrencies run on distributed ledger models that are operated through blockchain technology.

They may be considered the most decentralised form of currency. Issuance of CBDCs may be considered a paradigm shift in the evolution of money in human society. This is because CBDCs are a direct liability of central banks, and the citizens would hold the accounts directly with



Dr Sarima Sayari

Assistant Professor, Managerial and Financial Sciences Department, Al Zahra College for Women



Dr Suaad Jassem

Assistant Professor, HOD of Managerial and Financial Sciences Department, Al Zahra College for Women

the central bank, without any intermediary role of commercial banking organisations.

The advent of CDBC’s is expected to bring a lot of advantages for both governments as well as citizens such as the elimination of transaction costs of using financial intermediaries.

The first characteristic of CBDC is that it is a central bank currency, hence having the same benefits as currency: in terms of payment methods, the CBDC is a completely liquid and secure payment method. By placing a strict security constraint on the central bank, the issuance of a CBDC would also enable the avoidance of the potential distortions brought on by an oligopoly, which runs the risk of excluding private businesses.

The CBDC is frequently seen as a means of promoting financial inclusion by providing widespread access to digital payment methods. For both the central bank and the banking industry, the development and management of a CBDC’s circulation need to be noticeably lower than those induced by fiduciary currency.

From the perspective of consumers, a detailed CBDC would enable them to reduce the costs associated with the time it takes to travel to an exchange location, and withdraw their

currency.

Furthermore, it might facilitate cross-country transactions and lower transaction costs for people and small enterprises with little or expensive access to financial institutions. The volume of transactions using digital currency won’t be capped like it is with conventional money.

Additionally, a system of CBDC might function as a secondary payment method in addition to cash, enhancing operational resilience. The CBDC reduces transaction costs for individuals and small businesses with limited or expensive access to financial institutions and enables long-distance transactions.

Contrary to physical currency, the number of digital currency transactions will not be restricted.

The introduction of CBDCs presents three major challenges that must be addressed: first, the expanding threats to people’s privacy; second, selecting the technology which should be used to strengthen privacy and security; and third, the regulatory framework that must be set up to address problems like a cyber-attack. The issue is one of scale: it concerns the central bank’s reputation, or more specifically, its most significant role in directing monetary policies.

Deep-seated consequences of

CBDC.

They may cause alterations that affect the development of monetary policy, financial stability, financial sector intermediation, the exchange rate, and the operation of the payment system. Before introducing a CBDC, and as with any significant modification, rigorous evaluations and examinations are required, which are crucial to the smooth operation of the financial system, and also to ensure that commercial banks, which are an important player in this system, continue to play a dominant role as economic actors.

Launching a CBDC help to obstruct the growth of crypto-assets under its significant form of units issued on public blockchains, cryptocurrencies present several risks, including high operational risk, strong volatility, and liquidity risk.

In this regard, comes the role of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision (BCBS), which is working continuously to meet new challenges of the digitalisation of crypto assets.

The committee postulates that a comprehensive and forward-looking regulatory and supervisory strategy is required given the rapid innovations in decentralised finance and crypto assets.

Therefore, the Basel Committee’s work in this area will be influenced by its goal to improve global bank regulation, supervision, and practices to improve financial stability.

The rise of CBDC could benefit the economy and would raise some interesting questions, primarily regarding the distribution of responsibilities between central banks and the private sector in the provision of currency in the event of the issuance of a CBDC, whereas a CBDC might be harmonised with the expectations of highly globalised financial institutions.

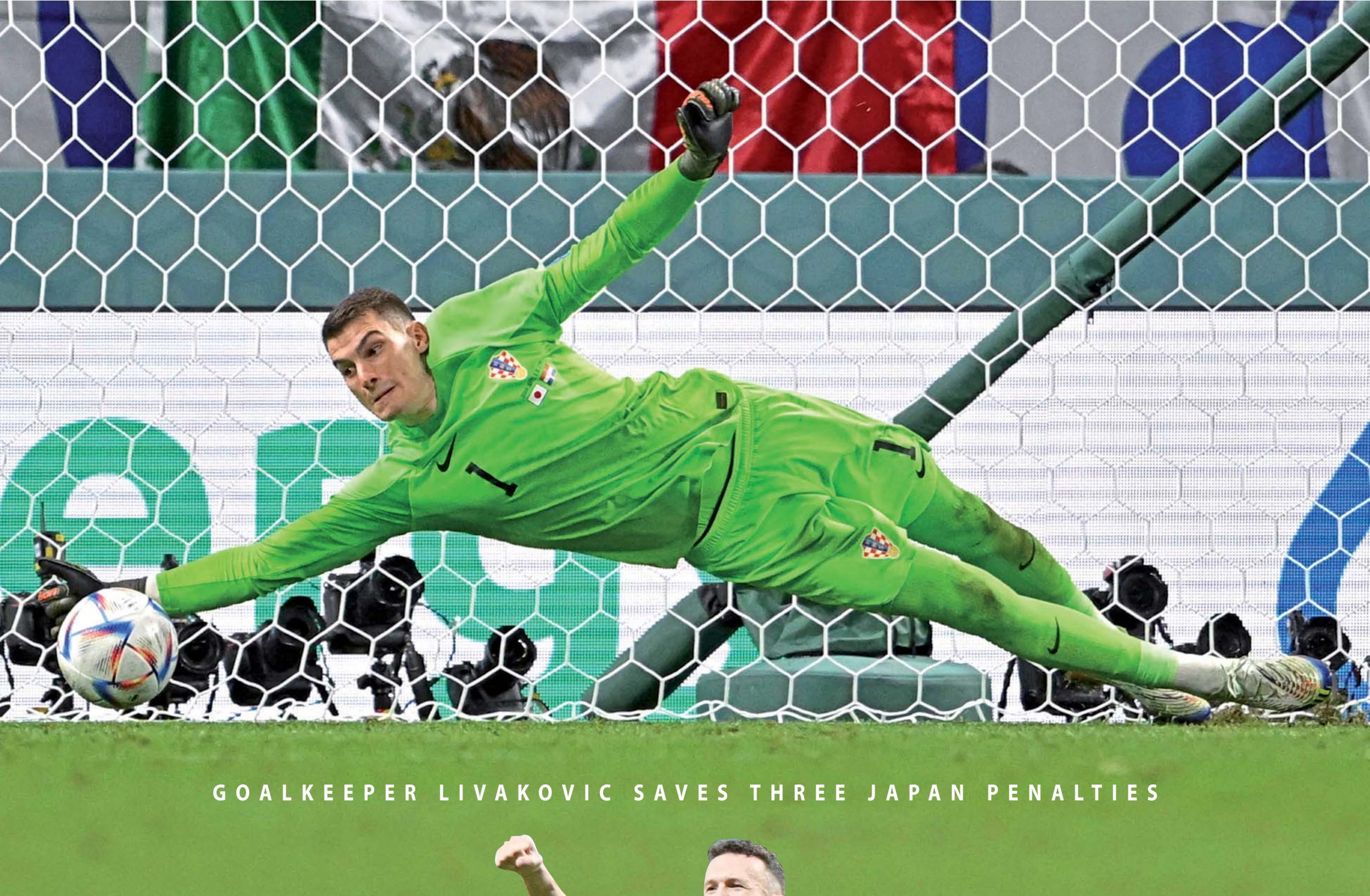
Additionally, international collaboration may prove crucial for safeguarding international payments and supporting developing countries on this issue.

In the absence of one with such collaboration, this group of countries that issue CBDC may observe their risks to cyber security are significantly rising, and issues like data theft are becoming more prevalent.

Furthermore, there is a need to assess the future role of accounting in the new digitalised currency era, where the definition of assets and liabilities is likely to change. Global organisations such as FASB need to look into the impact of digital currencies on accounting practices in the future.



TUESDAY | DECEMBER 6 | 2022 | JUMADA AL ULA 12 | 1444 AH



GOALKEEPER LIVAKOVIC SAVES THREE JAPAN PENALTIES

CROATIA EDGE JAPAN IN SHOOT-OUT

CROATIA goalkeeper Dominic Livakovic saved penalties from Takumi Minamino, Kaoru Mitoma and Maya Yoshida before Mario Pasalic netted the winning spot-kick in their 3-1 shootout win over Japan on Monday to reach the World Cup quarterfinals.

With the scores deadlocked at 1-1 after an absorbing 90 minutes, Japan's Kaoru Mitoma went closest in the scrappy half-hour of extra time, forcing Livakovic to parry away his powerful drive.

Daichi Kamada had shot off target after a flowing Japan counter-attack minutes before Daizen Maeda

deservedly put them ahead in the 43rd minute, firing home from close range after Ritsu Doan delivered an in-swinging cross into the penalty area.

Croatia forward Ivan Perisic, who was denied by Japan goalkeeper Shuichi Gonda in the opening minutes, pulled them level 10 minutes into the second half after meeting Dejan Lovren's cross with a powerful header.

Croatia now face either Brazil or South Korea in the last eight and continued midfield icon Luka Modric's stay at his fourth and likely final World Cup.

Japan's bid to reach the last eight for the first time in their history



Croatia's midfielder **IVAN PERISIC** celebrates scoring his team's first goal during the round of 16 match between Japan and Croatia. — AFP

came to a crushing end after another display of the sort which saw off Spain and Germany on their way to topping Group E.

However they could not claim one more big European scalp in the shape of the 2018 finalists and go home in the second round, as they did four years ago, after having three of their penalties saved.

Japan could easily have been ahead within three minutes when Shogo Taniguchi glanced a header wide from point-blank range, and 10 minutes later Daizen Maeda came close to turning in Junya Ito's brilliantly placed low ball from the right flank.

In the meantime, Perisic had let off a shot from a tight angle which led to a goalmouth scramble, but had Croatia scored they risked the goal being ruled out for what looked like a clear push on Takehiro Tomiyasu.

Bruno Petkovic then wasted a great opportunity in the 25th minute, strolling through almost unopposed onto a long through ball only to dawdle and fail to get a pass off to Andrej Kramaric who was charging into the box.

Kramaric was then too slow to latch on to Perisic's dangerous

flick-on and from there Japan took control, and the lead.

Daichi Kamada had already blasted over after a superb passing move when in the 43rd minute Maeda fired in the opener after Ritsu Doan's cross was knocked down by Maya Yoshida.

Japan looked the better team and ready to inflict more damage but out of the blue Croatia's most dangerous player Perisic levelled the scores with a bullet header from Dejan Lovren's deep cross.

Almost immediately afterwards Wataru Endo responded by having a good strike tipped over the bar by Dominik Livakovic, before Shuichi Gonda pulled off the save of the match to keep out Modric's beautifully-struck, dripping shot.

Modric was replaced nine minutes into the first half of extra-time in which Japan had the best chance, Kaoru Mitoma's effort well tipped away by Livakovic.

With penalties drawing close, one final chance fell to Modric's replacement Lovro Majer, who dragged his shot wide, but his team prevailed in the shoot-out to end the Blue Samurai's entertaining adventure. — Agencies



HENDERSON, KANE AND SAKA GOALS TAKE ENGLAND TALLY TO 12

VICTORY SETS UP QUARTERFINAL WITH HOLDERS FRANCE

Clinical England overcame a pedestrian start to surge to a comfortable 3-0 victory over Senegal on Sunday as high-quality goals by Jordan Henderson, Harry Kane and Bukayo Saka swept them into a mouth-watering World Cup quarterfinal clash with France.

England took a long time to impose themselves on the African champions, a team they had never faced before, and survived a couple of scares before two goals late in the first half changed the feel of the night and it was no contest after the break. The impressive victory extended their all-time unbeaten run against African teams to 21 games, including eight in World Cups.

Morocco, who face Spain on Tuesday, are now the only African team left in the tournament.

“The ruthlessness of the performance was excellent,” said manager Gareth Southgate. “Every match you play is a different sort of challenge and different tactical problem to resolve. We’ve stepped up and are answering those questions.

“The quality of the moves was outstanding and the finishing was ruthless.”

It was always going to be a stiff challenge for Senegal in the absence of the suspended Idrissa Gueye and injured fellow midfielder Cheikhou Kouyate.

With Sadio Mane missing the tournament through injury the Africans also lacked a cutting edge to trouble an England defence that kept a third successive World Cup clean sheet for the first time in 20 years.

They were very much in the game though for much of the first half as England were slow and static and a series of misplaced passes gifted Senegal chances.

The best of them fell to Boulaye Dia and only the strong left arm of keeper Jordan Pickford prevented the Africans taking the lead.

QUICK BREAK
England finally injected some pace after 38 minutes, breaking down the left through Phil Foden and Jude Bellingham, who crossed for the late-



England's midfielder #08 JORDAN HENDERSON (L) celebrates with England's midfielder #22 JUDE BELLINGHAM after he scored his team's first goal. – AFP

arriving Henderson to stroke home the opener. Kane's goal drought at this tournament then came to an end in emphatic style in first-half stoppage time.

Bellingham again drove from his own box and fed Foden, who rolled the ball into the path of the captain to smash in an unstoppable shot and become England's eighth scorer in Qatar.

It also took Kane to within one goal of Wayne Rooney's national record of 53. The goals knocked the stuffing out of Senegal and with England looking full of confidence after the break it no longer felt like a contest.

Saka, recalled by Southgate in his only change from the group stage win over Wales, cleverly lifted in the third after 57 minutes following a penetrating run and low cross by Foden.

It was England's 12th goal of the tournament, the most by any team in Qatar and a tally that matches their all-time record set four years ago when they went all the way to the semifinals.

From then on England were able to go through the motions and keep out

of trouble as they have yet to receive a yellow card and seem to have avoided any major injuries going into the France showdown.

Their only setback seems to be the absence of forward Raheem Sterling, who was not available for selection on Sunday for what the FA said was a family issue. They know they will be unlikely to get away with a similarly slow start next Saturday against a French team who dispatched Poland 3-1 earlier on Sunday, but the holders will also be aware that their old rivals have the weapons to do real damage.

“We all want to play in the biggest games and no better game than playing France,” said Foden, who had a hand in all three goals. “On our best game we can create chances and score. We're looking forward to what's going to be a big challenge.”

Man of the match Kane was also a happy man. “We've shown great maturity through the tournament ... 3-0 here against a really good side,” he said. “We feel good, we've got good players getting forward and we're solid at the back. A really good day for us.” — Reuters



Ronaldo ‘set to sign’ for Saudi side Al Nassr

BERLIN: Cristiano Ronaldo is set to sign for Saudi Professional League club Al Nassr on a two-and-a-half-year deal following his exit from Manchester United, according to reports.

The Portugal forward saw his stint at Old Trafford brought to an early conclusion by mutual agreement last month following an inflammatory interview with Piers Morgan where he revealed his unhappiness with United and their manager Erik ten Hag.

Ronaldo has been in action for Portugal at the World Cup in Qatar, scoring in their opening game of the tournament to become the first man to net at five different World Cups.

The 37-year-old wished to leave United ahead of the 2022-23 season, and confirmed in his interview with Morgan that he had turned down a lucrative offer from a Saudi Arabian club.

However, Marca on Monday reported that Riyadh-based side Al Nassr are close to signing the five-time Ballon d’Or winner.

A move to the Gulf state would

mark the end of Ronaldo’s illustrious career in Europe, having starred for United, Juventus and Real Madrid—indeed, he is Los Blancos’ record goalscorer.

No player has scored more in the Champions League than Ronaldo, who is also the highest goalscorer in international football, with 188 to his name.

At Al Nassr, he is expected to net close to 200 million Saudi Riyals (\$211million) per season, with additional economic incentives, a sum that would make him the highest-paid athlete in the world.

Al Nassr’s squad also includes Cameroon’s World Cup star Vincent Aboubakar and former Napoli goalkeeper David Ospina.

Ronaldo originally returned to United ahead of the 2021-22 campaign, but has mostly been frozen out under new boss Erik ten Hag this season, prompting an explosive interview that contributed to his departure.

— dpa

FERNANDES TAKES REINS SILENTLY FOR PORTUGAL

DOHA: Cristiano Ronaldo’s shadow looms large over Portugal at the World Cup, but away from the flash of camera phones and rolling headlines, Bruno Fernandes has taken the reins.

Fernando Santos’ team are synonymous with their leading man, a black hole for media attention and fan admiration, reducing his colleagues to a supporting cast, inadvertently or not.

However in Qatar playmaker Fernandes is emerging as the team’s true creative leader, sealing qualification for the last 16 with a game to spare.

With several changes but Ronaldo still leading the side, Portugal fell to a 2-1 defeat by South Korea on Friday but finished top of their group and face Switzerland.

Fernandes was rested, wrapped in cotton wool, and without him Portugal failed to create many clear chances.

Still, supporters swooned over veteran striker Ronaldo — save some Korea fans who instead chanted for “Messi” — even as the all-time record international goalscorer floundered up front.

Instead it is Fernandes, no longer a club team-mate of Ronaldo after his dramatic departure by mutual consent ahead of the World Cup, who has been the beating heart of the side this year.

It was Fernandes who picked up the pieces in Portugal’s press conference ahead of their opening game against Ghana, fielding questions on the Ronaldo drama.

Then on the pitch he was a quiet mastermind, providing two assists in the 3-2 win, even as Ronaldo basked in the limelight after winning a soft penalty and dispatching it to open the scoring.

The former Real Madrid forward became the first man to score in five separate World Cups, at 37 years old.

It’s an age where most players would have retired by, but Ronaldo chugs on, having pledged to play until 40, at least.

So that shadow stretches further, but under it, Portugal have a lot of younger, dynamic talent, itching for a chance to break through.



Portugal’s midfielder Bruno Fernandes (L) and forward Bernardo Silva (R) take part in a training session at Shahaniya Sports Club of Al Samriya Autograph Collection Hotel in Al Samriya, northwest of Doha. — AFP

FIGUREHEAD FERNANDES

Rafael Leao, Andre Silva and Goncalo Ramos are all interesting, young attacking options but started on the bench against Korea, with Ronaldo failing to make an impact.

Manchester City midfielder Bernardo Silva is another underrated, smooth presence but at the 2022 World Cup it is Fernandes who has taken on the role of floor manager, the man running the show at the tip of the midfield.

In Portugal’s 2-0 win over Uruguay Fernandes’ brace clinched qualification, with only

the goal post denying him a hat-trick.

The 28-year-old, like Ronaldo a former Sporting Lisbon player, is set to return to the side against Switzerland on Tuesday, and Portugal should look more like themselves again after their Korea blip. — AFP

Collective effort needed for Swiss, says Shaqiri



DOHA: Cristiano Ronaldo may be 37 and without a club but Switzerland’s Xherdan Shaqiri, whose team face Portugal in the World Cup last 16 on Tuesday, says it would be a mistake to consider him a fading force.

“You cannot write off Cristiano, he is one of the best players in the world together with (Lionel) Messi,” Shaqiri said on Sunday.

“This guy can score any second, any minute, he has experience and everyone knows how important he is for Portugal and for his team,” added the former Liverpool and Bayern Munich attacker, who scored in Switzerland’s 3-2 win over Serbia on Friday which secured them a place in the knockout stage. But Shaqiri, who now plays in Major League Soccer with Chicago Fire, knows that regardless of Ronaldo’s threat there



Switzerland’s Xherdan Shaqiri celebrates with Granit Xhaka. — Reuters

are also plenty of other sources of danger from Portugal.

“We have to know also the other players because it is not only Ronaldo, they have very good players, young players who

can make a big difference and we need to give really a very good performance because its knockout and anything can happen in the 95-100 minutes and we are looking forward to it,” he said.

While Shaqiri is established as the main creative force in the Swiss side, he says the key to their chances of success is found in their ability as a collective.

“The key is to have a special performance from the whole team. There are no Cristianos in our team, we need to have the whole team to be successful. If everyone sticks together, everyone goes to their highest level of performance, I am sure we have a chance to go through,” he said.

“We know Portugal, we have played them many times in friendlies, in the Nations League, we lost some, we won some, for me everything is open, it is a knockout game but we know they are going to be a good team. We need a big, big performance, a special performance if we are going to go through,” he said. — AFP

Z O N E



Fans inside the stadium for Japan v Croatia match. – Reuters



Croatia supporters at the Al Janoub Stadium. – AFP



A Croatia supporter cheers during the Qatar 2022 World Cup round of 16 match against Japan at the Al Janoub Stadium in Al Wakrah. – AFP



Supporters of Senegal cheer on the stands during the match against England. – AFP



A Japan supporter at the stadium. – AFP



Japan supporters wait for the start of the match. – AFP



Senegal fan wearing face paint at the stands. – Reuters



Japan supporters pose as they arrive for the match against Croatia. – AFP



A Japan supporter cheers at the stadium. – AFP



Poland's Meronk downs Scott to win Australian Open

MELBOURNE: Poland's Adrian Meronk drained an eagle putt at the last hole for a five-stroke win in the Australian Open, while South Africa's Ashleigh Buhai held on to win the women's tournament in Melbourne on Sunday.

Meronk, the world number 56, confirmed his victory with a putt from off the 18th green to finish a clear winner over his golfing idol Adam Scott at Victoria Golf Club.

The giant Pole carded his eagle and four birdies to finish at four-under 66 and pull away from former Masters champion Scott, who lost his winning chance with a double-bogey six at the 17th hole. "I'm super excited and to finish like that on the 18th hole is just unreal," Meronk said.

"I felt really good again today. I kept doing what I've done the last two days and it worked pretty well. I'm super proud of myself, proud of my team and super happy right now."

Meronk made history by becoming the first player from Poland to win on the DP World Tour with victory in this year's Irish Open by three strokes after finishing joint runner-up at last year's Italian Open. He zoomed into contention with nine birdies in a course record-equalling seven-under 63 in Saturday's third round and was rock solid throughout the final round.

The Pole overcome a horror start in his opening round, falling to four-over par through his opening seven holes before he clawed his way back to claim an emphatic victory.

British Open champion Buhai held off the fast-finishing Jiyai Shin to win the women's tournament by one shot. Buhai, the world No 28, led by four shots at one stage but had to withstand a big finish from the South Korean, who had an eight-foot putt on the final hole to force a play-off, only to narrowly miss. — AFP

Davis scores 55 to propel Lakers past Wizards, Celtics beat Nets

LOS ANGELES: Anthony Davis dazzled in the Los Angeles Lakers' 130-119 NBA victory over the Washington Wizards on Sunday, scoring 55 points with 17 rebounds in his 10th straight game of at least 20 points. Davis added three blocked shots as he followed up a 44-point performance in the team's triumph over the Milwaukee Bucks on Friday. He said after that game he believed the team was turning a corner after a rocky start to the season.

With injury troubles behind him, Davis said, he's finding his rhythm. "I've been feeling really good, confident in all my shots, playing with a great pace," said Davis, who connected on a blistering 22 of his 30 attempts from the floor. That included two of three from three-point range, and he made all nine of his free throw attempts in a devastatingly efficient performance. He's the first Laker since Kobe Bryant in 2013 to record back-to-back 40-point games. "Guys are doing a great job of finding me," Davis said.

"It's a team effort... all these guys are putting me in position to be successful. I think our entire team mindset is just coming out with effort on both ends of the floor."

Superstar LeBron James scored 29 points, Lonnie Walker IV added 20 and Westbrook added six points with 15 assists as the Lakers won their third straight and eighth in their last 10 games.

It wasn't all smooth sailing, however, as the Lakers saw a 29-point lead midway through the third quarter dwindle to nine



Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis (3) shoots as Washington Wizards' Kristaps Porzingis (6) defends during the second half at Capital One Arena. — USA Today Sports

points with six minutes to play.

"They were playing desperate basketball," James said. "They were just jacking it and getting up and down the floor, it caught us on our heels a little bit. But we played a great game."

The Boston Celtics, whose scorching start to the season is a stark contrast to the Lakers', rebounded from an overtime loss to the Miami Heat with a 103-92 home win over the Brooklyn Nets.

Jaylen Brown scored 34 points and Jayson Tatum added 29. Malcolm Brogdon scored 13 off

the bench as the Celtics reserves outscored Brooklyn's bench 24-15.

Kevin Durant led the Knicks with 31 points, seven rebounds, five assists, two steals and two blocked shots. Kyrie Irving added 18 but Brooklyn's four-game winning streak was halted.

In New Orleans, Pelicans guard Jose Alvarado drilled eight three-pointers on the way to a career-high 38 points in the hosts' 121-106 victory over the Denver Nuggets. The 24-year-old from Puerto Rico notched the most points by any player coming off

the bench this season.

The victory put the Pelicans in second place in the Western Conference, one game behind the Phoenix Suns, who had little trouble in a 133-95 victory over the Spurs in San Antonio.

The Portland Trail Blazers welcomed Damian Lillard back from a seven-game injury absence with a 116-100 victory over the Indiana Pacers.

In Detroit, Memphis star Ja Morant scored 33 points in the Grizzlies' wire-to-wire 122-112 victory over the Pistons. — AFP

Defending champ Hovland stretches Hero World Challenge lead

MIAMI: Viktor Hovland closed in on a second straight Hero World Challenge title on Saturday, firing a sizzling eight-under par 64 to push his lead to three strokes in the unofficial US PGA Tour event.

Norway's Hovland, trying to join tournament host Tiger Woods as the only back-to-back winners of the 20-player invitational, had 54-hole total of 13-under par at the Albany course in the Bahamas.

World number two Scottie Scheffler, who could overtake Rory McIlroy atop the rankings with a victory, carded a six-under par 66 to stand alone in second on 206. It was a further two strokes back to Americans Justin Thomas and Cameron Young, Thomas posting a 66 and Young a 68 as the winds that pushed up scores all week relented just a little.

"It was a lot easier today when it wasn't as windy," said Hovland, although players still had to deal with some erratic "mud balls" on the rain-softened course.

That didn't hinder Hovland, who birdied three of his first five holes followed a bogey at the sixth with another birdie at the seventh.

He scorched the back nine, grabbing six birdies in seven holes from the 11th through the 17th before a closing bogey that was barely a blip.

"It was great — just kept making birdies," Hovland said. "It was weird. Midway through the round I'd made a lot and it didn't really feel like I made that many."



"I just kind of kept playing golf and kept making putts and, yea, I stood on 18th hole with nine-under par. It was pretty sweet."

Hovland's highlights included a birdie bomb from the fringe at the fifth. He two-putted for birdie from off the green at the 11th, landed his tee shot within 10 feet of the pin for birdie at 12 and stuck his approach within five feet for birdie at 13.

After a par at 14 he two-putted for birdie at 15 to launch another three-birdie burst. "I missed probably like a 10-footer on the first hole and lipped out and I kind of thought 'here we go again,'" Hovland said. "But after that it was a lot of putts that went in. You need that on a day like today when the winds are down and you can be a little bit more aggressive."

EAGLE LIFTS SCHEFFLER

Scheffler's round was highlighted by a long eagle putt at the 15th. He also had five birdies.

"I played good today," Scheffler said. "I played really solid, kept the ball in front of me, hit a lot of fairways."

Scheffler admitted it was sometimes "infuriating" to be in the fairway but have little control over a shot because of mud affecting the ball. "It's frustrating you spend so much time trying to learn how to control your golf ball and then you're in the middle of the fairway and you have no idea where the ball's going to go," he said. — AFP



OOA conducts school sports and talent identification course

MUSCAT: A course on school sports and talents identification conducted by the Oman Olympic Academy (OOA) began here on Monday.

The two-day course will conclude on Wednesday.

The course aims to shed light on the importance of the stages of sports selection, and knowledge of the various techniques related to the training process and programmes for the care of sports talents, in addition to recognising the role and importance of school sports as the main base for discovering talents.

Dr Majid bin Saeed al Busafi, Director of the

Humanitarian Research Centre at Sultan Qaboos University, is lecturing in the course, and more than 20 male and female teachers from Oman School Sports Association, and public and private schools are taking part.

The course includes theoretical lectures and practical applications in several fields, including the scientific foundations and principles in the process of selecting sports talents.

The course will also review international experiences in discovering talents, and addressing the stages of sports selection, as well as recent studies and research in talent discovery.



Kiptum, Beriso light up Valencia Marathon

VALENCIA, Spain: Kenya's Kelvin Kiptum became the third fastest man in history in his first marathon in Valencia on Sunday, while Amane Beriso of Ethiopia became the third woman to run under two hours and 15 minutes. Kiptum, who turned 23 on Friday, timed two hours, one minute and 53 seconds. Only Kenya's world record holder Eliud Kipchoge and Ethiopian legend Kenenisa Bekele have run faster. "This is great. I was very well prepared," said Kiptum.

Beriso, 31, smashed her own personal record, crossing the line in 2hr 14min 58sec. She tired in the final few kilometres, having been on track to break Kenyan Brigid Kosgei's world record of 2hr 14min 04sec set in Chicago in 2019. Kosgei's compatriot Ruth Chepngetich is the only other woman to break the 2hr 15min mark, timing 2hr 14min 18sec, also in Chicago, this year.

"I am more than happy. Conditions were perfect for me," said Beriso. Beriso's compatriot, 10,000 metres world champion Letesenbet Gidey, had been the favourite and was also eyeing the world record. However, the 24-year-old was dropped by Beriso at the 35km mark. Gidey — who set the 10,000m and half marathon world records previously in Valencia — finished second in a distressed state and had to be helped away. — **AFP**

VALENCIA MARATHON LEADING RESULTS	
Women	
1 Amane Beriso (ETH)	2:14:58
2 Letesenbet Gidey (ETH)	2:16:49
3 Sheila Chepkirui (KEN)	2:17:29
4 Tadu Teshome (ETH)	2:17:36
5 Fancy Chemutai (KEN)	2:18:11
Men	
1 Kelvin Kiptum (KEN)	2:01:53
2 Gabriel Gay (TAN)	2:03:00
3 Alexander Mutiso (KEN)	2:03:29
4 Tamirat Tola (ETH)	2:03:40
5 Kaan Kigen Ozbilien (TUR)	2:04:36

ENGLAND SEAL MEMORABLE WIN OVER PAKISTAN

RAWALPINDI, Pakistan: England pulled off one of their most memorable Test victories on Monday when Ben Stokes and his men beat Pakistan by 74 runs in the fading light on day five of a high-scoring series opener in Rawalpindi. Barely 10 minutes before the final session's scheduled close of play, Jack Leach dismissed Naseem Shah to give England the win after Stokes boldly declared on Sunday to set Pakistan a target of 343.

The game had threatened to become an endless runfest on a docile track that yielded seven hundreds inside three days, and the 1,768 runs scored in the match is the third-highest aggregate in Test cricket history. But Ollie Robinson (4-36) and James Anderson (4-50) produced a reverse-swing masterclass for England to wreck Pakistan, who folded for 268. "It's a great place to be, and I think it's up there with one of England's greatest away Test match wins," Stokes said after the victory. "Jimmy Anderson said he was feeling very emotional trying to keep himself together."

"Having a bloke who's played nearly 180 Test matches to feel like that at the end of this, I think we've achieved something very special this week." It is all the more remarkable considering England had struggled to field a team after a virus swept through their camp forcing them to rejig the playing XI.

Pakistan, who fielded four debutants in the match, could not be faulted for their efforts. Resuming on 80-2 at the start of the final day, they lost opener Imam-ul-Haq (48) early but Mohammad Rizwan (46) and Saud Shakeel (76) counter-attacked to keep them in the game. Even after they departed, excitement intensified as both teams entered the final session with a reasonable chance of victory — Pakistan needing 86 runs and England requiring five wickets. Azhar Ali (40), who had retired hurt with an injured index finger on Sunday, returned to keep up the fight alongside Agha Salman



England's players celebrate after winning the match. — Reuters

SCOREBOARD	
ENGLAND 1ST INNINGS 657	Azhar Ali c Root b Robinson40
PAKISTAN 1ST INNINGS 579	Babar Azam c Pope b Stokes4
ENGLAND 2ND INNINGS	Saud Shakeel c sub (Jennings) b Robinson76
Z Crawley c Rizwan b Ali50	Mohammad Rizwan c Pope b Anderson46
B Duckett c Salman b Naseem0	Agha Salman lbw Robinson30
O Pope c Naseem b Ali15	Naseem Shah lbw Leach6
J Root c Haq b Mahmood73	Zahid Mahmood c Pope b Anderson1
H Brook b Naseem87	Haris Rauf lbw Anderson0
B Stokes c Shakeel b Mahmood0	Mohammad Ali not out0
W Jaks c Haq b Salman24	Extras (lb3, nb5)11
L Livingstone not out7	Total (all out; 96.3 overs) 268
Extras (lb3, nb5)8	Fall of wickets: 1-20, 2-25, 3-89, 4-176, 5-198, 6-259, 7-260, 8-264, 9-264
Total (for seven wkts decl, 35.5 overs) 264	Bowling: Robinson 22-6-50-4, Stokes 20-4-69-1, Anderson 24-12-36-4, Leach 18-3-6-56-1, Jaks 6-0-38-0, Root 6-0-16-0
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-36, 3-96, 4-192, 5-192, 6-248, 7-264	NOTE: Azhar Ali retired hurt with score on 20-1 and resumed his innings on 176-4
Bowling: Naseem 9.5-0-66-2, Ali 10-0-64-2, Mahmood 11-1-84-2, Agha 5-0-47-1	
PAKISTAN 2ND INNINGS	
Abdullah Shafique c Brook b Robinson6	
Imam-ul-Haq c Pope b Anderson48	

(30). But player-of-the-match Robinson eventually dismissed both in successive overs to put England on the brink of victory. Mohammad Ali, who faced 26 balls and ended unbeaten without scoring, and Naseem, however, refused to throw in the towel. A pack of England fielders surrounded the Pakistan tail-enders, who to their credit did not flinch despite being subjected to a barrage of bouncers. "We were not up to the mark," Pakistan captain Babar Azam said. "We had a golden chance to win this Test, but session by session we kept losing wickets." — **Reuters**



Superstar coach Bollettieri no more

PARIS: Legendary tennis coach Nick Bollettieri, who helped develop superstars such as Andre Agassi and Maria Sharapova, has died aged 91, the IMG Academy announced in a statement on Monday. "Nick Bollettieri, the legendary tennis coach and founder of Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy, which served as the foundation for today's IMG Academy, has passed away," read the statement. While his methods were sometimes controversial, his academy in Florida churned out top players and he was to coach 10 players who would go on to become number one in the world. Monica Seles, Jim Courier, Anna Kournikova and Mary Pierce were other stars who passed through his

Bollettieri, who helped develop superstars such as Andre Agassi and Maria Sharapova, also trained Monica Seles, Jim Courier, Anna Kournikova and Mary Pierce

Bradenton complex. Bollettieri also advised Venus and Serena Williams and Boris Becker. "Tennis wouldn't be where it is today without Nick's influence," said Jimmy Arias, IMG Academy director of tennis and one of Bollettieri's original students. "His tennis academy, which I had the privilege of growing up within, not only served as a launching pad for many tennis greats but evolved into an institution that has had a profound impact on the development of athletes across

many sports at all levels." Bollettieri founded the Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy — now IMG Academy — in 1978 with a focus on intense physical training, total immersion, and ongoing competition among the most talented players in the world. His enthusiasm for coaching continued almost right up to the end. "Even in his last days, you could often find him on campus, coaching and mentoring young student-athletes and staff with the same passion and enthusiasm as he did in his 20s," said

Tim Perneti, President of IMG Academy Bradenton, a division of IMG Academy. "Our heart goes out to his wife, Cindi, and his children. He has made a permanent and lasting impact on all of us." Tommy Haas — a four-time Grand Slam semifinalist and world number two — posted a moving tribute to the Korean War veteran. "So many memories, I am not sure where to begin," posted the 44-year-old on Instagram. "Nickiiii, that's how i have called you for the longest time. "Thank you for your time, knowledge, commitment, expertise, the willingness to share your skill, your personal interest in mentoring me, and giving me the best opportunity to follow my dreams." — **AFP**

ENRIQUE GIVES 1,000 PENALTIES ‘HOMEWORK’ TO PLAYERS



Spain's players attend a training session at the base camp of Qatar University in Doha. – AFP

AL RAYYAN: Spain coach Luis Enrique is convinced his players can overcome Morocco in the World Cup last 16 on Tuesday and deal with the pressure of a penalty shoot-out if they need to.

Morocco were surprise group winners ahead of favourites Croatia and Belgium. Spain finished second in their group after losing to Japan to set up Tuesday's last-16 clash against the only African team left in the tournament.

At last year's European Championship, Spain were involved in two shoot-outs, beating Switzerland in the quarterfinals before they were knocked out by eventual champions Italy in the semis.

"Over a year ago, in many national camps we told players, 'You have homework ahead of the World Cup. You must take at least



I don't think it's a lottery. If you train often, then the way you take penalties improves. Obviously, you can't train the pressure and tension, but you can cope with it.

LUIS ENRIQUE
SPAIN COACH

1,000 penalties with the club'. You can't just train them when they're with the national team," Luis Enrique told reporters on Monday.

"I don't think it's a lottery. If you train often, then the way you take penalties improves. Obviously, you can't train the pressure and tension, but you can cope with it.

"It doesn't depend on luck, the goalkeeper is key in the shoot-out. All three of our keepers are good at them. In our sessions we have players taking penalty kicks, it's homework we've taken into account."

Luis Enrique gave his team a B+ for their group stage performances, highlighting the 15 minutes against Japan when they were "steam-rolled".

"We have a clear idea," he said. "We don't have to dominate all opponents for 90 minutes. In the World Cup you have the best

teams, you're playing against top level coaches and players," Enrique added.

"Morocco are in the best mood at the moment, they're highly motivated after a spectacular group stage, they topped a tricky group.

"I'm very satisfied with what I've seen in training, I'm convinced we have a great chance to achieve a good result and advance."

COULDN'T CARE LESS

In the last four World Cups, Spain have only got past the last 16 once — when they were crowned champions in 2010. "I couldn't care less about the result, I want to control what I can control as a coach. I encourage my players to forget about the result too, the result will come," Luis Enrique said.

"Football is not always a fair game.

I'm convinced we have more merits than Morocco. If we don't, I'll be totally fine.

"Our philosophy is the same. We try and entertain the fans so they have fun watching us. We shouldn't just go and get the victory, we need to entertain the spectators."

Barcelona midfielder Pedri, who turned 20 during the tournament, is well aware of Morocco's style.

"They have a very physical midfield, they close up all the spaces. Many national teams play us one-on-one, we know they will press us hard in midfield to get the ball from us," Pedri said.

"I'm sure Morocco have analysed our movement. There are things to improve and I think we'll play a great match. We're eager to play and turn sadness (from the Japan defeat) into happiness." — **Reuters**

Morocco to ‘come out swinging’ against Spain



Morocco's coach Walid Regragui jokes with players including Morocco's defender Achraf Hakimi (C) at a training session at the Al Duhail SC Stadium in Doha. – AFP

MOROCCO coach Walid Regragui has urged his team to believe they can defeat powerhouse Spain as they attempt to reach a first World Cup quarterfinal.

The north African side are in the last 16 for only the second time after advancing as winners of Group F ahead of 2018 runners-up Croatia, having defeated Belgium and Canada in Qatar.

"It will be a very testing game for us. We're coming up against one of the best footballing nations in the world. I think

ALL ARABS AND AFRICANS, WE WANT TO MAKE THEM HAPPY. WE WANT THEIR PRAYERS AND WE WANT THEIR SUPPORT SO IT CAN GIVE US THAT EXTRA INGREDIENT TO WIN. BEFORE IT WAS JUST THE MOROCCANS THAT SUPPORTED US.

MOROCCO COACH
WALID REGRAGUI



Morocco's coach Walid Regragui oversees a training session of his players at the Al Duhail SC Stadium in Doha. – AFP

they're one of the favourites to reach the final," Regragui said on Monday.

"That said, we've also got things up our sleeve. We've had one extra rest day compared to them and we're going to try and pull a surprise out of the bag.

"If we're able to send Spain packing I think this will be a wonderful surprise not only for us but for our country."

Spain denied Morocco a famous win at the 2018 World Cup with a last-gasp equaliser in a 2-2 draw, the only point the Moroccans picked up in Russia.

"We're not seeking revenge at all. We're not looking at what happened in the past," said Regragui, who was appointed in August.

"We've got a new generation and, for me, the mentality has to change with the Moroccan team. All the negative aspects, that's the old Morocco, we've changed. Our country's changed."

Morocco, the lone Arab nation and the last African team remaining in Qatar, will have the vocal backing of thousands of fans for Tuesday's game at Education City Stadium.

"We'll come out swinging. We want to hoist the Moroccan flag way up high. We're playing first and foremost for us and our country," said Regragui.

"All Arabs and Africans, we want to make them happy. We want their prayers and we want their support so it can give us that

extra ingredient to win. Before it was just the Moroccans that supported us."

Morocco would become just the fourth African team to reach the quarterfinals — after Cameroon in 1990, Senegal in 2002 and Ghana in 2010 — if they beat the 2010 champions. Morocco's only other appearance in the last 16 came in 1986, when they lost 1-0 to eventual runners-up West Germany.

"I don't think we should go out with any sort of complex," said Regragui.

"Yes, we're the underdog, but we know what Spain are made of and the recipe is easy. We shouldn't be worried, we should have no regrets and give the best of ourselves."

— AFP