

The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion launched Importers Guide Service, which provides information for international importers of Omani exports in more than 180 countries. This service will facilitate the job of exporting companies and firms wishing to access new target markets. The service seeks to provide business data for potential importers of products from various sectors. **DETAILS ON P13**



P10

OMAN SAIL OVERCOME ELEMENTS TO PROGRESS AT MARINA MILITARE TOUR 2022



P13

WORK ON OMAN'S FIRST MEGA GREEN ENERGY PROJECT TO COMMENCE SHORTLY



P19

NASA SATELLITE BREAKS FROM ORBIT, HEADS TO MOON



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO ALGERIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Abdelmadjid Tebboune of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, well-being and long life to President Tebboune. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions on President Tebboune. — ONA

HM GREETINGS TO VENEZUELA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Nicolas Maduro of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty expressed his heartfelt sentiments to President Maduro, wishing him good health and well-being. His Majesty also wished the people of Venezuela further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM GREETINGS TO CAPE VERDE

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Jose Maria Neves of the Republic of Cape Verde on his country's National Day. His Majesty expressed his sincere sentiments to President Neves and the people of his country.

HIS MAJESTY ISSUES TWO ROYAL DECREES

Decree restructures Oman Human Rights commission

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday issued two Royal Decrees.

Royal Decree No 56/2022 promulgates the system (bylaw) of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Article (1) states that the system (bylaw) attached to this Decree shall be applied to Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Article (2) stipulates that the Chairman of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) shall issue the executive regulation of the attached system (bylaw) within a period of not more than one year from its date of enforcement. The Chairman of the OCCI shall also issue the financial, administrative and other regulations and decisions necessary for the implementation of provisions of the attached system, provided that the Executive Regulation be published in the Official Gazette. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions shall continue to be enforced without prejudice to the provisions of the attached system.

Article (3) cancels the system of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry promulgated under Royal Decree No 45/2017, as well as all that contradicts the attached system or contravenes its provisions.

Article (4) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publishing.

Royal Decree No 57/2022 on restructuring Oman Human Rights Commission.

TURN TO P3

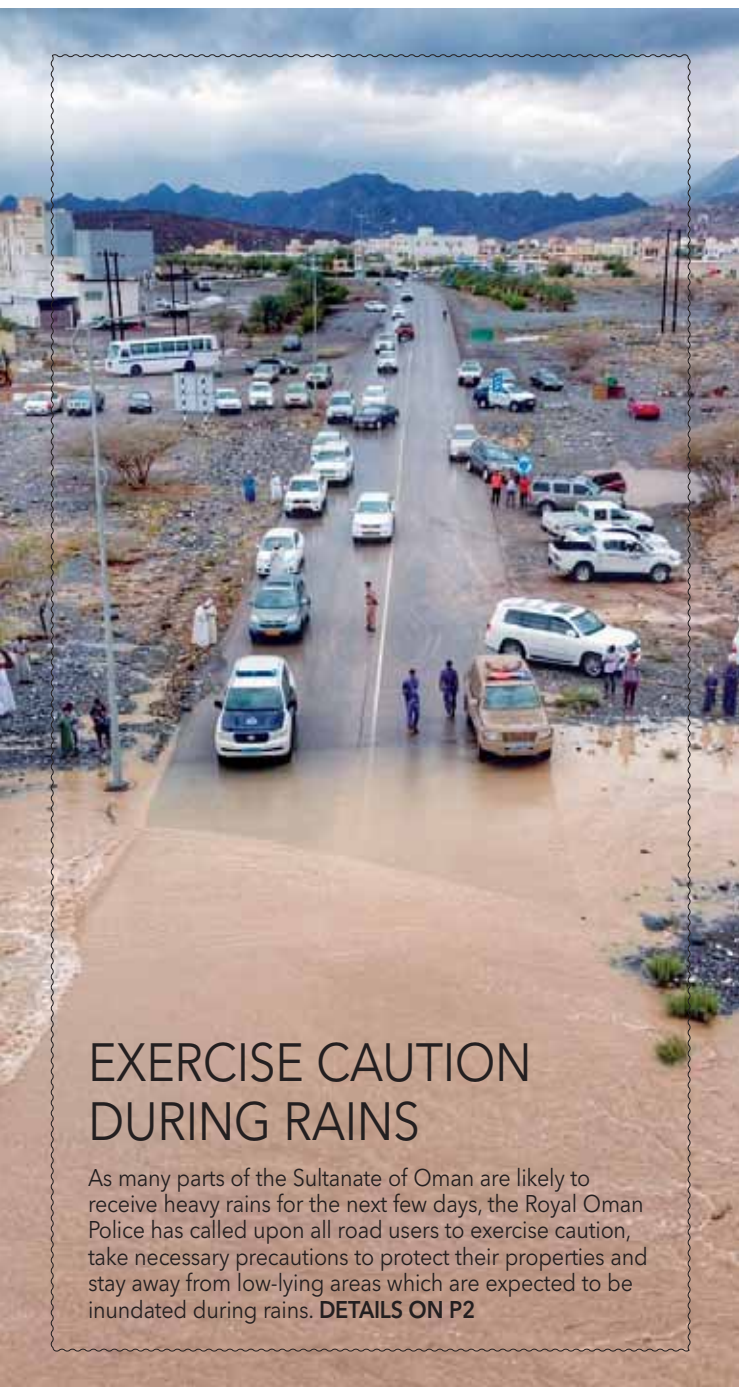
Saudi welcomes one million for Haj

MECCA: Worshippers from around the world have packed the streets of the holiest city ahead of the biggest Haj pilgrimage since the coronavirus pandemic began.

Banners welcoming the faithful, including the first international visitors since 2019, adorned squares and alleys, while armed security forces patrolled the ancient city.

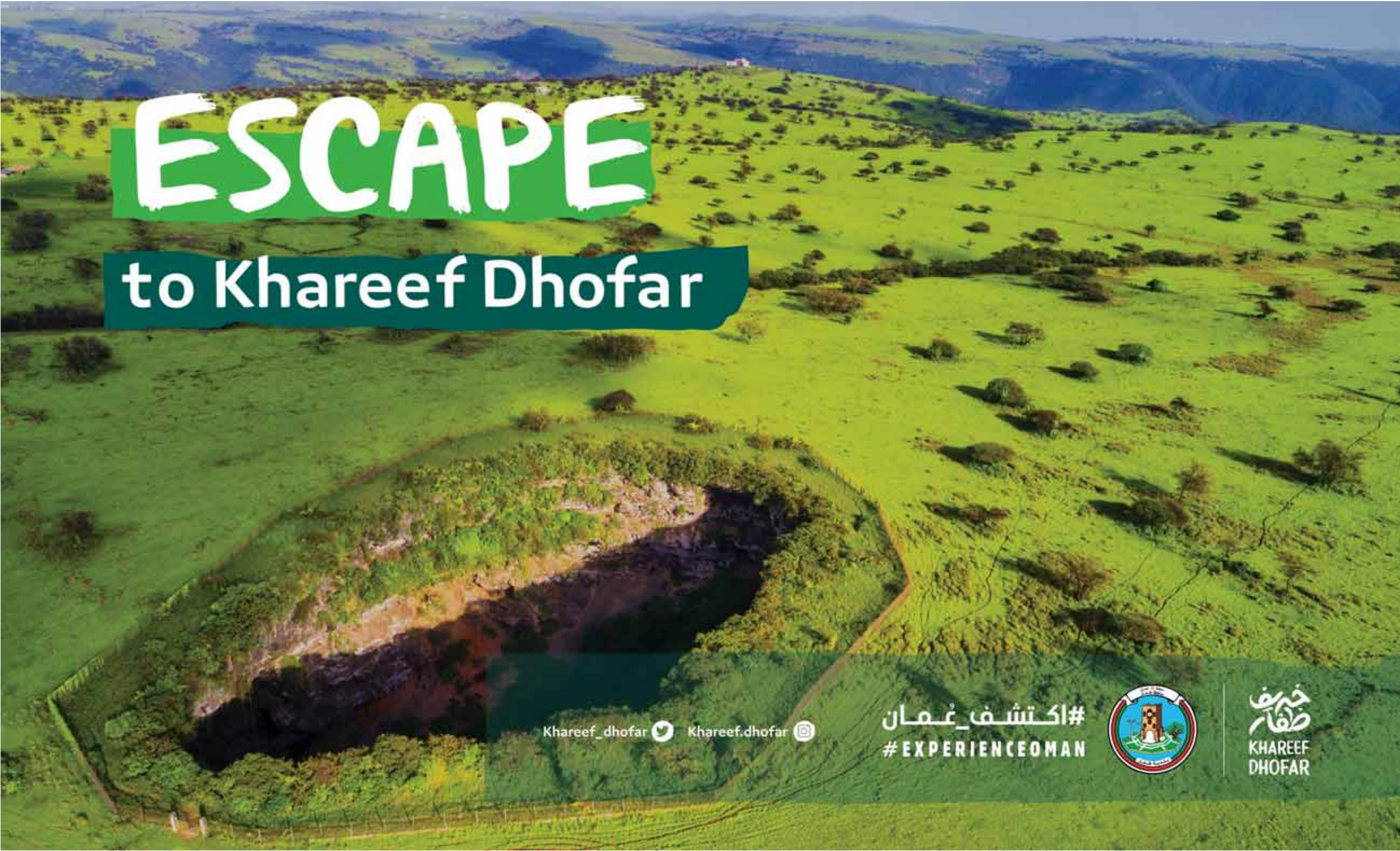
"This is pure joy", Sudanese pilgrim Abdel Qader Kheder said in Mecca, before the event which officially starts on Wednesday. "I almost can't believe I am here. I am enjoying every moment."

One million people, including 850,000 from abroad, are allowed at this year's Haj after two years of drastically curtailed numbers due to the pandemic. At least 650,000 overseas pilgrims have arrived so far in Saudi Arabia. — AFP



EXERCISE CAUTION DURING RAINS

As many parts of the Sultanate of Oman are likely to receive heavy rains for the next few days, the Royal Oman Police has called upon all road users to exercise caution, take necessary precautions to protect their properties and stay away from low-lying areas which are expected to be inundated during rains. **DETAILS ON P2**



ESCAPE to Khareef Dhofar

[Khareef_dhofar](#) [Khareef.dhofar](#)

#اكتشف_عمان #EXPERIENCEOMAN





Council discusses education, challenges of teachers



MUSCAT: The State Council on Monday discussed several studies, namely “Empowering Omani Teachers,” “Legislative Frameworks on Mandatory Education in the Sultanate of Oman,” “Developing Small and Medium Enterprises: Challenges, Opportunities and Suggestions” and “Tech Start-ups: Their Status and Investment Milieu”. The discussions came during the 6th regular session of the third annual convening for the 7th term of the State Council.

The Council’s members touched on the challenges facing teachers and the tasks they undertake. The members also lauded the crucial role played by teachers in the educational



process in Oman. Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, said that the long-term strategic development plan “Oman Vision 2040” focuses on Oman’s status and its prosperity, as well as the people’s welfare while

taking into consideration the country’s economic and human resources. This can be realised through the constructive and legislative decisions taken by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to press ahead with nation building process amid international, environmental, health and security developments taking place worldwide and affecting the economies and plans of countries. Al Khalili also highlighted the role of the State Council and its contribution to the Renewed Renaissance through recommendations, studies and legislative proposals which further support the realisation of Oman Vision 2040 goals.

— ONA

Oman, Yemen conclude talks on transport, IT



SALALAH: The Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Yemen on Monday concluded a round of official talks which began in Salalah on Sunday.

The Omani side was headed by Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, and the Yemeni side was led by Dr Najeeb Mansour al Auj, Minister of Communications and Information Technology.

They expressed satisfaction at the outcome of the talks hoped to translate into working plans and memoranda of understanding that would cement cooperation in the fields of transport, communications and information technology.

In the transport field, the two sides decided to start operating national air transport carriers for direct flights in implementation of an agreement signed by their governments in 1997 and a memorandum of understanding between civil aviation authorities in 2013.

They sides also agreed to enforce bilateral agreements and to exchange expertise in the fields of land and sea transport. Accordingly, Omani and Yemeni seaports will be activated and business communities in both countries are encouraged to invest in the related sectors, benefit from free trade incentives and tap other opportunities.

In the communications and information technology sectors, the two sides agreed to exchange expertise in establishing and running communications and fibre optics’ basic infrastructure. Plans are under way to have Oman host the data of Yemen, benefiting from providers of cloud services and security services.

The two sides also joined hands to revise laws and policies regulating the sector of communications, information technology and posts. This involves cooperation between operators of communications and the activation of sea and land cables.

— ONA

Low pressure to bring in more rains; beware of floods, thunder



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The direct impact of the low pressure system coming from North India is expected to begin on Tuesday in the form of thunder showers.

The Directorate-General of Meteorology said that the second wave of the low pressure system will bring in convective clouds and rainfall of varying intensity over the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, Muscat, Al Wusta, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Buraimi, Al Dhahirah and Al Dakhiliyah. The effect of the low pressure might extend to the plains and deserts to the west of Al Dhahirah and North Al Sharqiyah governorates.

Thunder showers were reported in Al Dakhiliyah and Al Buraimi governorates, on Monday.

The Met office noted that rainfall ranging between 20 mm and 60 mm are expected with chances of hail storm and downburst of between 50 and 70 km/hour decreasing visibility, dust storms and thunder showers.

Rainfall amounting to 42 mm was reported in the Wilayat of Izki on Monday while Al Jabal Al Akhdhar reported 35 mm, Dima W’attayeen 32 mm, Al Mudhaibi 15 mm, Nizwa 12 mm and Ibra 10 mm, according to a report issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) affirmed its readiness to handle any incidents resulting from heavy rains, calling on citizens, residents and visitors to avoid overflowing wadis and rough seas. Civil Aviation Authority of the Sultanate of Oman has issued precautions to be taken due to the expected heavy thunderstorms that are forecast to take place on Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Authority also issued an alert for fishermen and the sea-goers stating the sea will be rough on all the coasts of Oman and reach a maximum of 4 metres on Tuesday and Wednesday. they request to avoid venturing out into the sea.

“The low pressure system is located towards the north east of Oman and we are expecting a trough. Today its effect has been on Al Hajar Mountains with the local rain. The thunderstorms might move towards the south west. Maybe there could be some rain or thunderstorm in Muscat on Tuesday or Wednesday especially south of Muscat Governorate,” said Mohammed al Mashaiki, Meteorologist from Oman Met Office. South and North Sharqiyah might receive the highest amount of rainfall, especially Al Hajar Mountains and the adjoining areas, as well as the coastal areas,” he added.

He warned that the public should not attempt to cross running wadis and should stay away from low lying areas especially areas where rains are expected.

The authority has particularly requested the public to check the report on sea state before sailing.



SALE

SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1825

Al Khamis Plaza, Qurum - Tel. 24560992 | Muscat Grand Mall - Tel. 24399930 | Al Hail South - Tel. 24558148
Al Khamis Shoes Sohar - Tel. 26841178 | Al Khamis Shoes Al Hail - Tel. 24543045 93894474



New premises for central health labs

MUSCAT: The central public health laboratories in the Sultanate of Oman played key role during the coronavirus pandemic. His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik ordered the establishment of a new central laboratory for public health on June 2, 2020.

The Ministry of Health is planning to establish an integrated modern building for the central public health laboratories with state-of-the-art technologies and lab equipment. The new building will contain a sophisticated level-3 safety laboratory for tuberculosis (TB) and other highly infectious viral diseases, a genome sequencing department, and other departments that will be developed as a neonatal screening department for metabolic disorders.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has recently announced the selection of the central public health laboratories in the Sultanate of Oman as a cooperating centre in the field of emerging and novel infectious diseases. It is the first of its kind in the Eastern Mediterranean region and the centre represents a new addition to Oman's record of achievements in the health field. The selection of the Central Public Health Laboratories in the Sultanate of Oman represents a significant milestone as the centre will serve the Eastern Mediterranean Region and will play a global role with other centres worldwide.

The establishment of a collaborating centre provides an opportunity to share experiences, and enables countries in the region and the world to benefit from Oman's experience in the field of public health laboratories, such as providing technical consultations and organising training events.

The collaborating centre aims to enhance countries' preparedness and response for timely laboratory detection and management of outbreaks of novel, emerging and



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dangerous pathogens. It also aims to facilitate the transfer of safe and appropriate diagnostic techniques, practices and training in laboratories, as well as enhancing the technical capabilities of our public health laboratories to detect and report pathogens.

The Department of Public Health Laboratories enjoys a good international and regional reputation. The Sultanate of Oman periodically hosts many regional meetings, as well as many trainees from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and neighbouring countries for training in its laboratories. The central laboratories have also been recognised in 2006 by the WHO to become a regional reference laboratory for the Eastern Mediterranean Region for measles and rubella. Thirty-eight laboratories from different

The new building will contain a sophisticated level-3 safety laboratory for tuberculosis (TB) and other highly infectious viral diseases, a genome sequencing department, and other departments that will be developed as a neonatal screening department for metabolic disorders.

countries of the region are participating in the programme. It has also become a WHO-accredited polio reference laboratory and regional coordinator for the PulsNet Middle East network for foodborne disease surveillance

since 2006.

Additionally, the laboratory was re-elected in 2018 to play the same role. Dr Hanan Salim al Kindi, Director of Central Public Health Laboratories at the Ministry of Health said that the Central Laboratories of the Ministry of Health are a national reference under the umbrella of the Directorate General for Disease Surveillance and Control. These laboratories are concerned with conducting a wide range of laboratory tests using different techniques to diagnose and monitor diseases, as well as conducting the necessary surveys to investigate the spread of associating microbes and toxins affecting public health.

Dr Hanan pointed out that with the beginning of the Covid pandemic, the National Centre for Covid-19 disease was established in

the public health laboratories, and was entrusted with the diagnosis and monitoring of genomic mutations of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19). Laboratories' experts at the Ministry of Health analysed very large quantities of samples from hospitals and outpatient clinics. They numbered more than 1,000 samples per day at that time. She said that the centre is still continuing to conduct Covid-19 tests.

The number of samples analysed at the centre since the beginning of the pandemic has reached approximately 276,000 samples, including 240,000 samples in 2020. Dr. Hanan further said that the experts in the public health laboratories in 2020 contributed to supporting the government and private sectors in terms of training, choosing types of solutions and giving an opinion on the design of private laboratories that are concerned with Covid testing and then carrying out periodic inspection visits. The experts also contributed to the selection of appropriate rapid testing devices that were later used in Ministry of Health hospitals and many private laboratories. She pointed out that with providing the centre with advanced second-generation devices for genetic intrusion monitoring, the centre was able to provide information on emerging mutants of Covid-19.

An agreement was recently concluded for the centre to provide genome sequencing services to a number of countries in the region. Dr. Hanan continued, "The public health laboratories also host the National Influenza Centre recognised by the World Health Organization and the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office to monitor respiratory infections with influenza virus and other respiratory infections, including the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome virus." — ONA

HM issues two Royal Decrees

FROM PAGE 1

Article (1) stipulates that a national commission for human rights to be named "Oman Human Rights Commission" shall be established and that it shall have a legal identity. The headquarters of the commission shall be in the Governorate of Muscat and it may have branches in other governorates.

Article (2) states that the provisions of the system attached to this Decree shall be applied to Oman Human Rights Commission.

Article (3) states that the membership of Oman Human Rights Commission shall continue till its restructuring without prejudice to the attached system.

Article (4) cancels Royal Decree No124/2008 on establishing Oman Human Rights Commission and determining its competencies, as well as all that contradicts this Decree and the attached system or contravenes their provisions.

Article (5) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on the day following its date of publishing. — ONA

Oman, Brunei explore cooperation



BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: The 3rd meeting of the joint Oman-Brunei Committee was held in Brunei's Ministry of Finance and Economy in Bandar Seri Begawan on Monday. During the meeting, the Omani side was headed by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, while the Bruneian side was headed by Dr Hajah May Faizah Binti Haji Ahmad Ariffin, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Finance and Economy for Economy.

They reviewed areas of economic, business and investment cooperation between the two countries, especially in the fields of agriculture, fisheries, food industries, converting industries and tourism. They also explored the possibility of striking partnerships to augment the volume of trade exchange between Oman and Brunei. The two sides stressed the importance of activating cooperation and coordination channels in a bid to enhance bilateral relations that serve the interests of the two countries' peoples. — ONA

OMANI OLIVE OIL BAGS PRIZES IN GLOBAL CONTEST



Olive oil of the Royal Court Affairs (RCA), represented by the Royal Gardens and Farms, won gold, silver and bronze prizes at the extra virgin olive oils contest held in London. Riyad Al Jabal Farm in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar or "The Green Mountain" was awarded a total of five medals: 2 gold, 2 silver and 1 bronze, thereby maintaining its high-profile record in international competitions. The prizes will be handed over to winners at a ceremony on July 11. — ONA

Habta markets receive Eid al Adha customers

SAMUEL KUTTY
@samuelkuttyvp

With the crescent moon sighted and Eid al Adha set to fall on Saturday, shoppers have started thronging markets including the traditional habtas.

In the Sultanate of Oman, the seasonal traditional markets located in the centre of every governorate are the major centres of Eid al Adha purchases thanks to the availability of different sacrificial animals.

These unique open markets turn into a beehive of activities on Eid days as they display other commodities that people need during Eid, including clothing and accessories.

Omani goats, sheep and cows are available in all the Habta markets and normally cost higher compared to the imported livestock, since their meat is very tender and easy to cook.

Animals are also sold in auctions with professional auctioneers overseeing the proceedings.

"If an imported goat can be bought for RO 80, the price of the indigenous one reaches more than



RO 150 at least," said Hameed al Balushi in Ruwi.

The Eid habta, which means coming down to the market in Arabic, said Hameed, is a legacy and Omani tradition that successive generations have preserved. Shopping in this cultural market is a famous tradition for many Omanis.

"Hence, the Eid celebrations are not complete without visiting a Habta market", he said.

Normally, there is a fixed timing for most of Oman's Habta markets which start from sunrise to 11 am and sometimes to 1 pm. They also witness great turnout of people since early morning. And

these markets are held in open spaces or under the shade of palm trees, mangoes, Ghaf, or near castles and forts.

He said that if people are not happy with the price of an animal at one market, they move from one to the other in the nearby wilayats to search their markets for the best.

"Some people do it to enjoy the atmosphere associated with Habta, such as the sale of sheep, cows and camels at auction", he said.

These traditional markets also provide an opportunity for breeders to sell their livestock at good prices.



KEEP THIS OFF THE MENU

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
[@zainabalnasseri](#)

Eating processed foods and bakery products containing trans fats or hydrogenated oils increase bad cholesterol levels and boosts the risk of heart diseases, one of the world's leading causes of death. It may also increase your risk for type 2 diabetes.

The Sultanate of Oman in April banned the production, import or marketing of partially hydrogenated oils, and use of these oils in the manufacture of food products through the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources's Decision No 83/2022. The decision stipulated a fine of RO 1,000 for violators in an attempt to create a

healthier society.

In 2018, the WHO set a goal for the world to eliminate trans fats by 2023. There are 17 million deaths annually, resulting from cardiovascular diseases, which has been linked to foods containing saturated and trans fats, according to the World Health Organization.

The US Food and Drug Administration recently banned food companies from relying on trans fats as a main ingredient in their products.

Food manufacturers began adding this cheap alternative to animal fats in the 1950s. Hydrogenated fats can be used to make donuts taste better and extend the shelf life of foods, but they are also "silent killers."

TRANS FATS OR HYDROGENATED OILS INCREASE BAD CHOLESTEROL LEVELS AND BOOSTS THE RISK OF HEART DISEASES, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH. IT MAY ALSO INCREASE YOUR RISK FOR TYPE 2 DIABETES

These fats are made by adding hydrogen to vegetable oil. This process turns the liquid into a solid fat when it reaches room temperature. When it first became popular, some nutritionists thought artificial fats were healthier than animal fats. However, soon studies proved otherwise.

Eating too much trans fat can cause you to gain weight. Staying at a healthy weight can reduce your risk for diabetes, heart disease and other health problems. High LDL (low-density lipoprotein) or bad cholesterol along with low HDL levels can cause cholesterol to build up in your arteries (blood vessels). This increases your risk for heart disease and stroke.

Dr Saleh bin Saif al Hinai, Senior Consultant, family medicine, said partially hydrogenated oils contain large amounts of artificial trans fats like most bakery products, margarine, coffee whiteners and snacks.

"There are side effects of partially hydrogenated oils, including raising low-density lipoprotein cholesterol (bad cholesterol) and lowering good cholesterol, which may cause cardiovascular disease"

Dr Al Hinai said, "The easiest way to avoid hydrogenated oils is to avoid processed foods. A person should consume whole foods, including vegetables, fruits, nuts, lean proteins and unsweetened dairy products as part of a regular diet."

RO 1,000
PENALTY FOR USE
OF TRANS FAT IN
FOOD PRODUCTS

17 MN
HEART DISEASE-
RELATED DEATHS
DUE TO TRANS FAT

WHO SET A GOAL
FOR THE WORLD TO
ELIMINATE TRANS
FATS BY
2023







 وزارة الإعلام
 Ministry of Information
 Sultanate of Oman



MINISTRY OF INFORMATION

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

The Internal Tender Committee in Ministry of Information announces the following Tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Name	Class & Grade	Last Date For Collection	Submission Date	Purchase Fees (R.O.)
6/2022	Supply, instillation, testing and commissioning a new data center infrastructure in MOI premises in Salalah	International Excellent	14/7/2022	14/8/2022	25/-
7/2022	Supply, Development, Implementation and Support "Ain"	Interantional Excellent	21/7/2022	31/8/2022	25/-

1. All specialized companies in the field of the tenders shown above and are registered with the Tender Board to the degree indicated above, may obtain tender documents, against non-refundable fees, from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
2. Bidder shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of the a bond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to the Ministry of Information. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for (90) days. Any tenderers which do not meet the required bond shall not accept. Note that the last date for accepting bids as mentioned above is before 10:00 am. Any bid received after the time and date mentioned in the submission date will be rejected automatically.

Note: The original bank guarantee should be submitted to the General Directorate of Administrative and Financial Affairs, Project Department Building at Ministry of Information, if it **Requested**.

3. The Ministry has the right to:
 - 1) Add or Cancel some works in the tender if necessary.
 - 2) Cancellation of the tender without giving reasons.

For clarifications you may contact via:

Telephone : 24943093, 24943785, Email id: (projects@part.gov.om)



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Libya protests planned over political deadlock

TRIPOLI: Libyans angered by rising prices, chronic power cuts and political deadlock planned further demonstrations on Monday after a night of angry protests across the capital.

Masked youths set alight car tyres and blocked roads including a major coastal highway between central Tripoli and its western suburbs, but security forces did not intervene.

Videos carried by local media also showed demonstrations in Beni Walid and the port city of Misrata.

A youth movement calling itself “Beltress” said further protests were planned in Tripoli’s Martyr’s Square at 4 pm local time (14:00 GMT).

The movement demands elections and the dissolution of both the country’s rival governments and their two houses of parliament.

Public anger has been fuelled by power cuts that often last 18 hours amid soaring summer temperatures, despite Libya sitting on Africa’s largest oil reserves.

The vast country has been mired in political unrest and armed violence since a 2011 Nato-backed uprising toppled and killed ruler Muammar Gaddafi. On Friday



A picture taken on June 3, shows burning tyres blocking roads during overnight protests in the Libyan capital Tripoli. – AFP

night, protesters stormed the seat of the House of Representatives in the eastern city of Tobruk, ransacking its offices and torching part of the building. In both Tripoli and the

main eastern city of Benghazi, the cradle of the 2011 uprising, thousands took to the streets to chants of “We want the lights to work”. Some brandished the green

flags of the former Gaddafi rule.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has called for calm, but UN-mediated talks in Geneva last week aimed

at breaking the stalemate between rival Libyan institutions failed to resolve key differences.

Presidential and parliamentary elections, originally set for last

UN-mediated talks aimed at breaking the stalemate have failed to resolve key differences

December, were meant to cap a UN-led peace process following the end of the last major round of violence in 2020.

But voting never took place due to several contentious candidacies and deep disagreements over the polls’ legal basis between the rival power centres in east and west.

The crisis deepened this year as parliament, elected in 2014 and backed by eastern strongman Khalifa Haftar, appointed a new government to replace that of interim leader Abdelhamid Dbeibah.

He has refused to cede power except to an elected administration.

On top of the political deadlock, Libyans’ living standards have been hit hard by price hikes on food imports due to the war in Ukraine.

Meanwhile supporters of the rival administration of former interior minister Fathi Bashagha have shut down several oil facilities since April as leverage in his power struggle with Dbeibah.— AFP

Gunman behind Copenhagen shooting jailed for 24 days

COPENHAGEN: The man behind a shooting in a Copenhagen shopping mall which left three people dead and several wounded was jailed for 24 days on Monday after facing preliminary questioning in a city court, Danish police said.

The 22-year-old Danish male, who on Sunday afternoon opened fire on shoppers in the Field’s mall a few kilometres south of downtown Copenhagen, was arrested and charged with manslaughter and intent to kill.

He will be kept in custody in a closed psychiatric ward, authorities said.

The incident rocked Denmark at the end of a week in which it hosted the first three stages of the Tour de France cycle race and hundreds of thousands of cheering Danes took to the streets across the country.

The shooter, whose name is subject to a publication ban, shot and killed two 17-year-olds, a man and a woman, and a 47-year-old Russian citizen living in Denmark. Four other people were also wounded by gunshots.

Three of them were now stable and one remained in critical condition, a health official from Danish emergency medical services said.

The wounded included two Swedish citizens, a 50-year-old man and a 16-year-old woman.

The incident could not be viewed as an “act of terror” based on current evidence, Chief Police Inspector Soren Thomassen told reporters earlier on Monday, adding there was no indication the suspect had acted together with others.

“There has been some sort of deliberation and preparation (by the suspect) up to this terrible event,” Thomassen told a news conference. A number of people were slightly injured when fleeing the scene, but not by gunshots.

“I’m heartbroken along with the people of Copenhagen. I adore this city.

The people are so warm and full of love.

I’m devastated for the victims, their families, and everyone hurting,” Styles wrote on Twitter.

—Reuters

Thousands evacuate from Sydney floods

SYDNEY: Rapidly rising rivers swamped swathes of rain-lashed Sydney on Monday, forcing thousands to flee “dangerous” floods as the city’s largest dam spilled torrents of water.

On the third day of torrential east coast rains, emergency workers said they had rescued more than 140 people since the stormy weather began.

But evacuated residents in one area of western Sydney were now being allowed to return home, officials said, as weather conditions in New South Wales were forecast to ease over the next 24 hours.

Many of those rescued had been trapped in their cars trying to cross flood-swept roads or were unable to leave homes surrounded by rising waters.

Australia has been at the sharp end of climate change, with droughts, deadly bushfires, bleaching events on the Great Barrier Reef and floods becoming more common and intense as global weather patterns change.

Higher temperatures mean the atmosphere holds more moisture, unleashing more rain.

About 32,000 people were under orders to evacuate or be ready to



People kayak along a flooded street from the overflowing Hawkesbury river due to torrential rain in the Windsor suburb of Sydney. – AFP

Australia’s east coast has suffered repeated flooding in the past 18 months

flee across New South Wales, the state’s emergency services said.

The army sent 100 troops to help operations in the storm-battered state. “The ground is saturated, the rivers are fast flowing, the dams are

overflowing,” said State Emergency Services commissioner Carlene York.

“It is particularly dangerous out there.”

Mud-brown river waters transformed a large stretch of land into a lake in the southwestern Sydney suburb of Camden.

Roads disappeared into the waters and mobile homes stood in knee-high water, at least one toppled on its side, television

images showed. Large volumes of water gushed from the Warragamba Dam, which has been spilling excess water since Sunday. The huge concrete dam lies on the western outskirts of Sydney and provides most of the city’s drinking water.

The wild weather whipped up drama off the Sydney coast, as the 150-metre Portland Bay cargo ship with 21 crew lost power in heavy seas.—AFP

SHORT TAKES

BEIJING

1.7m locked down in China’s Anhui province

China placed 1.7 million people under lockdown in central Anhui province, where authorities reported nearly 300 new cases in the latest of a string of outbreaks testing Beijing’s no-tolerance approach to Covid-19.

The country is the last major economy wedded to a zero-Covid strategy, responding to all cases with strict isolation orders and tough testing campaigns.

The outbreak in Anhui — where officials first found hundreds of cases last week —



comes as the Chinese economy begins to rebound from a months-long lockdown in Shanghai and disruptive Covid restrictions in the capital Beijing. —AFP

COLOMBO

Lanka’s fuel crisis deepens, runs short of supplies

Sri Lanka is appealing for credit from other countries, international companies and foreign suppliers for fuel stocks to get it through the next two weeks, a senior government official said.

Sri Lanka’s appeal came as it was running short of its own supplies and was banking on stocks from an Indian company to provide diesel and petrol to the public, members of which have been agitating at filling stations. An official from the



Power and Energy Ministry said Sri Lanka has appealed to Malaysia and India for fuel for the next two weeks, to meet basic public demand.

— dpa

TEHRAN

Sandstorm hits Tehran, offices and schools shut

Iranian officials closed government offices, courts, schools and universities in Tehran after a severe sandstorm hit the capital.

“The air pollution emergency committee of Tehran province has ordered the closure of all administrative offices and public educational centres today due to the spread of dust,” state news agency IRNA said. Visibility was severely limited in Tehran, a city of more than eight million people.



The neighbouring province of Alborz, located west of the capital, also announced the closure of all offices, banks and scientific and educational centres, state TV said. — AFP



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TUESDAY | JULY 5 | 2022

7

In brief

WASHINGTON



US SAYS JOURNALIST LIKELY SHOT BUT NOT INTENTIONALLY

The United States said that Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh was likely killed by gunfire from Israeli positions but that there was no reason to believe her death was intentional. The State Department also said the US could not make a “definitive conclusion” on the origin of the bullet that killed her on May 11, which was handed over by the Palestinian Authority. “Ballistic experts determined the bullet was badly damaged, which prevented a clear conclusion”, State Department spokesman Ned Price said after what he called “extremely detailed forensic analysis” with outside examiners. — AFP

ROME



ITALY TO DECLARE EMERGENCY IN REGIONS HIT BY DROUGHT

The Italian government plans to declare an emergency in response to a serious drought that has hit parts of the country, Prime Minister Mario Draghi's office announced on Monday. The Cabinet later met on Monday to announce the measures affecting the worst-affected regions. The north of the country is particularly badly hit, with its large lakes, including Lake Garda, holding much less water than is normal at this time of the year. The Po, Italy's longest river, with its delta near Venice, is at its lowest level in the past 70 years at certain points along its course. Salt water has flowed in for kilometres upstream. — dpa

ALMATY



UZBEKISTAN SAYS 18 KILLED, HUNDREDS WOUNDED IN UNREST

Eighteen people were killed and 243 wounded during unrest in Uzbekistan's autonomous province of Karakalpakstan that broke out last week over plans to curtail its autonomy, Uzbek authorities said. Security forces detained 516 people while dispersing the protesters last Friday but have now released many of them, the national guard press office told a briefing. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev dropped plans to amend articles of the constitution concerning Karakalpakstan's autonomy and its right to secede. He also declared a month-long state of emergency in the northwestern province. — Reuters

Ukraine estimates cost of reconstruction at \$750 bn

LUGANO: Ukraine told an international conference on Monday that it will cost an estimated \$750 billion to rebuild the war-shattered country, a task President Volodymyr Zelensky said was the shared duty of the democratic world.

Speaking at the opening of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Switzerland, Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal described the massive destruction and acknowledged the needs were towering.

Ukraine's recovery, he said, “is already estimated at \$750 billion.

We believe that the key source of recovery should be the confiscated assets of Russia and Russian oligarchs.”

“The Russian authorities unleashed this bloody war, they caused this massive destruction and they should be held accountable for it”, he said.

Speaking via video message, Zelensky stressed that “reconstruction of Ukraine is not a local task of a single nation.”

“It is a common task of the whole democratic world”, he said, insisting that “reconstruction of Ukraine is the biggest contribution to the support of global peace.”

The two-day conference, held under tight security in the picturesque southern Swiss city of Lugano, had been planned well before the invasion, and had originally been slated to discuss reforms in Ukraine before being repurposed to focus on reconstruction.

As billions of dollars in aid flow into Ukraine, however, lingering concerns about widespread corruption in the country mean far-reaching reforms remain in focus and will be a condition for any recovery plan decided here.



Swiss Environment, Energy and Transport Minister Simonetta Sommaruga and Ukrainian Minister of Environmental Protection and Natural Resources Ruslan Strilets exchange documents after signing an Implementing Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and Ukraine in Lugano. — AFP

The two-day conference had originally been slated to discuss reforms in Ukraine before being repurposed to focus on reconstruction

Zelensky's Swiss counterpart and co-host of the conference, Ignazio Cassis, stressed that reforms remained front and centre, with the aim of the meeting to lay “the groundwork

for an effective and transparent political process.”

He said he was convinced that Ukraine's resilience in the face of the Russian invasion was largely due to the reforms already implemented in the country.

“It is crucial that these efforts continue unwaveringly, especially in the fight against corruption, improving transparency and the independence of the judiciary, and that they are not stalled by the war.”

He hailed that Ukraine had sent a large delegation of around 100 people to the conference, with Smyhal joined by speaker of parliament Rousland Stefanchouk and five government ministers.

In all, around 1,000 people

are attending the conference, including European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who let out an enthusiastic “Slava Ukraini” (glory to Ukraine) after insisting on the importance of rebuilding a Ukraine better than before the war.

“Ukraine can emerge from this on a path towards a stronger and more modern country, with a modernised judiciary, with stronger institutions, with a solid track-record to fight against corruption, but also with a greener, more digital and more resilient economy”, she said. While the EU is intent on helping Ukraine win the war, she said, “We must also make sure that Ukraine wins the peace that will come for sure.” — AFP

US General takes over Nato command

BRUSSELS: US Army General Christopher Cavoli is Nato's new supreme allied commander in Europe (SACEUR), after assuming command from US General Tod Wolters on Monday in a ceremony in Mons, Belgium.

Cavoli enters the top alliance role amid “the return of brutal conflict to Europe”, Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in his ceremony speech.

The handover comes after the alliance agreed last week on a major reinforcement of Eastern European members during a Nato leaders' summit in Madrid, against the backdrop of the Russian war on Ukraine.

Stoltenberg also highlighted Cavoli's role in overseeing the United State's recent increased troop deployments to Europe — numbering more than 100,000 soldiers — in reaction to that invasion.

Cavoli is to be primarily responsible for planning and executing military measures to defend the alliance and deter Russia.

For example, a new Nato force model is to be implemented in the coming months. — dpa



US Army General Christopher Cavoli.

Macron reshuffles cabinet

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron on Monday turned to the health minister who steered France through Covid to sell the government's policies to an electorate worried about a spike in inflation as he carried out a limited reshuffle.

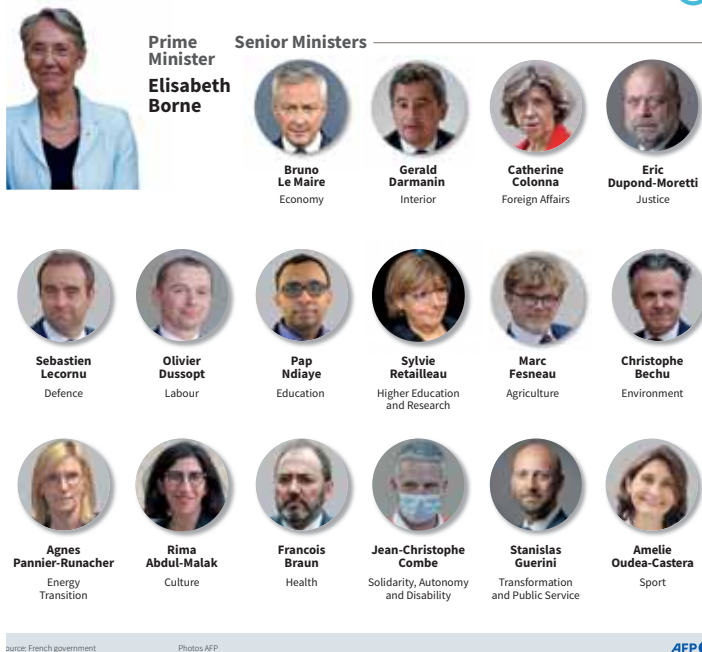
Key roles such as the prime minister and finance minister remained unchanged in the reshuffle that signalled no policy changes and was criticised by the opposition as being tone-deaf after elections in which Macron's centrist alliance lost control of parliament.

“We have so much to do to rebuild trust”, the new government spokesman, Olivier Veran, acknowledged as he took over his portfolio, referring to comments made by unhappy voters during June's election campaign.

Having lost the absolute majority in the Lower House of Parliament, Macron and his government will need to negotiate support from the opposition bill by bill, for each reform.

“The president of the republic ignores the verdict of the ballot boxes and the demand of the French people for different policies”, the far-

New French government



Source: French government Photos: AFP

right's Marine Le Pen tweeted.

After being the face of the crisis throughout most of the coronavirus pandemic, Veran, who had moved from health to a different cabinet role in May, will be in charge of presenting government policy.

He won a reputation of calm and poise when defending the government's Covid policy in parliament and in the media.

His challenges will start as early as this week with a draft cost-of-living bill set to be adopted by the government and make its way

to parliament, and a policy speech by Borne, who kept her role as prime minister.

Borne could call a confidence vote after the speech. The left-wing opposition has said it will call a no-confidence vote if she does not.

Macron has not announced any coalition pact with other parties to build a workable majority in parliament nor poached any major names from the opposition in this latest reshuffle.

— Reuters

Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tenders :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtaining of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-refundable)
94/2022	Providing caring services for the overage persons & cleaning services for the Al-rustaq social development buildings	Companies specialized in the field of cleaning, washing and pest control, which are registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent or first class	Sunday 24-7-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 11-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=
95/2022	Providing maintenance technicians for the buildings affiliated to the Ministry in North Al Batinah Governorate	Companies specialized in the field of industrial workshop services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first, second,	Sunday 24-7-2022 02:00 PM	Thursday 11-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

- ❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at theTender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), On Tuesday 5/7/2022.
- ❖ Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.
- ❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

“ The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry “

www.mosd.gov.om

Rising to the challenge of new careers



Sandhya Rao Mehta

The writer is Associate Professor, Dept of English Language and Literature, Sultan Qaboos University

July and August is the season of fresh graduates, looking forward to facing a brave new world of economic independence and a fresh set of challenges, away from the comfort of high schools and colleges.

But it is also a nervous time, as new entrants to the job market are faced with the prospect of having to choose professions which will define their future.

It is said that students are getting ready for jobs which don't even exist yet. According to career counsellors worldwide, data entry, assembling and bookkeeping are jobs which will disappear in the near future as Artificial Intelligence takes over and such jobs become completely automated.

Just as switchboard operators and telegraphists were sidelined as

jobs by the turn of the 21st century, computers have ensured that many other jobs that require information retrieval will cease to exist as data becomes more accessible.

What is a fresh entrant to the job market to do then?

It is distressing to know that years of education have come to little and that there is no ready make job waiting for fresh graduates, whether from school or college.

Finding a fresh way of looking at career options is most necessary. Accepting that traditional jobs may be on the way out. It is important for young graduates to look closely at the emerging market to see where their competencies and interests may lie.

Suggestions often given to those who are new to the job market

SOME OF THE SWIFTLY EMERGING PROFESSIONS INCLUDE HEALTHCARE AND TECHNOLOGY AS THESE HAVE VERTICAL POTENTIAL WITH VAST OPPORTUNITIES ALL ALONG THE LADDER

include performing a thorough self-assessment, identifying interests and how they may fit into the professional world, making lists of potential areas of employment and reaching out to potential organisations.

Most important, however, is to be aware of changing trends and patterns, and to see the shape that

the market is going to take in the next few decades.

This involves being well read, keeping an active network, both digital and personal, and of course, continuing to upskill.

For new entrants, the guiding principle should be to find the sweet spot between passion and necessity. It would be great if all our passions led us to prosperous jobs, but this is not always the case.

Some of the swiftly emerging professions include those in healthcare and technology. These have vertical potential as there are vast opportunities all along the ladder. Other areas include biotechnology, social media development and data analysis. Small businesses and self-employment are also becoming

very popular, given the opportunity for work-life balance that is a rising concern.

Very few degrees prepare students directly for the jobs which are now in demand. That is of solace to the many who may wonder how to use their Majors. Employers are now less concerned with GPA and Majors, and more with the effective skills that the prospective employee demonstrates. These traits include leadership, team spirit, independent and critical thinking and collaborative skills.

The most important quality, however, is curiosity — the curiosity to know, to discover, to learn and to do. With sufficient curiosity and investment in oneself, a graduate is surely prepared to enter the exciting new world of the workplace.

Covid-19 misinformation bolsters anti-vaccine movement

ROB LEVER

More parents are questioning the necessity of routine vaccinations for young children. Adults are skipping shots as well, even for vaccines with a long safety record.

The trend comes amid a wave of misinformation and disinformation about Covid-19 and the vaccines that helped to stem pandemic deaths. Politicisation of the Covid-19 shots has bolstered the anti-vaccine movement, contributing to the decline in routine immunisations for measles, polio and other dangerous diseases.

“They ask if these are truly necessary, or if we can give them at later times”, said Jason Terk, a Texas paediatrician and spokesperson for the American Academy of Paediatrics.

“This is not the majority of parents, but we are seeing a higher number.”

The anti-vaccine movement has mushroomed as its messages on social media are amplified by conservative political figures as well as foreign influence operations, whose vaccine disinformation efforts pre-date the pandemic.

With routine immunisation rates falling, concerns are growing about a resurgence of diseases which had largely been eradicated in many parts of the world.

In the United States, the percentage of kindergarten children with recommended immunisations fell a percentage point to 94 per cent in the 2020-21 school year, representing some 35,000 children unvaccinated.

“I refer to it as the parallel contagion”, Terk said.

“This seems to have at its origin hesitancy in Covid-19 vaccinations and increasing distrust of vaccines and the bodies we’ve relied on to keep us healthy and well.”

Dramatic changes were seen in some states, especially during the height of the pandemic: Researchers found a 47 per cent drop in immunisation rates in Texas among five-month-olds and a 58 per cent decline for 16-month-olds between 2019 and 2020.

The researchers, writing in the scientific journal ‘Vaccine’, said the declines resulted from shelter-in-place restrictions and vaccine exemptions, but also to “an aggressive anti-vaccine movement in Texas.”

Washington state reported a 13 per cent decline in childhood immunisation rates in 2021 compared with pre-pandemic levels and Michigan’s vaccination rate for toddlers fell last year to 69.9 per cent, the lowest in a decade. — AFP

In Ukraine, US veterans step in where the military will not



Dave Philipps

The writer is a national correspondent for *NYT* covering the military

A democracy came under attack. The United States saw a threat to an ally and also to the entire world order, but it feared that sending troops could spark a nuclear war. So, instead, it supplied weapons. And a small number of American Special Operations trainers started quietly working with the local military.

That was the situation in South Vietnam in 1961, a few years before full-blown US military involvement, when the American presence was limited to a military “advisory group.”

It is also the situation in Ukraine today. As a bloody conflict churns on, small teams of American Special Operations veterans are training Ukrainian soldiers near the front lines and, in some cases, helping to plan combat missions.

There is a notable difference, though. In Vietnam, the trainers were active-duty troops under the control of the Pentagon.

In Ukraine, where the United States has avoided sending any troops, the trainers are civilian volunteers, supported by online donations and operating entirely on their own.

“This is why I became a Green Beret”, said Perry Blackburn Jr, a retired Army Special Forces lieutenant colonel who spent 34 years in uniform in Iraq, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Egypt, Somalia and Jordan. He is now in Ukraine as a civilian doing what he once did in the military: Training local forces to fight a common enemy.

“To not use my talents in a real time of need would be a waste”, said Blackburn, 60, who was one of a handful of Special Forces soldiers who rode into Afghanistan on horseback at the start of the US invasion in 2001 and is funding similar efforts now through thousands of small online donations from the public.

“At my age, I’ve seen enough death and I want to try to stop the bloodshed”, he said. “We need to give people the means to defend themselves.”

Whether this new type of crowdfunded military support is wise is up for debate.

Some experts caution that the presence of American volunteers could lead to some kind of tragic mishap



Ukrainian troops load a Howitzer M777 155mm artillery piece in Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine.

EXPERTS CAUTION THAT THE PRESENCE OF AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS COULD LEAD TO SOME KIND OF TRAGIC MISHAP THAT ENTANGLES THE US IN A VIETNAM-STYLE ESCALATION

that entangles the United States in a Vietnam-style escalation. Russia says that it would treat volunteer fighters as mercenaries and that they could be executed if captured.

The United States discourages Americans from participating in the conflict.

It pulled out its 150 military trainers before the war began and now relies on a few dozen commandos from other Nato countries to coordinate the flow of weapons inside Ukraine.

But the volunteers dismiss the idea that they might be stoking a larger war. Instead, they say, they are working to

prevent one, by training Ukrainian fighters to put up better resistance against the Russians and deter further aggression.

Either way, Americans are in Ukraine. An unknown number are fighting on the front lines.

Others volunteer to be members of casualty evacuation teams, bomb disposal specialists, logistics experts and trainers.

At least 21 Americans have been wounded in combat since the war started, according to a volunteer group that evacuates them.

Two have been killed, two have been captured and one is missing in action.

Blackburn and a small group of volunteers work directly with the Ukrainian military, teaching marksmanship, manoeuvring, combat first aid and other basic skills while constantly shifting locations of training camps to avoid Russian rocket attacks. They say they do all of it without any input from the Pentagon.

“We have no communication with the US military, period”, he said in an interview from his home in Tampa, Florida, where he recently returned to resupply before returning to the war zone.

“That’s a line they don’t want to cross. They are not going to take any responsibility for our well-being or our actions.” — *New York Times*

Why do people bully?



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor. We are exploring various aspects that influence lives of teenagers. One major issue is bullying.

Interestingly enough bullying is connected with self esteem. A low self esteem could be the reason for a person to become a bully or end up being a victim.

Laughing at others or giving names and poking fun at them in front of others could all turn out to be funny for one group of people and the doer could win some element of popularity even. But the process could ruin the recipient of this attention.

While sharing her thoughts, Lama Sulaiman, a college student, said throughout schooling and in college she has seen friends suffer due to bullying.

She said most of the time it was to do with body shaming. According to her, many developed eating disorders or change in personality. But they always hesitated to talk to their parents and was never keen to go to teachers or counsellors especially because they were afraid it would be in their file forever, which could affect their career in the future.

INTERESTINGLY ENOUGH BULLYING IS CONNECTED WITH SELF ESTEEM. A LOW SELF ESTEEM COULD BE THE REASON FOR A PERSON TO BECOME A BULLY OR END UP BEING A VICTIM

So they choose to suffer silently. Dr Hamed al Sinawi explained that teenagers could even cause self harm. Parents, therefore could be the best counsellors. One of the most important factors a parent must remember

is that their son/daughter feels that they can be trusted and will keep it a secret. A betrayal again would mean a new trauma.

As for teenagers, all you have to remember is you will cross this stage too. Make your parents your best friends and cultivate resilience. No one really has it easy in life. If you are a victim, do not remain there. Work at it, overcome and be an inspiration for others. Don't fall into the trap of being another bully because it is often a set pattern. Instead be the one that makes others proud of you and be the one with empathy.

Apparently bullies tend not to have empathy. But let us not brand them and blame them. They can be helped and the right persons to take them for therapy and help are the parents.

The scars of bullying can last forever in certain cases. With stigma on mental health, most victims would shun psychotherapy. Yet some parents are brave to take the step and change the child's for the better.

There are, however certain instances where parenting techniques become the problem. A teenager wants the boundary and the space to form their own identity. Soon it is frustration leading to anger and mood swings. Most teenagers ease out of this situation, but some continue to rebel, and at times fall into the wrong company.

Or could there be a chance that these are early warning signs?

Could there be a need for counselling? These are the questions that are being pondered on the forthcoming episodes of GreenMent. You are most welcome to send your questions and thoughts.

We have all been teenagers once upon a time, but lifestyle was different so we're the peer pressure.

All a teenager wants is to be accepted and given space to find their true self.



FEAR FOR LIFE

People react outside the Fields shopping mall, where a gunman killed three people and wounded several others in Copenhagen on Sunday. A 22-year-old Danish man was arrested after the shooting but his motives were unclear, police said. – AFP

US democracy under concerted attack



George Soros

The writer is Chairman of Soros Fund Management and the Open Society Foundations. A pioneer of the hedge-fund industry, he is the author of many books, including The Alchemy of Finance, The New Paradigm for Financial Markets: The Credit Crisis of 2008 and What it Means, and The Tragedy of the European Union: Disintegration or Revival? His most recent book is In Defense of Open Society

The United States has been a constantly evolving democracy ever since it was founded in 1776, but its survival as a democracy is now gravely endangered. A set of loosely interconnected developments at home and abroad is responsible for this crisis.

From abroad, the US is threatened by repressive regimes who want to impose an autocratic form of government on the world.

But the threat to the US from the domestic enemies of democracy is even greater.

They include the current Supreme Court, which is dominated by far-right extremists, and Donald Trump's Republican Party, which placed those extremists on the court.

What qualifies the majority of the court as extremists? It is not merely their decision to overturn Roe vs Wade, the landmark 1973 case that recognised a woman's right to choose whether to give birth.

What qualifies them as extremists is the arguments they used to justify their decision and the indications they gave of how far they might be willing to go in carrying out those arguments.

Justice Samuel Alito, the author of the majority opinion, based his ruling on the assertion that the Fourteenth Amendment protects only those rights that were generally recognised in 1868, when the amendment was ratified. But this argument endangers many other rights that have been recognised since then.

Carried to its logical conclusion, this line of reasoning could even allow states to ban inter-racial marriage, as some did until 1967.

It is also clear that this court intends to mount a frontal attack on the executive branch. One of the most consequential rulings of the court's just-completed term denied the Environmental Protection Agency the authority to issue regulations needed to combat climate change.

It doesn't take long to find the common denominator in the court's recent decisions: support causes promoted by Trump's Republican Party and weaken or outlaw causes favoured by the Democratic Party. Consider gun laws.

The court's radical wing listens closely to the pro-gun lobby. So, though a recent epidemic of mass shootings created such a national outcry that even some Republicans supported a new federal gun law, the court compensated the National Rifle Association for the loss by striking down a longstanding New York law that placed strict restrictions on carrying concealed handguns (New York State

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC HAS BEEN ALARMED AND AROUSED BY THE US SUPREME COURT'S GROWING EXTREMISM. BUT VOTERS NEED TO RECOGNISE THE COURT'S RADICAL MAJORITY FOR WHAT IT IS: PART OF A CAREFULLY LAID PLAN TO TURN THE US INTO A REPRESSIVE REGIME.

immediately passed new gun laws, that are likely to end up before the Supreme Court).

The Supreme Court used to be among the most highly respected institutions in the US.

Through its recent decisions, the extremist majority has driven its approval rating to a historic low, and disapproval of the court to new highs.

The dissenting opinion in the case that overturned Roe flatly stated that the majority decision "undermines the court's legitimacy."

Unfortunately, the minority is likely to remain in the minority for a long time, because the extremists are younger and hold a 6-3 majority.

There is only one way to rein in the Supreme Court: throw the Republican Party out of office in a landslide.

That would allow Congress to protect through legislation the rights that had been entrusted to the protection of the Supreme Court.

It is now clear that doing so was a big mistake. Congress must act, starting with protecting a woman's right to choose. If the filibuster must be amended to achieve that, so be it.

But when it comes to organising a landslide victory against the radicalised Republicans, opponents face almost

insuperable obstacles. Republicans have not only stacked the Supreme Court and many lower courts with extremist judges. In states such as Florida, Georgia, and Texas, they have enacted a raft of laws that make voting very difficult.

While these laws focus on disenfranchising African Americans, other minorities, and young voters generally, their ultimate goal is to help Republicans win elections.

As a Florida federal judge recently wrote in striking down one of these laws, they were enacted "with the intent to restructure Florida's election system in ways that favour the Republican Party over the Democratic Party."

These laws would be bad enough if they only targeted who can vote. But Republicans are now going even further, by attacking the vote-counting and election-certification process.

From changing the law to make subversion of the electoral system easier, to recruiting believers in Trump's big lie that the 2020 election was stolen from him to oversee the process, we are watching Republicans attack our system of democracy from every angle.

And here, too, the radical Supreme Court has done its part, gutting the federal Voting Rights Act and allowing naked partisan redistricting to weaken minority voting power.

Fortunately, I am not alone in claiming that the survival of democracy in the US is gravely endangered.

The American public has been aroused by the decision overturning Roe.

But people need to recognise that decision for what it is: part of a carefully laid plan to turn the US into a repressive regime, particularly targeting women regardless of the devastating consequences.

We must do everything we can to prevent that. This fight ought to include many people who voted for Trump in the past. ©Project Syndicate, 2021



The Supreme Court used to be among the most highly respected institutions in the US.

sport

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OMAN SAIL OVERCOME ELEMENTS TO PROGRESS AT MARINA MILITARE TOUR 2022

MUSCAT: Oman Sail's elite sailing team continues to make progress at the Marina Militare Nastro Rosa Tour 2022 in Italy, despite turbulent weather where the lack of wind has impacted all teams and technical issues with the boat has prevented the team from reaching its full potential. The team is currently in

eighth place in a congested fleet after six stages of the eight-leg event. Oman Sail's team of Akram al Wahaibi, Ibtisam al Salmi, Sultan al Balushi, Ali al Balushi and Abdulmajeed al Hadhrami have embarked on their first test on board a new class, the Beneteau Figaro 3, as well as competing in wing foil

and kite regattas simultaneously. Sultan al Balushi, Wing Foil coach, said, "It is a pleasure to be here in Italy for the Nastro Rosa Tour. It is a new class and a challenge for our team, but it is a good experience and we are definitely learning as the event progresses. We have Wing Foil

for the first time, again it is a new board for us but definitely a great experience. Adding the Waszp to the Tour and having the chance to have an athlete represent Oman Sail is a great thing for our country, and we can consider this class a really good class to develop sailing and fast racing."

He added, "The Tour has been an exciting introduction to new classes for us and while results are not yet promising for podium positions, we have several legs left to go and results should improve if we have steady wind. Regardless, our main aim is to share the sport, represent our nation, learn and try

new classes with a view to building on our race experience." The team is currently travelling to Ancona for the seventh stage, taking place from 4-6 July, before finally racing around the medieval shipyards of the Venetian Arsenal in Venice where the tour concludes on July 9, 2022.



Oman inch closer to qualification

MUSCAT: The final leg for the Oman Men's National Team of the ICC Cricket World Cup League 2 just concluded in June 2022. The team was playing their last set of tri-series vs USA and Nepal at Moosa Stadium in Houston. Poised to play 2 matches vs USA and Nepal each to confirm a sure shot at the ICC CWC Qualifiers 2023, Oman landed at the breeding ground a week before the matches were scheduled. Oman played two practice games vs MLC Invitational XI, loosing the initial one marginally after setting up a mammoth 293 run target and claiming the later one successfully chasing a 296 run target. Skipper Zeeshan Maqsood

looked sublime in the last game scoring 187 not out while chasing and Bilal Khan claiming key wickets in both the matches. In the opener to the tri-series, Oman looked tad bit undercooked against the host USA who set an target of 323. Oman looked positive initially although key wickets and wrong timing costed the chase. Oman, the next day came out raging vs Nepal setting up a target of 212. Oman restricted them to 198 and claimed the series ticker 2 points. Zeeshan Maqsood was a standstill against Nepal scoring a century, claiming 3 wickets and a brilliant catch at point. Cut

to a two day break, Oman were yet again vs the hosts and were turned on to the occasion. Oman scored 280 with key contributions from Openers Jatinder Singh and Kashyap Prajapati scoring a quickfire 67 and a century by the latter respectively. Oman restricted USA to 267 cementing their top position in the table and affirming their tadness. In the last game, Nepal looked over Oman to restrict the men to just 163 and chasing away the win. Duleep Mendis , Head Coach — Men's National Team said "Overall, it was great to see the boys go out there and express themselves the we had expected them to.

Skipper Zeeshan Maqsood's outright performances on the field was something that made us feel comfortable. Overall, we had a great outing as a team playing against all of the 6 sides in the League 2 and I am certain that the remaining competition between these sides will be intense. We are almost ascertain of our position within the top 3 to make it through to the ICC CWC Qualifiers 2023." Oman Currently sits on top of the table with 44 points in 36 games followed by Scotland and UAE with 28 points (20 games) and 26 points (22 games). The top 3 of the ICC CWC League 2 will qualify for the ICC CWC Qualifiers in 2023.

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RIAL **2.990**

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+ 3 Topping Pizza Small



RIAL **1.490**

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500 gms Pack



RIAL **1.690**

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Home Mate Sufra
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‘WIMBLEDON TURNING INTO INDOOR EVENT FOR LATE STARTERS’

LONDON: Novak Djokovic said the start times for the evening sessions at the All England Club were effectively turning Wimbledon into an indoor tournament for players scheduled to play late matches on the main showcourts.

The reigning champion beat wildcard Tim van Rijthoven in four sets under the Centre Court lights on Sunday, setting up a quarter-final against young gun Jannik Sinner in a match that finished at about 10.40 pm local time (09:40 GMT).

“I don’t see a reason why there wouldn’t be an earlier start,” Djokovic told reporters.

“If you’re scheduled last on the Centre, you’re going to end up a match under the roof, which changes the conditions, the style of play, the way you move on the court. It’s more slippery. The lights.

“It’s really an indoor tournament in most of the cases when you’re scheduled last on Centre or Court One.”

Sally Bolton, the CEO of organisers the All England Club (AELTC), on Monday defended Wimbledon’s scheduling and said there were currently no plans to bring start times forward.

“The reality of running a tennis event is that once you start the day, you have no idea when the day is going to finish,” she told reporters, adding that there were no plans to move into night sessions. “It is pretty unpredictable.

“I think it’s understandable that players are providing feedback on the experience that they’re having at the Championships and of course we take account of all of that as we think about the way in which we plan our days.

“There haven’t been significant changes

to the schedule, we will always take account of the feedback we receive and look at what we do.”

CENTENARY CEREMONY

The start of Djokovic’s match on Sunday was further delayed by a ceremony marking the centenary of Centre Court involving a parade of champions.

“Of course today it was a special occasion,” the six-times Wimbledon champion added.

“For me it was an honour. I was very happy to be part of it. It’s one of those unique moments that you get to live as a tennis player, and I’ll cherish it.

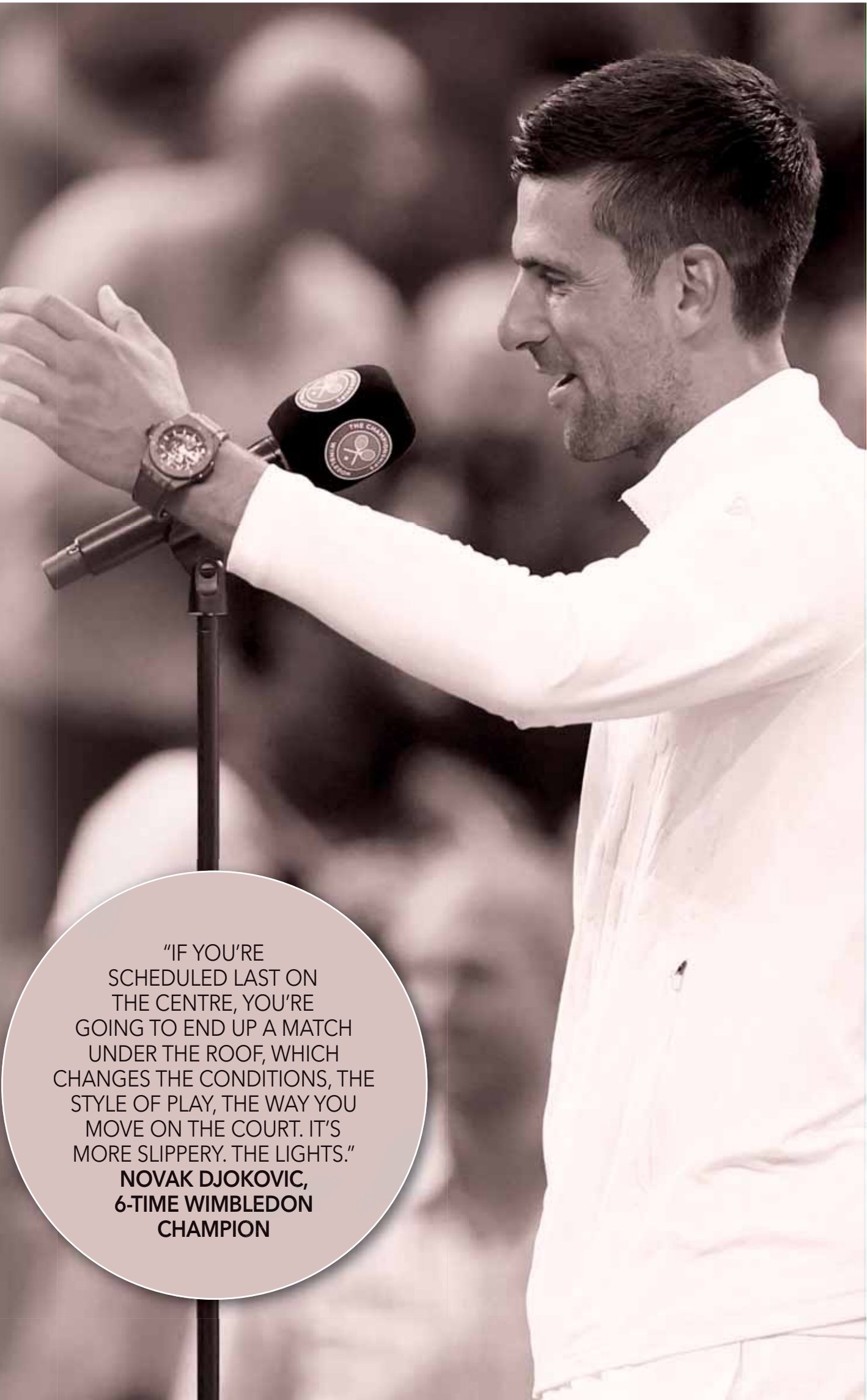
“But I think most of the players would probably agree that we would all want the start of the match on Centre Court pushed earlier.”

While much later finishes are common at the Australian and U.S. Opens, Wimbledon was unable to host matches after dark until the retractable roof and floodlights were installed on Centre Court for the 2009 championships.

This year play was scheduled over all 14 days of the tournament, bringing an end to the tradition of a day off on the middle Sunday to allow the grass courts to recover.

Djokovic said that while he respected the traditions of the tournament, the changes illustrated that alterations could be made to the schedule.

“Since there are some changes this year that we never thought we’d see in Wimbledon, why not move it for half an hour, one hour earlier?” he said. “I think it would be quite helpful to finish matches maybe not using the roof.” — Reuters



“IF YOU’RE SCHEDULED LAST ON THE CENTRE, YOU’RE GOING TO END UP A MATCH UNDER THE ROOF, WHICH CHANGES THE CONDITIONS, THE STYLE OF PLAY, THE WAY YOU MOVE ON THE COURT. IT’S MORE SLIPPERY. THE LIGHTS.”
**NOVAK DJOKOVIC,
6-TIME WIMBLEDON CHAMPION**

■ AYMAN TO PARTICIPATE AT JUNIOR OPEN GOLF EVENT IN SCOTLAND



Ayman al Busaidy, the Oman national junior golf team, will participate in the 150th Junior Open Golf Championship, that will feature the best golf players to be held from July 11-13 in St. Andrews. The 147th edition was the last Championship played in 2018 in Scotland and Martin Forster from South Africa was the winner.

England start ‘Bazball’ chase against India

BIRMINGHAM, UK: England were off to a flying start in pursuit of 378 for a series-levelling victory against India in the fifth Test at Edgbaston on Monday.

The home team were 107/1 at tea with Alex Lees and Ollie Pope in the middle. Jasprit Bumrah had bowled Zak Crawley after the opening pair of Lees and Crawley put on 107.

INDIA FOLD FOR 245

Earlier, India were dismissed for 245 in their second innings shortly after lunch on the fourth day.

There have been only two successful fourth-innings chases above 200 in a Test at Edgbaston, with South Africa making 283-5 in 2008 and England 211-3 against New Zealand in 1999.

England, however, reached seemingly stiff targets of 277, 299 and 296 during a recent 3-0 whitewash of Test world champions New Zealand.

And they now have more than 150 overs in which to chase down this latest target and so end this five-match series with India level



at 2-2.

Recalled opener Cheteshwar Pujara top-scored for India with 66, while Rishabh Pant followed his first-innings 146 with 57.

But India lost their last six wickets for 55 runs, with England captain Ben Stokes taking 4-33 in 11.5 overs.

This decider should have

SCOREBOARD	
India first Innings: 416	
England first Innings: 284	
India second Innings (O/n: 125-3):	
S Gill c Crawley b Anderson	4
C Pujara c Lees b Broad	66
H Vihari c Bairstow b Broad	11
V Kohli c Root b Stokes	20
R Pant c Root b Leach	57
S Iyer c Anderson b Potts	19
R Jadeja b Stokes	23
S Thakur c Crawley b Potts	4
M Shami c Lees b Stokes	13
J Bumrah c Crawley b Stokes	7
M Siraj (not out)	2
Extras (B-6, LB-7, NB-3, W-3)	19
Total (all out, 81.5 overs)	245
Fall of wickets: 1-4, 2-43, 3-75, 4-153, 5-190, 6-198, 7-207, 8-230, 9-236	
Bowling: Anderson 19-5-46-1, Broad 16-1-58-2, Potts 17-3-50-2, Leach 12-1-28-1, Stokes 11-5-0-33-4, Root 6-1-17-0	
England second Innings:	
A Lees (batting)	56
Z Crawley b Bumrah	46
O Pope (batting)	0
Extras (LB-4, NB-1)	5
Total (For 1 wkt, 23 overs)	107
Fall of wickets: 1-107	
Bowling: J Bumrah 5-0-23-1, M Shami 6-2-21-0, R Jadeja 4-0-18-0, M Siraj 5-0-26-0, S Thakur 3-0-15-0	

been played in Manchester last September only to be postponed just hours before the start because of coronavirus concerns within the India camp.



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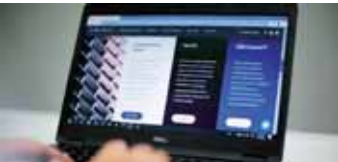
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New Importers Guide Service to promote Omani exports worldwide



MUSCAT: The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion inaugurated the Importers Guide Service, which furnishes information for international importers of Omani exports in more than 180 countries.

Asila bint Salim al Samsamiyah, Under-Secretary for Investment Promotion, said the initiative will facilitate the job of Omani exporting companies and firms wishing to access new target markets, acting from their bases in different commercial sectors. The service seeks to provide business data for potential importers of products from these sectors.

She added that Omani firms have an opportunity to contact their counterparts abroad and sign contracts with them to make Omani products available in international markets. She affirmed that the service will open up vistas for exploring new international markets and augment the rate of Omani exports.

The value of Omani non-oil exports in 2021 stood at more than RO 5.7 billion. The new service covers North America, South America, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. Importers data focus in the sectors of foods, beverages, agriculture, fisheries, chemical, petrochemicals, detergents, plastics, pharmaceutical products, textiles and garments, as well as glass, mining and electrical products. — ONA

Work on Oman’s first mega green energy project to commence shortly

Fast-track: Investment in Green Hydrogen & Chemicals Company's scheme at Duqm SEZ to rise to \$6 - 7bn across two phases

CONRAD PRABHU
@conradprabhu

An Indian-Norwegian joint venture developing the first green hydrogen project in the Sultanate of Oman envisions investments rising to a total of around \$6 - 7 billion when both phases of the mega phases are fully operational at Duqm in Al Wusta Governorate.

Green Hydrogen and Chemicals Company (GHC), a joint venture between the UK unit of Indian energy developer ACME Group and Norway-based Scatec ASA, a leading renewable energy solutions provider, recently signed a land usufruct agreement with the Omani Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones to develop the first phase of a green hydrogen and ammonia project in the Duqm SEZ.

Phase 1, set on an area of 12 square kilometres, targets the production of 100,000 metric tonnes per annum of green ammonia. But output is anticipated to grow 12-fold to around 1.2 million metric tonnes annually when a second phase is added and brought into operation – an expansion that will necessitate a proportionately large ramp-up in renewable power generation capacity, and overall investment, according to a key project official.

Rajat Seksaria, CEO, ACME Group, said the JV, while currently focused on the delivery of the first phase, also has its sights on



OUTPUT IS ANTICIPATED TO GROW 12-FOLD TO AROUND 1.2 MILLION METRIC TONNES ANNUALLY WHEN A SECOND PHASE IS ADDED AND BROUGHT INTO OPERATION – AN EXPANSION THAT WILL NECESSITATE A PROPORTIONATELY LARGE RAMP-UP IN RENEWABLE POWER GENERATION CAPACITY, AND OVERALL INVESTMENT.

planning the groundwork for the much larger second phase.

“Phase 1 production is about 300 tonnes of hydrogen per day powered by 500 MW of solar power. And we are having discussions with the authorities for Phase 2, with a capacity of around 1.1 million tonnes, requiring around 5 gigawatts (GW) of solar capacity. The investment will be in multiple billion dollars - probably around 6 - 7 billion dollars, depending upon how it's scaled in Phase 2,” Seksaria noted.

Earlier, Manoj Upadhyay, Chairman & Founder, ACME Group, said the JV was also

committed to getting started with the implementation of the landmark project – effectively making it the first green hydrogen scheme to take off in the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking at the land usufruct agreement signing, he said the project team, having already readied the full design, is now gearing up to implement the scheme on the ground in Duqm SEZ. “In fact, most of the long lead items, like building the storage, compressor and other activities, we were able to place the order well in advance,” Upadhyay said.

Citing the non-availability of a

contractor globally with integrated experience in the delivery of a green hydrogen project, he pledged ACME Group's support in the development of local capabilities in Oman.

“We are building a local supply chain with the local companies so they can be trained in the future (to think about the) many new projects which will be coming to these parts,” Upadhyay said.

Significantly, an offtake agreement covering the green ammonia output from the Duqm scheme is expected to be signed soon, said Upadhyay, noting that it would be the “world's first

offtake agreement” of its kind.

According to Seksaria, as many as 11 international consultancy firms are currently assisting in the development of the project which, besides solar farms, electrolyzers and ammonia plants, will also include a dedicated desalination plant for the production of pure water, and nitrogen capture facilities for ammonia production.

The same template will be used to build out phase two of the project, he pointed out. Actual work on the project will commence on the ground in Duqm SEZ during July or August 2022, he added.

RO 33m worth projects to strengthen food security

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 4

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning along with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources signed on Monday a total of 28 agreements for the implementation of a number of agricultural and fish projects with an investment of RO 33 million. A total of 8 million sq metres of land, distributed across various governorates of the country, have been allocated for the projects.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, said the project will enable local



and international investors to support Oman's food security objectives, as well as boost self-sufficiency in some areas of food production, and create job opportunities for local Omanis.

Additionally, the agreements will contribute to the production of at least 10 per cent of Oman's total annual wheat requirement of 320,000 - 350,000 tonnes, he noted.

Also taking part in the agreements signing was Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing and Urban Planning. The biggest of these agreements is linked to the implementation of a major finfish aquaculture project off the Wilayat of Seeb at a cost of RO 29.650

million. Another project is for the breeding of rabbits. In Al Buraimi Governorate, agreements have been signed for the allocation of land plots for the cultivation of wheat, vegetables, lemons and fodder grass.

In Al Dhahirah Governorate, several land sites have been earmarked for the cultivation of wheat, and fruits and vegetables. In Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, the focus is on poultry farming, as well as the cultivation of fruits and vegetables.

South Al Batinah Governorate, with its fertile farms, will host several new sites for the growth of vegetables and fruits, cultivation of mangoes, and investments in poultry farms.

Sohar International receives Wells Fargo Special Recognition Award



MUSCAT: Revered for upholding the highest degree of excellence in all operations, Sohar International was recently honoured with the ‘Wells Fargo Special Recognition Award’ crystal. The highly coveted award is granted to banks that have achieved a Straight-Through Processing (STP) rate of over 99 per cent for their payments. The award recognises the bank’s continued pursuit of accomplishing high commercial payment STP rates that allows Wells Fargo to expedite the processing and settlement of payments to the beneficiary banks around the world.

By delivering properly formatted payments to Wells Fargo, the bank has been able to enhance operational efficiencies, facilitate cost reductions, and honour customer commitments. “This award is a testament to Sohar International’s commitment to excellence and we are indeed honoured to have received this recognition from such a venerated international financial institution,” said Ahmed al Musalmi, Chief Executive Officer of Sohar International. “At Sohar International, we keep pace with the continuously evolving realm of international payments. Despite the complexities of the market and the challenges faced in relation to regulations, compliance protocols, and standardisation needs, we have been able to deliver quality services to our customers. Our continued investments in the latest technological innovations have helped us build a strong footing in the industry and we will continue to lead by example.”

Bank Muscat hosts event to highlight the importance of digitalisation

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, organised an event focused on the importance of financial transformation” in Suhar, North Al Batinah. The event was attended by a number of government and corporate institutional customers and senior officials from the bank. The event was aimed at enhancing partnership with government, corporate and private institutions by offering a space to discuss new developments in the sector. The bank is keen to encourage its partners to benefit from the digital banking services that were developed in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040 as well as enhancing partnership and collaboration with different institutions. During the event, Ilham Murtadha al Hamaid, General Manager — Corporate Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “In line with its vision ‘To Serve you Better, Everyday,’ Bank Muscat is keen to organise events for its customers to enhance partnership and cooperation and share views that can enhance the services offered. Over the last 40 years, Bank Muscat has been developing a range of banking services and products for individuals, institutions and corporates in a manner that supports national economy and entrepreneurship. As a pioneer of Corporate Banking in the country, Bank Muscat has always been a pillar that supports the country’s needs



across the government and private sectors. The bank has been working hard to further popularise and promote digital banking by constantly adding new features and services that continue to strengthen the customer experience. We are delighted to be part of our partners’ successful journeys throughout different sectors such as oil and gas, power, water, mining, transport and telecommunications, airports, free zone development and industry. We are delighted to further build on this success and continue launching new world-class banking services and solutions that fulfil the complex requirements of our valued customers.” Ilham al Hamaid further pointed out that the shift to digital has been gathering pace in recent years and given a further boost to this

all over the world. These rapid developments have now changed the way transactions are done. We have noticed a noticeable change amongst our Government and Corporate Banking clients with more and more of them using digital banking once they discovered the ease and remarkable convenience of using these highly secure services. Throughout such events, Bank Muscat highlights the importance of digital transformation in developing institutions and introduces these types of electronic services. During the event, a presentation about Government Digital Transformation Programme 2021-2025 was given by Sumaya bint Humeed al Kindiyah, Head of Masar Team & Participant in Government Digital Transformation Programme,

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology. The agenda also included a presentation by Abbas bin Fayadh al Lawati where he focused on digital services and platforms offered by the bank for government institutions and corporates as well as the financing facilities developed for corporates which can serve different sectors. Wafa bint Ibrahim al Ajmiyah, Assistant General Manager — Transaction & Government Banking, Bank Muscat, said in her closing speech: “I would like to express my thanks and appreciation for Bank Muscat’s customers for their participation, and for their strong confidence in the bank’s financial services and facilities. Digital transformation witnessed a surge in popularity, especially during the last few years due to the massive transformation in the banking and IT sectors in general. At Bank Muscat, we have implemented a strong technological infrastructure, and are working on creating a ‘digital culture’. This digitalisation is reflected in all our operations, products and services. Over the past few years, the digital services and facilities provided by Bank Muscat have been seeing increasing demand from our institutional and corporate customers because of numerous advantages. In particular, these solutions optimise cash flow management and provide complete control.”

Shell offers cashback for ahli islamic credit cardholders

MUSCAT: As part of its continuous efforts to provide exclusive benefits under its credit card profiles, ahli Islamic has announced a collaboration with Shell Oman Marketing to offer an exciting cash reward to its credit cardholders. Scheduled to run in the fourth week of each month for five days, starting from June until December 2022, all ahli islamic credit card holders will get a 20 per cent cashback when fueling at Shell service stations or shopping at Shell Select stores. Yousuf al Rawahi, Deputy General Manager and Head of ahli islamic said, “We recognise the importance of meeting customers’ needs and providing them with Shariah-compliant banking solutions consistent with their evolving lifestyle. Hence, ahli islamic has always strived to create products and services that help all our customers achieve their goals and earn value-added benefits.”



“This objective is also reflected in the cashback offer for the ahli islamic credit cardholders, who can access a range of services and benefits provided by our third-party partners from across different sectors. It is also indicative of our digital transformation journey and encouraging cashless transactions across the country, as part of Oman 2040 objectives.” As part of the collaborative promotion, ahli islamic customers can avail a discount of up to RO 10 at Shell Oman service stations and Select outlets. “This offer is in line with the bank’s objective to keep providing excellent customer-centric services that are innovative, secure, and convenient. It also demonstrates our in-depth understanding of clients’ needs and our keenness to adapt these learnings to meet customer expectation and current market requirements,” Al Rawahi added.

Live the moment in the exciting Kia Sonet SUV

MUSCAT: Power-packed, fuel-efficient and fun to drive, the Kia Sonet is a perfect companion for those seeking to make the most of every drive. Designed to impress, engineered to excite and equipped with impressive features and technology to take you further, the Sonet is a compact SUV with more than you expect. Kia Sonet’s power is dished out from its powerful 1.5L engine that is paired to a CVT transmission. Offering comfortable space to passengers with its 5-seater capacity, this SUV goes the distance giving an impressive average of 17.5 kmpl. Designed around the driver with a well laid-out, intuitive infotainment and cluster interface, the Sonet was built taking into consideration the end user’s experience. The Sonet comes with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay feature, Audio Remote Control, Bluetooth, USB charger. Harbours functional qualities in every inch of its ergonomic space. Making a style statement on every arrival are a range of well designed features. They include body colour outside mirror, 2-tone bumper, power outside mirror, body colour



door handles, side repeater lamps in outside mirror, 16” alloy wheels, chrome radiator grille, rear fog lamps, LED front fog lamps, roof rack, LED headlamps, LED daytime running lamps and more. Boasting multiple segment-first features that offer the ultimate driving experience for customers, the Sonet provides comfort, convenience, and safety. Fitted with 8” Audio Display, the Sonet also comes with other smart features such as remote engine start, auto cruise control and more. Adding to increased levels of convenience as features like keyless entry system, smart key with button start, central door lock and more.

2023 Changan CS35 Plus Crossover available at low EMI

MUSCAT: Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC (AGAE), which is part of Bahwan International Group, is offering low EMI starting from RO 105 for eight years on the all-new 2023 Changan CS35 Plus crossover, which boasts of a heavily revised exterior and youthful, interactive, safe, and powerful engine with manufacturer’s warranty of 6 years or 250,000 kms (whichever is earlier) the all-new Changan CS35 Plus Crossover front facade is now bolder with muscular fender flanges with roof rails and LED headlamps. The all-new CS35 Plus limited

variant comes with amazing features including 18” alloy wheels, leather seats, panoramic sunroof, 10-inch touch info screen, 7” LCD digital instrument cluster and LED headlamps plus it’s equipped with all the advanced safety attributes like adaptive cruise control, hill descent control, 360° view camera, forward collision warning, automatic emergency brake, front side airbag and curtain airbag and additionally comfort feature like electric tailgate and wireless charging. Energetic like new generation youth, Changan CS35 Plus is packed with a 1.4 litre turbo



charged engine which produces 156 hp and 260 nm of torque and fitted with a 7-speed dual clutch transmission (DCT) to always keep owners ahead of the segment competition. A spokesperson for AGAE

said, “We are pleased to introduce 2023 MY which has come with facelift with new age design. We are confident that this new design and stylish Changan CS35 Plus will prove to be yet another reason for car-buyers to upgrade

their cars. The sporty new-generation crossover developed by the global research and development team of Changan Automobile integrates all comprehensive functions: high-quality performance, comfortable driving experience, large internal space and abundant configurations of entertainments.” He also added that All-new Changan CS35 Plus 2023 model year is energetic in style and sprightly in design. The CS35 Plus offers a robust look on the outside while the beautifully crafted interior gives a first-class feel inside. It is a youthful

SUV for younger generation who are spirited, passionate, social and want to become the influencers of their time. Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment which is part of Bahwan International Group has set up a spacious and state-of-the-art showroom in Al Qurum and service centre in Ghala, Muscat. AGAE has already tied up for Periodic Maintenance Services in many cities including Salalah, Suhar, Sur, Nizwa, Ibra and Barka etc. Changan Oman offers 6 years or 250,000 kms manufacturer warranty on all passenger vehicles in Oman.



Do's and don'ts of safe disposal of animal waste this Eid al Adha

QASIM AL MAASHANI

MUSCAT, JULY 4

Ahead of the celebration of Eid al Adha, Oman's authorities are seeking to remind the faithful — Omanis and expatriates alike — that they have an obligation to ensure that offal and other waste from the sacrificial animal are suitably and efficiently disposed of.

Seeking to avert a repeat of scenes that have played out year after year — particularly in rural areas across the country — Oman Environmental Services Holding Company (be'ah), which oversees the solid waste sector in the Sultanate of Oman — is once again reminding citizens and residents alike that animal waste resulting from the Eid al Adha sacrifice must end up only in designated waste bins installed across the country.

Many of us will recall, in past years, scenes of bloodied animal waste dumped in public locations, often in close proximity of main roads or left to rot in makeshift waste heaps. In the heat of summer, these stinking piles would typically attract stray dogs, and also a multitude of flies and other insects.

Besides posing a hazard to public health, such piles of abandoned animal waste would also pose dangers to the safety of water resources in the area, and also threaten the local environment.

In recent years, however, with the modernisation of its solid waste collection and disposal infrastructure, be'ah has also developed its capabilities to deal with sacrificial animal waste.

Working in collaboration with its licensed service providers in the different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, be'ah has put in place policies and practices to ensure the prompt collection and disposal of animal waste.

Specially designed bins are typically installed at strategic locations in every village and towns to allow for local inhabitants to safely deposit their animal waste pending their transportation and eventual disposal in designated municipal dumpsites.

In preparation for the Eid al Adha holiday, several hundreds of these bins are installed in place around the Sultanate of Oman.

Emblazoned with the logo



of be'ah, these giant bins are large enough to hold substantial quantities of animal waste. Hundreds of workers and clean-up staff, employed by the licensed service providers, are also deployed over the holiday to ensure that the bins are promptly emptied or replaced with fresh bins.

Collection and disposal of animal waste during the Eid holiday is a well-oiled process that the nation can indeed be proud of.

But what role can we play as consumers and members of the general public in ensuring the overall success of be'ah animal

waste handling and disposal campaign during the upcoming Eid al Adha holiday?

Our role, in my view, is critical. As generators of the waste, first and foremost, we are also called upon to ensure that the waste is carefully deposited in the assigned bins. To achieve this, we would need to first ensure the availability of suitably heavy duty biodegradable plastic bags (or other packaging material).

After filling the bags with the waste, they need to be tied with string and placed in the designated bins. be'ah also encourages us to ensure

IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE PLAY OUR PART IN ENSURING THE SAFE AND PROPER DISPOSAL OF ANIMAL WASTE THIS EID AL ADHA HOLIDAY. IN DOING SO WE ARE DEMONSTRATING A STEADFAST COMMITMENT TO OUR OMANI VALUES AND CULTURE, BUT ALSO AFFIRMING OUR INTEREST IN KEEPING THE ENVIRONMENT PRISTINE.

that the waste-filled bags are deposited inside the bin and not merely dumped nearby.

For our own safety and well-being, we are advised to wash down the area where the sacrificial animal was slaughtered. Disposing of any washings or liquid waste in water streams or wadis is strictly frowned upon.

Such actions can pose public health or environmental hazards. Likewise, avoid disposing of any waste in the local drainage system as this will result in blocked drains and also contribute to the problem of pests and rodents.

To sum up, it's imperative that we play our part in ensuring the safe and proper disposal of animal waste this Eid al Adha holiday. In doing so we are demonstrating a steadfast commitment to our Omani values and culture, but also affirming our interest in keeping the environment pristine.



Pact signed for RO 2m pharma project in Al Buraimi Industrial City

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 4

Al Buraimi Industrial City — part of the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) — has signed an investment contract with Al Pharabi Company for Veterinary and Agricultural Medicines for the establishment of a project for the manufacturing of veterinary and agricultural medicines, vitamins, food supplements and feed additives.

This project, valued at around RO 2 million, will be built on an area of 6,000 sq metres. The

contract was signed by Said bin Abdullah al Balushi, Director General of Al Buraimi Industrial City and Jamal bin Said al Ojaili, the Company's Director.

The project will produce more than 200 types of pharmaceuticals for veterinary use, vitamins and food supplements, and will present an added value for Al Buraimi Industrial City and the Omani market. The products will also be exported to the company's agents in a number of Arab and African countries, and thus contribute to strengthening and boosting the sources of national income.

Bukha Beach Park design winners feted



BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JULY 4

Under the auspices of Sayyid Ibrahim bin Said al Busaidy, the Governor of Musandam, the award ceremony for the winners of the innovative design competition for Bukha Beach Park in Governorate of Musandam was held recently.

Organised by OQ in cooperation with the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the event saw the Governor hand out awards to three winners who were selected by a specialised evaluation committee. The competition was for university and college students to submit innovative

design concepts for Bukha Beach Park where 30 contestants competed, and three winners were selected.

Al Busaidy appreciated OQ's efforts in promoting sustainable development within the Governorate of Musandam via its social investment program, which implements many projects & initiatives in several wilayats of the Governorate.

Under the memorandum of understanding signed between the Governor's office and OQ, the planned projects and parks will have a significant impact on the local community and will provide several services and aesthetics that maximise added values.

The Plaza Hotel and Resort set to launch in Salalah

BUSINESS REPORTER

SALALAH, JULY 4

As Dhofar Governorate prepares a splendid khareef season, a new hotel is all set to open this week at the heart of the city with a capacity of more than 166 rooms.

The Plaza Hotel and Resorts, owned and managed by Ahmed al Shanfari, also features luxury suites, conference room and other facilities.

Located in the centre of the city near the Saada Commercial Centre, barely 7 km away from the Salalah International Airport, the hotel is one of the important projects to diversify the tourism

sector and attract more tourists, both from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman.

The Plaza Hotel and Resorts, built on an area of 3,600 sqm, will be open for business from Thursday, July 7, 2022, and aims to redefine the concept of mid-scale business and leisure travel, offering a comfortable and consistent environment with state-of-the-art facilities.

The 166-room hotel is aesthetically designed for the guests to enjoy their stay with prime comfort. Well equipped with reliable services and amenities, the Plaza Hotel will offer an unparalleled experience



for business and leisure visitors.

The hotel also provides distinctive benefits making travel successful and offers guests single, double and suite accommodations.

Property highlights include a meeting room, banquet room,

conference room, kids' zone, family restaurant, main restaurant, coffee shop, business centre, rental shops, large swimming pools for gents and ladies, sauna, steam, jacuzzi, massage, Morocco bath, kids play area, large parking area,



prayer room and a large laundry.

"We are thrilled to launch the Plaza Hotel and Resorts in Salalah — an increasingly 'hot' travel destination for the MENA region. We look forward to welcoming guests to a resort offering international hospitality standards with a touch of that famous Omani hospitality. This is

a key destination for us and we are confident it will be a huge success", said Khaled Moaz (pictured), General Manager.

"Salalah is a picturesque city of natural wonders and historic attractions, with a colourful past, alluring present and a promising future. We look forward to warmly welcoming guests and delivering the highest standards of service. As a team, we are committed to creating an environment, which allows our guests to feel totally at home. We are proud of our resort which can offer a range of experiences, from total tranquillity to exciting adventures", Moaz added.

Putin issues decree to seize key exporter of natural gas in Russia's Far East



The Grand Aniva tanker is loaded at a liquefied natural gas terminal south of Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, on Sakhalin Island in Russia's Far East. — The New York Times

PUTIN'S MOVE IS THE FIRST TIME HE HAS GRABBED AN INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM PROJECT SINCE THE ATTACK ON UKRAINE IN FEBRUARY. DURING HIS TWO DECADES IN POWER, THOUGH, THE RUSSIAN GOVERNMENT HAS PLAYED HARBALL WITH FOREIGN OIL AND GAS COMPANIES.

STANLEY REED

Russia is moving to take over an important natural gas joint venture, putting the investments of Shell and two Japanese energy trading companies at risk in a seizure of a significant foreign investment.

A decree issued by Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday is directed toward Sakhalin-2, a project in Russia's far east that is a key exporter of liquefied natural gas to Japan. The Kremlin's move raised concerns in Japan about the future of those shipments.

Gazprom, Russia's natural gas monopoly, has a controlling 50 per cent stake in Sakhalin-2, followed by Shell, the European oil giant, with 27.5 per cent, and Mitsui and Mitsubishi, two energy firms based in Japan with shares totalling 22.5 per cent.

The decree says that a new company will take over Sakhalin-2 and that the three foreign investors have one month to ask the Russian government to keep their stake in the new enterprise.

Shell has previously said it plans to exit the venture as part of its efforts to pull out of Russia because of the attack on Ukraine.

On Friday, Shell said it was "assessing" the implications of Russia's move but declined to comment further. Shell has already written off \$1.6 billion of the value of Sakhalin-2.

Putin's move is the first time he has grabbed an international petroleum project since the attack on Ukraine in February. During his two decades in power, though, the Russian government has played hardball with foreign oil and gas companies.

Essentially, Putin and the Russian oil industry have wanted Western companies to bring to the table capital and technology but with Russian entities retaining control.

Shell led the way in developing Sakhalin-2, which is based on Sakhalin Island in the Pacific and was Russia's first liquefied natural gas facility, sending its first cargo to Japan in 2009. It gave the country a foothold in the fast-growing fuel, which is chilled to a liquid so it can be transported on ships.

Building the project was tricky because the location was remote and rugged and the gas needed to be piped from icy waters off the northern coast of the island to a liquefaction and export terminal in the warmer sea to the south.

Shell originally had a majority stake but came under fire from the Russian authorities, mostly because of allegations of environmental violations. In 2007, Shell and its Japanese partners yielded to pressure to sell a controlling stake to Gazprom.

Putin may be trying to avoid what has happened with another project on the island, Sakhalin-1. The facility has been operated by Exxon Mobil, which has a sizable minority stake and, like Shell, has

also said it is pulling out of Russia.

In recent months, oil exports from the facility have dropped sharply. In June, not a single tanker took crude oil from the facility compared with a prior average of about one ship every three days, said Viktor Katona, an analyst at Kpler, a firm that tracks petroleum shipping.

The presidential order is unlikely to inflict much immediate damage on Shell, Europe's largest energy company, which reported a record \$9.1 billion profit for the first quarter of this year, because of high oil and gas prices.

It could, though, herald other strong-arm tactics against Western oil companies that still have assets in Russia.

After the attack on Ukraine in February, Shell said it would exit Sakhalin-2 and other ventures in Russia, although it did not set a precise date or indicate what it would do with its stake and other ventures. In May, Shell sold its gasoline stations in Russia to

Lukoil, a private Russian company. If it gave up Sakhalin-2, Shell would also lose its share of the liquefied natural gas exported by the project, which amounted to about 5 per cent of the company's global LNG trading last year, according to an estimate by Bernstein, a research firm.

LNG may be a significant business for Shell, but Alexander McColl, an analyst at Bernstein, said the loss of Sakhalin-2 was "not a game changer" for Shell.

The smooth flow of fuel supplies from Sakhalin-2 to Japan and other countries

may be the primary concern after this move. The facility may continue to function under its new ownership, but not having a leading LNG operator such as Shell to work with Gazprom will not help in the long run, McColl said.

Both Mitsui and Mitsubishi said there had been no impact on production at Sakhalin-2 so far.

Sakhalin-2 has great importance to Japan, providing about 8 per cent of the country's liquefied natural gas, a mainstay of the power industry in recent years that was already under pressure.

After the Fukushima nuclear meltdown in 2011, Japan embraced liquefied natural gas as a fuel that was cleaner than coal and safer than nuclear. About one-third of Japan's electricity now comes from power plants burning LNG.

In recent months, though, prices have soared as Japanese buyers found themselves in competition with utilities in Europe scrambling to make up for shortfalls of gas from Russia.

After Western oil companies announced plans to leave Russia after the attack on Ukraine, Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said his country could not afford to pull out of Sakhalin-2, which he described as "extremely important to Japan's energy security."

After Putin's move to take over the company, though, Kishida said the government needed to keep "a watchful eye on the kind of demands" the new arrangement may bring.

Inflation in Eurozone soars to a record high

MELISSA EDDY

Record energy prices drove the inflation rate for the countries using the common European currency to 8.6 per cent over the year through June, as the fallout of the war in Ukraine and the economic conflict it has set off between Russia and Western Europe continued to bite.

Nearly half of the 19 countries in the eurozone have now reached double-digit annual inflation, figures released on Friday by Eurostat, the European Union's statistics agency, showed. The overall rate was the latest record high since the creation of the euro in 1999.

Many eurozone countries depend heavily on Russia as a source of fossil fuels to heat homes and power their economies. But the amount of energy, especially natural gas, flowing to Europe from Russia has been reduced by more than half since Russia's attack on Ukraine on February 24, driving prices to record levels and leaving European governments scrambling for alternative sources.

The fresh inflation data will bolster plans by the European Central Bank to raise rates for the first time

Eurozone Inflation Hits New High

Year-over-year change in harmonized index of consumer prices



in more than a decade at its meeting in three weeks, and to increase them further later in the year, amid concerns that the risk of persistently high inflation outweighs a deteriorating economic growth outlook.

The situation in each eurozone member varies. Although inflation in Germany and the Netherlands dipped slightly in June, Spain set a record, hitting

The fresh inflation data will bolster plans by the European Central Bank to raise rates for the first time in more than a decade at its meeting in three weeks, and to increase them further later in the year, amid concerns that the risk of persistently high inflation outweighs a deteriorating economic growth outlook

double digits for the first time since 1985.

For the three Baltic States in northeast Europe — Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia — prices that high have been a reality for months.

Despite their differences, all of these countries are in some way feeling the effects of the jump in the price of energy, which rose to 41.9 per cent over the year through June, three times the rate in the same period a year earlier, and prices for food, which were up to 8.9 per cent over the past year, also a significant acceleration.

Economists are predicting that higher prices could lead workers to demand higher wages, which could solidify rapid inflation and put more pressure on interest rates to rise. But the aftereffects of the coronavirus pandemic, combined with the unpredictability of the war, have made forecasts difficult.

Mateusz Urban, an economist at Oxford Economics, wrote in a report that June could be the peak of eurozone inflation, but that the pace of price rises "will slow only gradually throughout 2022." But as Kerstin Bernoth and Marcel Fratzscher of the German Institute for Economic Research note, "There is enormous uncertainty how the economic situation and the inflation in the eurozone will develop in the coming months."

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Kayaking among Lotus Flowers

Not far away from his village, something caught Omani photographer Mohammed al Malki's curiosity. Using a kayak and a camera, he explored further the plants that covered the waters in Wadi Shab and related that it's one of the must-try experiences to wade amongst this water plants to get a different perspective of the place... **P20**

In age-old ritual, Mexican mayor weds alligator to secure abundance

A SMALL TOWN Mexican mayor married his alligator bride in a colourful ceremony as traditional music rang out and revellers danced while imploring the indigenous leader to seal the nuptials with a kiss. San Pedro Huamelula Mayor Victor Hugo Sosa obliged more than once during Thursday's wedding, bending down to plant his lips on the small alligator's snout, which had been tied shut presumably to avoid

unwanted biting. The ritual marriage likely dates back centuries to pre-Hispanic times among Oaxaca state's Chontal and Huave indigenous communities, like a prayer pleading for nature's bounty. "We ask nature for enough rain, for enough food, that we have fish in the river," said Sosa, mayor of the small fishing village on Oaxaca's steamy Pacific coast. Oaxaca, located in Mexico's poor



south, is arguably the country's richest in indigenous culture and home to many groups that have stubbornly maintained their languages and traditions. The San Pedro Huamelula Mayor

Victor Hugo Sosa kisses a seven-year-old alligator dressed as a bride during a traditional ritual marriage, likely dates back centuries to pre-Hispanic times, between the mayor and the reptile that depicts a prin-

cess, as a prayer to plead for nature's bounty. The age-old ritual in San Pedro Huamelula, now mixed with Catholic spirituality, involves dressing the alligator or caiman in a white wedding dress plus other colourful garments. The seven-year-old reptile, referred to as a little princess, is believed to be a deity representing mother earth, and her marriage to the local leader symbolises the joining of humans with the divine. As trumpets blared and drums provided a festive beat, locals carried the alligator bride in their arms through village streets as men fanned it with their hats. "It gives me so much happiness and makes me proud of my roots," said Elia Edith Aguilar, known as the godmother who organised the wedding. She said that she feels privileged to be entrusted with carrying out the ceremony, and noted she spent a lot of time fretting over what the bride would wear. "It's a very beautiful tradition," she added with a smile. — Reuters

READ

SEE YOU IN THE COSMOS

BY JACK CHENG

Alex travels to a rocket convention in New Mexico from his home in Colorado in an effort to send his Golden iPod into space so that the aliens can get it.



DANCE AFFAIR

Students of the Ballet Manguinhos School practice dance movements after a photo session at the Manguinhos favela in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. — AFP



FASHION TRENDS

A model presents a creation during a fashion show celebrating the centenary of French fashion designer Pierre Cardin, at Ca' Bragadin, in Venice. — AFP





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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

New York artist turns Brooklyn home into showcase for urban dioramas



A SELF-TAUGHT New York artist took advantage of the pandemic to create a diverse array of dioramas that depict urban Brooklyn scenes in addition to a host of other more rural settings.

Aaron Winston Kinard has worked for decades for Barnard College in Manhattan. Around four years ago, he elevated a life-long artistic flair into a passion for creating ornate dioramas.

A diorama is a miniature model of a scene represented through the use of three-dimensional objects placed in an artistic background.

Kinard's home is like a mini-museum of his works.

When creating a work, Kinard devotes several days to painting items such as bricks. He taps in to a range of forms, from 3D printing to airbrushing to complete his works.

When the pandemic hit, he no longer had to travel across the city for work, which gave him more time to dive deeper into his artistic project.

"We've been on virtual or semi-lockdown for almost three years now, and during that time I had to make a decision," he said in an interview at the Brooklyn home he shares with his partner. "While I was on lockdown, was I going to sit on the couch and watch television and drink some beers until this was over? Or was I going to get creative?"

He followed through, and tackled themes that were on everyone's mind during the shutdown.

Themes included urban streetscapes, poverty, homelessness and Black Lives Matter protests.

Kinard, a native of Washington, D.C., who has lived in New York since the late 1970s, had no formal art training other than a few classes at Barnard and the New York-based International Center for Photography.

He says he relies on experimentation and instructions on YouTube videos.

"When I looked at many miniatures or videos on this, you see guys making railroad trains and train stations, small towns, and it's always rural and it always reflects White America, for the most part," he said.

"And although it looks beautiful and they have talent, it wasn't anything that I was relating to. When I tried to scan the Internet, there were very few Black artists doing this type of work also, and I wanted to represent."

ARTEMIS PROGRAMME

Nasa satellite breaks from orbit, heads to moon



A SATELLITE THE Size of a microwave oven on Monday successfully broke free from its orbit around Earth and is headed towards the moon, the latest step in Nasa's plan to land astronauts on the lunar surface again.

It's been an unusual journey already for the Capstone satellite. It was launched six days ago from New Zealand's Mahia Peninsula by the company Rocket Lab in one of their small Electron rockets. It will take another four months for the satellite to reach the moon, as it cruises along using minimal energy.

If the rest of the mission is successful, the Capstone satellite will send back vital information for months as the first to take a new orbit around the moon called a near-rectilinear halo orbit: A stretched-out egg shape with one end of the orbit passing close to the moon and the other far from it.

Eventually, Nasa plans to put a space station called Gateway into the orbital path, from which astronauts can descend to the moon's surface as part of its Artemis programme.

The Electron rocket that

launched June 28 from New Zealand was carrying a second spacecraft called Photon, which separated after nine minutes. The satellite was carried for six days in Photon, with the spacecraft's engines firing periodically to raise its orbit farther and farther from Earth.

A final engine burst on Monday allowed Photon to break from Earth's gravitational pull and send the satellite on its way. The plan now is for the 25 kilogram satellite to far overshoot the moon before falling back into the new lunar orbit on November 13. The satellite will use tiny amounts of fuel to make a few planned trajectory course corrections along the way.

Meanwhile, China on Monday rejected as an irresponsible smear a warning from the chief of Nasa that China might "take over" the moon as part of a military programme, saying it has always called for the building of a community of nations in outer space.

China has stepped up the pace of its space programme in the past decade, with

exploration of the moon a focus. China made its first lunar uncrewed landing in 2013 and expects to launch rockets powerful enough to send astronauts to the moon towards the end of this decade.

"We must be very concerned that China is landing on the moon and saying: 'It's ours now and you stay out'", Nasa Administrator Bill Nelson told German newspaper 'Bild' in an interview published on Saturday. The US space agency chief said China's space programme was a military one and that China had stolen ideas and technology from others.

"This is not the first time that the head of the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration has ignored the facts and spoken irresponsibly about China", said Zhao Lijian, a spokesman at the Chinese foreign ministry.

"The US side has constantly constructed a smear campaign against China's normal and reasonable outer space endeavours and China firmly opposes such irresponsible remarks."

— Agencies

A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

From our folk arts

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

OUR FOLK ARTS

At that time the widely-spread folk arts were the likes of aiyal, aazi, shilla, razha. Similar to traditional songs, some were exclusive to certain occasions. People, both men and women, would sing on the plains when grazing their animals or engaged in any other activities. After the Eid prayers, women would stand up nearby and sing melodious songs in a happy atmosphere.

AL OSEFER AND AL YATIMA

Just as we had our pedigree male camel, called Osefer, mentioned earlier, so Uncle Salim had a female camel called Yatima. Pride and joy of our all family, the beautiful Yatima was deemed to be one of the excellent camels for racing throughout the whole region. Although friendly towards me and to the rest of our family, she was particularly close to my cousin Mohammed bin Ali al Kalbani, probably because he took special care of her.

TRAVELLING TO AL KHABOURAH

We would go to Al Khabourah, where we pursued our business interests, either once or twice a month. Depending on weather conditions, our journey started either in the morning or in the evening. I once went with Uncle Saif al Kalbani in a group of seven people, all on camels. I was the youngest of all. There

was a small valley known as Wadi Shaki in the larger Wadi Al Hawasina. We stayed up there and let our camels graze from the sadar tree.

There was a big stone named "Maraza". We had a white stone in Miskin with the same name, which children used to compete in carrying as an exercise for the task ahead in Wadi Al Hawasina. For it was the custom that if someone couldn't carry the Hawasina stone, he would bear the consequence by arranging a dinner for the whole group. The dinner was the Qashe fish with Omani oil. This latter we kept in akka, lizard's skin, known for its toughness and cohesiveness. As such oil wouldn't seep through it.

AL O'WS EMBARRASSES US

Once, with Uncle Saif al Kalbani, we encountered a fox, locally known as ALO'ws. We hunted it, as it was lying on the ground. But it happened that the fox bit so fiercely the left hand of the person who wanted to slaughter it that its teeth left a hole in it. He was taken to the small town of Ghezeen to be treated with iodine, known locally as hal dam. The Ghezeen people, all from the Hawasina tribe, began to treat him without knowing anything about the bite. They later inquired insistently about the reason. Our people hesitated to say anything at first, as it was viewed unmanly to be bitten by a fox. After a rather heated debate, the man who had been bitten began to feel that his people were being embarrassed. Consequently, he revealed the whole incident.

art & life

Local Scene

f t i y u @omanobserver

TUESDAY | JULY 5 | 2022

Kayaking among lotus flowers

By Zuwaina Al Sulimani

What is better than escaping the hustle and bustle of modern life for a whole day on the water for kayaking. Kayaking is one of the best ways to explore a new place and creates some of the best memories. The memory is completed if kayaking is among the glorious lotus flowers. By paddling along next to a place and looking at it, as opposed to being directly immersed in it, you get a completely different perspective.

Using a kayak and a camera, Mohammed al Malki, an Omani photographer, indulges in quiet waves of Wadi Shab and charming lotus flowers taking beautiful shots of the place. As he mentioned, the presence of these rare flowers in Oman especially not far away from his village caught his attention to visit the place. He took shots of the lotus flowers in the Wadi which went viral through social media.

For most people, it is known that lotus flowers grow in rainy countries, and it was a surprise for Mohammed to know that they are planted in Tiwi. He thought that it will be a unique experience to try as he was excited to picture the place and spread great pictures to people who are interested in Oman's tourism and photography.

Mohammed is among those few photographers who enjoyed the experience of kayaking through the lotus flowers.

To the viewer, the flowers seem to be covering the surface of the wadi only, yet the fact is that the roots of the flow-

ers go so deep inside and the trunks with the leaves cover the whole boat.

"It is just as if you are inside a forest of lotus flowers. The view is splendid and it feels like you are not in Wadi Shab," says al Malki. He expressed his feeling that this experience was one of the best he has ever gone through and he encourages Omanis and tourists to visit the place to enjoy the charming beauty of Wadi Shab and louts flowers.

He describes Wadi Shab as "a famous place with an amazingly beautiful valley in which the presence of waterfalls and louts flowers give the place a magical touch with surprisingly cold place inside."

The Lotus flower is one kind of water plant as it is also called a water lily. It is found across India, East Africa, Southern Asia, and Australia. The reason behind its presence in Wadi Shab is likely because of tourists who have spread the seeds in the Wadi and they surprisingly grow up. They beautifully bloom during the day, petal by petal, then close up at night. It is considered to be a symbol of purity, rebirth and strength across various cultures. It has flowers of various colours such as red, pink, white, creamy white and yellow.

Mohamed concludes his amazing experience by saying that one of the photographers' missions to their country is to highlight the beauty of different places through their lenses. "we have this duty of revealing the country to other people through photography. This talent, if not invested correctly to the service of the country and humanity, will lose its essence" he explained.

