

P10

STOKES AND CURRAN STAR AS ENGLAND WIN T20 WORLD CUP



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FISH OIL PLANT OPENED IN DUQM SEZ



P20

BEYOND MATS: LOCAL ARTISAN REIMAGINES MORE...



■ **SUHAR**

SANVIRA CARBON PLANT IN FREE ZONE

The Sanvira carbon plant was inaugurated at Sohar Free Zone. The plant has a production capacity of 600,000 tonnes annually of calcined petroleum coke and 24 megawatts of electricity annually through produced steam. The plant is an Omani-Indian partnership, represented by Oman National Investments Development Company “Tanmia”, United Business company and India’s Sanvira Industries. The plant is the first-of-its-kind in Oman that transforms petroleum coke into a product of high industrial value. **DETAILS ON P13**

■ **BALI**

BIDEN AND XI TO MEET TODAY

US President Joe Biden will meet Chinese leader Xi Jinping in person on Monday for the first time since taking office, with US concerns over Russia’s war in Ukraine and North Korea’s nuclear ambitions on top of his agenda. The long-awaited in-person meeting comes as relations between the superpowers have sunk to their lowest in decades. The two will meet on the Indonesian island of Bali ahead of the annual G20 summit. Biden goes into the meeting on the back of a major domestic victory with Democrats clinching control of the Senate, a development acknowledged by global leaders.

■ **OMAN, HUNGARY DISCUSS RELATIONS**



HH Sayyid Fahd bin Mahmood al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers, received Dr Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary. At the outset of the meeting, HH Sayyid Fahd reviewed the relations between Oman and Hungary, stressing the importance of supporting bilateral cooperation between the two countries in various areas to serve the joint interests.

PHOTO BY MOHAMMED AL RASHDI

Stone laid for RO 43 million titanium project

SUHAR: Sohar Titanium Company – a subsidiary of Minerals Development Oman (MDO) – celebrated the foundation stone laying of its integrated titanium dioxide plant in Sohar Free Zone on Sunday.

Built on an area of 120,000 square metres, the plant is being established with an investment of RO 43 million and will have a capacity of 150,000 tonnes per annum. It will come into commercial operation by 2025.

Sohar Titanium project is a strategic partnership between MDO (35 per cent), Dubal Holding Company and Stork International Group through the Gulf Titanium Company.

Speaking on the occasion, Eng Nasser bin Saif al Maqbali, MDO’s CEO, said: “Today’s celebration of laying the foundation stone for Sohar Titanium project marks the beginning of a significant journey of construction works for the company’s plant to produce titanium dioxide in cooperation with our partners. We are looking forward to celebrating the reopening and operation nearly two years from now.”

DETAILS ON P13

GDP grows by 30.4% to hit RO 20.4 billion

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in current prices grew by 30.4 per cent by the end of the second quarter of 2022 to hit RO 20.4 billion compared to RO 15.6 billion during the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Statistics indicated that this rise is attributed to the surge in value-added hydrocarbon activities by 75.3 per cent and non-oil activities by 13.4 per cent.

Breaking down the figure, value-added oil activities went up by RO 3.4 billion to stand at RO 7.8 billion by the end of the second quarter of 2022 compared to RO 4.5 billion by the end of the corresponding period in 2021. This is attributed to the growth of value-added crude oil by 82 per cent to reach RO 6.8 billion compared to RO 3.8 billion by the end of the same quarter in 2021.

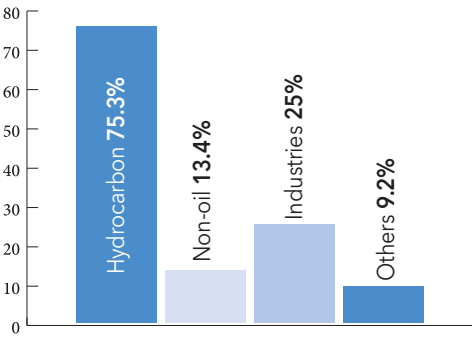
Moreover, value-added natural gas surged by 39.8 per cent. Value-added non-oil activities increased by 13.4 per cent by the end of the second quarter of 2022 to stand at RO 13.3 billion. This is the result of growth in value-added industrial activities by 25 per cent, agriculture, forestry and fishing by 9.2 per cent and services by 8.8 per cent.

Meanwhile, the rise in value-added industrial activities is attributed to the surge of converting industries by 67 per cent, electricity and water coverage and sewage activities by 4.1 per cent and mining and utilising quarries by 28.4 per cent.

The surplus in the trade balance by the end of the second quarter of 2022 rose by RO 3.1 billion to reach RO 4.7 billion.

This is attributed to the increase in the value of merchandise exports by 61 per cent to reach RO 12.3 billion compared to RO 7.7 billion during the corresponding period in 2021. — ONA

MAJOR SURGE



Category	Growth (%)
Hydrocarbon	75.3%
Non-oil	13.4%
Industries	25%
Others	9.2%

Schools told to stick to influenza guidelines

KABEER YOUSUF
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With the number of flu cases surging at par with global trends, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has asked schools to follow the ministry guidelines to deal with such cases.

The ministry had earlier asked people from the target group to get seasonal influenza vaccines available at health centres and private health institutions.

“Influenza is a global issue, and we have our systems and guidelines for schools on how to deal with flu cases and schools are expected to follow them,” said Dr Nihal Afifi, Head of Primary Health at the

Ministry of Health.

According to a school management representative, three to four children are absent per day due to symptoms of influenza, including sneezing, running nose and fever.

“We have at least three to four children reporting with symptoms of influenza including sneezing, running nose and/or fever, and for a school of our size, it’s a big number, if put together,” he said.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the current seasonal influenza is an acute respiratory infection caused by influenza viruses which circulate in all parts of the world.

Six dead in Istanbul blast

ISTANBUL: Six people were killed and 53 others were wounded on Sunday when an explosion rocked a busy pedestrian street in central Istanbul in an incident President Tayyip Erdogan called a bomb attack that “smells like terrorism”.

Ambulances raced to the scene on the packed Istiklal Avenue, which police had quickly cordoned off. The area, in the Beyoglu district of Turkey’s largest city, had been crowded as usual at the weekend

with shoppers, tourists and families.

Video footage obtained by Reuters showed the moment the blast occurred in the centre of the avenue, sending debris into the air and leaving several people lying on the ground.

“Efforts to defeat Turkey and the Turkish people through terrorism will fail today just as they did yesterday and as they will fail again tomorrow,” Erdogan told a news conference. — AFP

Arabian Engineering Services

Warm WELCOME

On the Occasion of 40 Years of a Remarkable Partnership between MAN Truck & Bus SE and AES



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Senior Vice President
Head of Center MEA & LA
MAN Truck & Bus SE
& Managing Director,
MAN Truck & Bus Middle East FZE

Mr. Bjoern Loose
Senior Vice President,
Marketing & Brand,
MAN Truck & Bus SE



■ MINISTER RECEIVES AMBASSADORS OF KSA, BANGLADESH



MUSCAT: Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Abdullah Saud al Anzi, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the Sultanate of Oman.

The two sides reviewed the bilateral relations and areas of joint cooperation between the two

countries. They also discussed several matters of mutual interest.

The ambassador lauded the firmness of relations between Oman and the KSA.

Gen Al Numani also received Mohammed Nazmul Islam, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Sultanate



of Oman. Al Numani underscored the advancement of relations between Oman and Bangladesh in various fields.

On his turn, the ambassador expressed his appreciation for the Sultanate of Oman. He also touched on several matters of common interest.

— ONA

Oman, Hungary enhance bilateral cooperation



MUSCAT: Khalid bin Hilal al Maawali, Chairman of Majlis Ash'shura, met here on Sunday with Dr Laszlo Kover, Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary.

The meeting discussed means of enhancing bilateral cooperation, especially in the legislative fields by boosting coordination between the Majlis Ash'shura and the National Assembly of Hungary.

The meeting underscored the importance of unifying perspectives in international meetings and forums by activating

the joint Omani-Hungarian Friendship Association.

The Speaker of the National Assembly of Hungary reiterated the importance of his visit in benefiting from the experience of the Majlis Ash'shura in the legislative field.

He also affirmed that the meetings which will be held during the visit will contribute to augmenting the cooperation between Oman and Hungary in various fields.

The meeting was attended by officials from both sides.

— ONA

Oman, China hold official talks session



MUSCAT: An official session of talks was held here on Sunday between the Sultanate of Oman and the People's Republic of China.

During the session, the Omani side was headed by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, while the Chinese side was headed by Zhai Jun, Special Envoy of the Chinese Government on the Middle East.

The two sides reviewed bilateral cooperation and ways of enhancing them. They also exchanged views on the Arab-Chinese summit, scheduled to be held next month in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in addition to a set of regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The session was attended by officials from the Foreign Ministry, Li Lingping, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Sultanate of Oman, and the delegation accompanying the guest.

— ONA

New health policy to benefit all visitors

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Capital Market Authority's (CMA) new health insurance policy form for visitors coming to the Sultanate of Oman will allow visitors to obtain insurance coverage through insurance companies websites.

Apart from linking the document's validity period to the duration of the visit, the policy will enable visitors to add new health benefits.

The new policy was announced based on the Insurance Companies Law issued by Royal Decree 79/12 and Royal Decree 90/2004, transferring the insurance competencies from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry to the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

This decision shall be published in the Official Gazette. It shall take effect from the day following the date of its publication.

The health insurance will be provided by the company licensed to engage in health insurance activity in the Sultanate of Oman to a person coming to Oman through land, sea, or air borders.

The health services will be offered by the health service providers approved by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and registered with CMA to provide

insurance services and health care in the Sultanate of Oman.

Health care can include a disease or injury that requires the need for continuous or long-term follow-up through consultations or treatment that requires the insured to be registered with the health service provider for a period of no less than one night so that the enrolment period exceeds one hour to obtain the necessary medical attention.

The health insurance form must include details of the insurance application and the policy (linked to the duration of the visit) starting from the moment he enters the Sultanate of Oman.

The insured is obligated to pay the insurance premium in full to the insured before entering the Sultanate of Oman.

The insured may cancel the policy if he does not enter the Sultanate of Oman, and that is within a maximum period of three working days from the date of purchasing the document, and the entire insurance premium is returned to him.

The insured must return the insurance premium to the insured within five working days from the date of cancelling the document.

The insurer must compensate the insured for the recoverable expenses within 21 working days from the date of completing

the supporting documents to claim, provided that the insured is provided with documents supporting the claim within a period not exceeding ten working days from the date of incurring those expenses.

The following cases are excluded from the application of the provisions of the document — injury intentionally caused by the insured to himself, experimental therapy, comprehensive examinations that do not require medical treatment as stipulated in the document, any examinations or health services performed for non-medical purposes, those related to medical examination, employment, travel, licensing and insurance, alternative medicine drugs and treatment methods.

Diseases that arise because of the abuse of some medicines, stimulants, or tranquillisers or by the use of alcohol, narcotics, or psychotropic substances are also excluded.

Surgery or cosmetic treatment, unless necessitated by accidental bodily injury, which is not an exception, recreation, general physical health programmes, Hepatitis C treatment, treatment of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), or related illnesses, is also not included in the policies.

More details can be availed from the insurance providers.

SQU HOLDS GRADUATION CEREMONY



MUSCAT: Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) held a graduation ceremony for the second cohort of the 33th batch which comprises 1,221 graduates from the colleges of science, under the auspices of Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, on Sunday.





Citizens march to express allegiance to HM



Citizens of the Wilayat of Maqshan organised a march of loyalty and allegiance to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq on the occasion of the 52nd National Day. Shaikh Ahmed bin Muslim Jadad, Wali of Maqshan and a number of dignitaries took part in the march alongside a large number of citizens carrying portraits of His Majesty, national flags and placards expressing National Day congratulations and sincere thanks and appreciation to His Majesty for the achievements that took place during his reign. – ONA

Countdown begins for Football Fan Festival

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The 'Oman World Cup Programme' announced the details of the Football Fan Festival, which will take place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC) from November 18.

Speaking to the media at a briefing on Sunday, the Fan Zone will be able to cater to 4,000 guests at a given time, offering contests, activities, competitions, food stalls and live broadcasts of all 64 matches.

Meanwhile, Oman Air said that ticket fares for shuttle flights will be RO 49 for both residents, with a free date change facility available as per conditions.

An area of more than 9,000 square metres at OCEC Gardens will be dedicated to the Football Fan Festival, which will feature a specially constructed fan village catering to all ages.

The 'Food Zone' will have 12



dedicated F&B outlets, and some of them will be changed regularly, ensuring that returning visitors always have something new to try.

Two 'Activity Zones', each with a dedicated five-a-side football pitch.

These two zones will feature over 22 interactive football-themed mini-games and activities for families and people of all ages to enjoy. Some highlights include:

The final zone will be the 'Football Theatre' where all 64 World Cup matches will be broadcast live, in partnership with beIN Sports.

The matches will be shown on three large screens with grandstand seating as well as at other viewing areas around the fan festival area. Moreover, each of the festival screens can stream a different match independently of the others.

Several contests and incentives will be organised before and during the Festival, on-site and online. The first is a Football Fan Festival E-World Cup, an online e-sports contest that will kick off on November 20.

The Football Fan Festival will welcome well-known musical

stars, comedians, dancers, and performers. The programme will change daily, and it is recommended to follow the Festival's website and social media channels for the most up-to-date information on programmes scheduled for each match day.

The Football Fan Festival has appointed Oman's football icon Ali al Habsi as the official brand ambassador alongside favourite sports personalities Khalil al Balushi, Fatma al Nabhani and Mohammed al Noufali. They will all join the Festival's promotional activities and on-site activities.



SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

NUMBERS
SPEAK
VOLUMESOCIAL SECURITY
PENSION129,475
BENEFICIARIESRO 109,828,261
DISBURSEDZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasse

Social progress is essential to the development of any nation. In the Sultanate of Oman, the Ministry of Social Development seeks to develop its programmes, activities, and services to be directed to various segments of society so that each individual can invest his full potential to achieve an adequate standard of living in the light of a cohesive family and a prosperous society.

The programmes of support, empowerment, rehabilitation and training provided by the ministry to the families and individuals are done in partnership with the relevant authorities in accordance with the mechanisms and services of protection and social care within a framework of sustainable development integration and within targeted social priorities, plans and policies.

The social welfare sector includes various programmes and services provided by the ministry to groups and cases in need of care and assistance. This aims to enable and provide a decent life for them. The cases benefiting from the social security pension reached 72,675 by the end of 2021, for which an amount of RO 109,828,261 was disbursed. The total number of individuals benefiting from the social security pension reached 129,475.

Disaster aid was provided under the social security system during the year 2021 to 365 people, for which RO 94,002 was disbursed. While disaster aid was also provided to 451 cases from low-income category, for which an amount of RO 129,789 was disbursed.

As part of the ministry's efforts to employ members of social security families and persons with disabilities during the year 2021, job opportunities were created for (114) members of social security families and the like and for (12) persons with disabilities.

Being an integral part of Omani society, the elderly have their share of care and attention. The Social Welfare House in Al Rustaq has a number of elderly people - especially - those who do not have a breadwinner from their relatives to take care

ELDERLY PEOPLE
BENEFITING
FROM SOCIAL
SERVICES3,308
PEOPLE1,563
MALES1,745
FEMALES

of them, serve them and meet their life needs. The number of inmates in this house until the end of 2021 reached 45 (34 males, 11 females). On the other hand, the number of elderly people benefiting from social services through the home care programme provided stood at 3,308 — 1,563 males and 1,745 females.

To enable, rehabilitate and care for persons with disabilities, to rely on themselves in managing their lives, the ministry offers a range of different welfare programmes and social services for this category, including the "Vocational Evaluation and Rehabilitation Center" which aims to care and rehabilitate persons with mental disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation.

The number of those enrolled in the centre's programmes until the end of 2021 reached 58, including 31 males and 27 females. The "Al-Aman Rehabilitation Center" also provides its entrants with a number of social, health, rehabilitation, psychological and therapeutic services. Until the end of 2021, the total number of children enrolled in the centre reached 315, including 204 males and 111 females.

There are also "Al-Wafa Centers for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities" that aim to care for children with disabilities between the ages of (2-14) years of both genders who suffer from various simple and medium mental disabilities, hearing disabilities and motor disabilities. The number of those

enrolled in these centres reached 2,590 people, 1,551 of which are males and 1,039 females, distributed over 27 centres in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Last September, the Ministry of Social Development signed six memoranda of understanding to "promote and provide training, rehabilitation and operational services for persons with disabilities" in the Sultanate of Oman; in order to promote the objectives of social responsibility through the "Be With Us For Them" initiative to support and empower persons with disabilities.

In its first year, the "Be With Us For Them" initiative aims to train 100 people with mental, visual, simple and moderate hearing disabilities, ranging in age from 18 to 40 years, for 36 weeks. The training will be in a number of jobs that are commensurate with their abilities in a number of private sector institutions in the areas of customer service, office management, document printing and photocopying, and electronic archiving.

This comes to achieve a number of the objectives, including participating in the realisation of the "Oman Vision 2040", encouraging the main sectors in the Sultanate of Oman to actively participate in achieving the strategic goals of the national priorities concerning with strengthening support for social responsibility, investing in creative ideas of the human resources and competencies that the Sultanate of Oman abounds in.

27
AL Wafa SOCIAL CENTERS2,590
PEOPLE1,551
MALES1,039
FEMALES

DISASTER AID

365 PEOPLE
RO 94,002451 PEOPLE
(LOW-INCOME CATEGORY)

RO 129,789



Oman committed to achieve net-zero emissions

VINOD NAIR
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The Sultanate of Oman has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050, announcing its plan recently. The target involves reaching zero routine flaring by 2030 and a 7 per cent reduction in emissions by that year.

Overall, the GCC countries have a responsibility and are on track towards transitioning to low-emissions economies, according to experts.

According to PwC's report on the Middle East, continued strong oil revenue across the GCC helps to maintain fiscal surplus, in turn enabling higher levels of spending which can be reinvested in renewables to help fund the energy transition, reducing the domestic consumption of hydrocarbons.

Public and private sector collaboration in the GCC and MENA will be essential to make this work, the report said.

According to the UN, net-zero emissions are key to reducing global warming under the 2015 Paris Agreement. The agreement calls for countries to achieve net-



Oman's pavilion at the COP27 summit saw a number of discussion sessions on climate change and measures undertaken to reduce carbon emissions based on the national strategy for an orderly transition to a carbon neutral plan, green economy and investment in clean energy fields.

zero emissions by 2050.

In the region, the Sultanate of Oman has been also discussing ways of cooperation in the field of green finance, as the fund is concerned with supporting projects, programmes, policies and other activities related to the green economy, and is concerned with raising climate finance under the United Nations Framework Convention on

Climate change.

The goal is to generate 20 per cent of its electricity from renewable sources by 2027.

Saudi Arabia pledged to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

The country has undertaken \$1 billion in climate change initiatives as part of the Saudi Green Initiative programme, which seeks to establish a regional carbon capture and storage centre, an early storm

warning centre and cloud seeding programmes as part of its efforts to create a greener future.

The UAE has established the Net-Zero by 2050 strategy, pledging to cut carbon emissions by 23.5 per cent, equal to 70 million tonnes by 2030.

Qatar has created a national climate change action plan to lower greenhouse gas emissions by 25 per cent by 2030 and liquefied natural gas facility carbon intensity by 25 per cent by the same year.

Qatar is the world's largest producer of liquefied natural gas and aims to expand its production to 127 million tonnes annually by 2027.

Kuwait has pledged to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7.4 per cent by 2035. The country estimates greenhouse gas emissions at around 142 tonnes of carbon by 2035, 65 per cent more than in 2016. The 7.4 per cent cut would limit GHG emissions by nearly 11 tonnes to 132 tonnes.

Bahrain committed to net-zero emissions by 2060 and pledged a 30 per cent reduction by 2035, including investments in renewable energy, and carbon removal solutions.

3rd global ministerial antimicrobial resistance conference next week

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV. 13

The Sultanate of Oman will host the 3rd Global High-level Ministerial Conference on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) at Kempinski Hotel Muscat from November 24 to 25.

The conference is organised by the government of the Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in cooperation with the Quadripartite Alliance formed by the United Nations to monitor the antibiotic resistance — World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and Gulf Health Council for the Cooperation Council



States.

The third conference builds on the success of the two previous Ministerial Conferences held in the Netherlands in 2014 and 2019, which the Sultanate of Oman participated in with a delegation headed by the Minister of Health and a representative from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The two conferences highlighted the collaborative work to tackle the risk of the spread of antibiotic resistance.

During its active participation in these two conferences, the Sultanate of Oman expressed its desire to organise and host the 3rd conference, which was widely welcomed by the participating

countries and organisations due to the Sultanate of Oman's reputation.

Conducting the event in the Sultanate of Oman represents a shift for the conference to include other regions beyond the European continent, exchange experiences, and benefit from the actions taken in those countries, which immensely helped to reduce the spread of antibiotic-resistant microbes and their adverse effects on the health and economy.

Given the importance of the event, the Sultanate of Oman has been preparing to organise and host this conference in coordination with countries, organisations, and relevant scientific bodies for approximately one year in order to provide constructive content and outcomes that serve as a fundamental addition in countering the risks of AMR locally, regionally, and globally.

Labour Ministry, PDO sign cooperation programme

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Labour and the Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) on Sunday signed a cooperation programme in the field of human resources development.

The agreement aims at encouraging practical training and organising workshops and training courses, as well as exchanging visits for experts.

It also aims to issue publications in the areas of training and management development, investment in human capital and talent management, career planning, application of successful management practices, modern technologies, networks and systems management, occupational safety and health.



The programme was signed by Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Labour Ministry for Human Resources Development, and Eng Abdul Amir bin Abdul Hussein al Ajmi, PDO External Affairs and Value Creation Director. — ONA

Omani product to treat white mold

NIZWA: A student company at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences-Nizwa has managed to produce a treatment to combat white mould or scale bugs in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

Al Zahra bint Ibrahim al Hadhramiyah, CEO of Pure Green Company, said: "We have produced a safe, natural and effective product that is extracted from natural waste materials and vegetable oils. It affects citrus and almond trees, in addition to pomegranate trees, and its symptoms are pale plant leaves and wilting of stems with a white cottony layer on the affected plant parts."

She confirmed that the product was registered with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and samples were submitted for laboratory tests. It



also obtained quality proof from the Omani Agricultural Society and has been granted intellectual property rights.

Maram bint Abdullah al Sulaimaniyah, Vice-President of Pure Green Company, said that the product would serve a large segment of society, including farmers and people interested in agriculture.



Regarding the company's future plans, Amani bint Salim al Toubiyah, Director of Human Resources for Pure Green, said that by next year, the product would be developed with nanotechnology in cooperation with the Omani Agricultural Society. Efforts are on to sign contracts for sale and distribution of the product in the Arab Gulf countries. — ONA

سلطنة عُمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مزاييدة
Bidding Announcement

Investment Announcement No.1/2022
Extend investment bidding for Develop, Manage and Operate
Dhalkut Port in Dhofar Governorate

Due to the increasing requests from investors to participate in the investment bidding, Internal investment committee at The Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology announces the following request for investment proposals for local and global companies specialized in developing, managing, and operating ports to participate and submit their investment proposals for developing, managing, and operating Dhalkut Port in Dhofar Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman.

NUMBER	DOCUMENT PURCHASING DATE	CLARIFICATION PERIODS	CLOSING DATE	DOCUMENT FEES
1/2022	06/11/2022 – 11/12/2022	11/12/2022 – 25/12/2022	22/01/2023 12:00 PM	500 Omani Rials (non-refundable)

Investment proposals must include all the requirements mentioned in Bidding document

Document fee should be paid by a transfer only to the Ministry's account number **0325001361300017 Bank Muscat**

The payment receipt must be sent to **investment@mtcit.gov.om**

The bidding document will be shared via email

Investment proposal must be valid for at least 12 months and should be signed and stamped

The RFP document will be sent by E-mail only

All investment proposals should be sent as PDF to **investment@mtcit.gov.om**

For any other inquiries please contact us through the following numbers:

PHONE NUMBER	E-mail
24685341 24685094	investment@mtcit.gov.om

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Muscat Arab Digital Capital
2022

JAPAN, SOUTH KOREA AND US DENOUNCE NORTH KOREA MISSILE LAUNCHES

Biden promises competition with China, not conflict

PHNOM PENH: US President Joe Biden told Asian leaders on Sunday that US communication lines with China would stay open to prevent conflict, as the first of three summits of world leaders this week ended, with tense talks almost certain in the days ahead.

Biden during an address to the East Asia Summit in Cambodia, said the United States would “compete vigorously” with Beijing while “ensuring competition does not veer into conflict”, stressing the importance of peace.

Biden also called on Myanmar’s military rulers to follow a peace plan they agreed to with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), while condemning North Korea’s missile launches and Russia’s “brutal and unjust” invasion of Ukraine.

The Southeast Asia region is also hosting the Group of 20 (G20) Summit in Indonesia’s Bali

this week, ahead of which Biden will meet Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping for the first time since taking office, with relations between the two superpowers at their worst in decades.

The war in Ukraine and its economic fallout is expected to dominate discussions in Bali and at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in Bangkok at the end of the week, as alongside climate commitments, food insecurity and tensions over the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea and North Korea.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on the sidelines of the summit in Cambodia on Sunday accused the West of militarising Southeast Asia to contain Chinese and Russian interest in a key geostrategic battleground.

“The United States and its Nato allies are trying to master this space,” Lavrov told reporters.

He said Biden’s Indo-Pacific



US President Joe Biden and Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen shake hands as they attend the East Asia Summit Gala dinner in Phnom Penh. — AFP

strategy, which the US president was promoting heavily at the meeting, was an attempt to bypass “inclusive structures” for regional cooperation.

Lavrov is representing President Vladimir Putin at the summits and is expected to hear stinging rebukes from within the G20 over the invasion of Ukraine,

which Moscow calls a special military operation.

Though Ukraine is not a G20 member, its president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, will address the meeting virtually.

Russia’s foreign ministry on Sunday said the G20 was not the forum to handle security issues and should instead focus on pressing global economic challenges. Lavrov arrived in Bali from Cambodia on Sunday evening.

“Expanding its agenda into areas of peace and security, which many countries are talking about, is not viable,” it said of the G20 forum.

Eighteen countries accounting for half the global economy attended Sunday’s East Asia Summit, which was held behind closed doors, attended by the Asean nations, Japan, South Korea, China, India, the United States, Russia, Australia and New Zealand.

The summit’s chair, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, said the plenary meeting handled some heated discussion, but the atmosphere was not tense. “Leaders talked in mature way, no one left,” he told a news conference.

Biden held a trilateral meeting with leaders of allies Japan and South Korea and said the three countries were “more aligned than ever” on North Korea.

South Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol said the North’s recent provocations showed its regime’s “nature against humanitarianism”, adding it had become more hostile and aggressive based on confidence in its nuclear and missile capabilities. Japan counterpart Fumio Kishida said Pyongyang’s actions, which included a recent firing of a ballistic missile over Japan, were unprecedented. — AFP

FANS’ REACTION!



Cricket fans react as they watch the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2022 final cricket match between England and Pakistan at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) in Melbourne, being aired on a screen at a park in Islamabad on Sunday. England beat Pakistan in the match to lift the cup. — AFP

Skilling for future for a self-reliant India

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Skilling for the future is a challenge as well as an opportunity for a country like India, which has one of the youngest populations globally. With a population of 1.3 billion, the average age of the people in the country is 29.

The Economic Diplomacy Division of India’s Ministry of External Affairs cited the United Nations Population Fund statement, which states India’s demographic positioning as a “demographic dividend” and the “economic growth resulting from a shift in a population’s age structure, mainly when the working-age population is larger than the number of dependents.”

With a dedicated ministry to skill as many people as possible across the sectors, the country is on the move to equip people with new skills or strengthen the skills they are already having.

Ministry of Skill Development is working under a broader theme of a ‘Self-Reliant India’ or ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ that Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentions at all possible forums to strengthen the human resource and make the country a production hub.

The push for skill development is widespread, irrespective of the location or nature of the institute. It can happen anywhere, including the educational or healthcare sector and the public or private enterprises in urban and rural India.

The government wants to achieve its ‘Skill’ target through several schemes and efforts like National Training Institutes and Bharti Skill Institutes, Skill Development Mission, and Skill India Mission.

The National Training Institutes and Bharti Skill Institutes are focused on establishing skill development centres in big numbers across the country, while the idea behind the Skill Development Mission is to give a new direction to skill development to make India’ Self-Reliant’.

The Skill India Mission aims at transforming “a large population of the youth into a worthy human resource group,” a source in the Ministry of Skill Development said.

There is an ambitious target to achieve the goals — to skill from the current 5.4 per cent of the country’s workforce to at least 15 per cent that too with global standards.

In focus are traditional skills (professions) like carpenters, blacksmiths, cobblers, welders, masons, tailors, weavers, midwives etc. Keeping in mind global demand, emphasis is there on areas like gem and Jewellery designing, banking, tourism, real estate, construction, transportation, textile, and many others.

According to ministry sources, more than 5,000 skill hubs have been set up to promote skill development even at the school level.

SHORT TAKES

SEOUL

Japan, South Korea to resolve disputes

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida (pictured) on Sunday said that he and South Korean President Yoon Suk-yeol have reaffirmed that their countries will work towards a swift resolution of the wartime labour issue. At stake is an unresolved dispute over compensation for the Korean wartime labourers used by Japanese firms during World War Two, which had worsened bilateral relations in recent years. “We reiterated again that we are hoping for the swift



resolution of the wartime labour issue, on the understanding that the speed of the discussions between our diplomatic counterparts is accelerating,” Kishida told reporters.

PHNOM PENH

Australian PM hails talks with China’s Li

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Sunday hailed a “positive” meeting with Chinese premier Li Keqiang — the first in-person encounter between leaders of the two countries since 2019. Albanese, whose Labor government is keen to scrape the ice off of Canberra’s frosty relationship with Beijing, spoke to Li at a gala dinner on Saturday night at the Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Phnom Penh.

“I had a great conversation



with Premier Li. It was very positive and constructive,” Albanese told reporters on Sunday. Ties with Beijing had hit an all-time low under the previous government.

NUSA DUA

Indonesia launches global pandemic fund

Indonesian President Joko Widodo launched a global fund on Sunday to prepare for future pandemics and warned that the \$1.4 billion raised so far is not enough.

The launch followed a meeting of G20 health and finance ministers on Indonesia’s resort island of Bali, ahead of a summit of the G20 group of leading world economies on Tuesday and Wednesday.

“I thank all donors from G20 and non-G20 countries



and philanthropic institutions for their contributions, but the amount is not enough,” Widodo said via video link from Cambodia, where he was attending a regional summit.



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In brief

■ LONDON



CROSS-CHANNEL MIGRANTS TOP 40,000 THIS YEAR

More than 40,000 migrants have crossed the Channel to Britain so far this year, in a new record, the UK government said on Sunday as it targets a new deal with France to fight people smuggling.

The provisional total for this year stood at 40,885, most of them Albanians, Iranians and Afghans — well in excess of last year's 28,561, the Ministry of Defence said. On Saturday, some 972 people were detected making the perilous crossing in 22 boats, it said.

The figures have been rising for years. Some 299 were detected making the crossing in 2018; 1,843 in 2019; and 8,466 in 2020, according to the UK.

■ TEL AVIV



NETANYAHU TAPPED TO FORM NEXT GOVERNMENT

Israel's veteran ex-premier Benjamin Netanyahu secured a mandate on Sunday to form a new government, paving the way for his comeback at the helm of what is expected to be the most right-wing administration in the country's history. After a period of unprecedented political gridlock tested the electorate with five votes in less than four years, November 1 polls gave Netanyahu and his far-right allies a clear majority in the 120-seat parliament.

"I have decided to assign to you, Benjamin Netanyahu, the task of forming a government," President Isaac Herzog told him at a ceremony.

■ VATICAN CITY



POPE HOSTS LUNCH FOR ROME'S POOR AND HOMELESS

Pope Francis hosted a lunch for 1,300 poor and homeless people on Sunday, the day the Roman Catholic Church marks the World Day of the Poor.

Francis, who has been using a wheelchair and cane because of a knee ailment, sat with them in the Vatican's large audience hall, where they were served by volunteer waiters and waitresses.

Earlier, in the homily of a Mass in St Peter's Basilica, where many of them sat in the front rows, Francis called on people who are more fortunate "to break through that inner deafness which prevents us from hearing the stifled cry of pain of the frailest" in society.

Slovenia's election may produce first woman president

LJUBLJANA: Slovenians were voting on Sunday in a presidential election runoff, with former TV presenter Natasa Pirc Musar hoping to beat right-wing politician Andze Logar and become the country's first woman president.

Although Logar came first in the first round on October 23, opinion polls have narrowly favoured a victory on Sunday for Pirc Musar, an independent candidate who has secured the support of the ruling coalition for the runoff.

Polling stations close at 7 pm (1800 GMT) and first results are expected about two hours later.

Although the role is mostly ceremonial, the president heads the army and also nominates several top officials, including the central bank governor. Most of the nominations have to be confirmed by parliament.

The new president of Slovenia, an EU and Nato member state, will replace Borut Pahor, a former fashion model who served two



Slovenian Presidential candidate Natasa Pirc Musar casts her ballot at one of the polling stations in Radomlje, on Sunday. — AFP

five-year terms and is often referred in public as the Instagram president for his frequent use of the social network. An opinion poll conducted by the Ninamedia agency published in the daily Dnevnik on Friday showed Pirc

Musar winning 51.2 per cent of the votes, with Logar taking 48.8 per cent.

"I expect the next president to care about us, the citizens, to represent Slovenia in a good manner," Uros Pinter said after

casting his ballot in Ljubljana. "I think it is time for a female president."

Pirc Musar, 54, a former TV presenter who is now an influential lawyer, campaigned on human rights, the rule of law and social welfare issues.

Logar, 46, is a member of the right-wing Slovenian Democratic Party (SDS) of former Prime Minister Janez Jansa, who lost April's general election to the environmentalist Freedom Movement of Prime Minister Robert Golob.

"Pirc Musar's victory would signify continued voter support for moderate centre-left politicians in the country, which until recently was governed by a right-wing populist government led by Janez Jansa," Teneo consultancy said in a note on Thursday.

Logar's campaign slogan was: "Let's work together for the future," and he focused in his speeches on traditional family values and religion in the largely Roman Catholic country. — Reuters

Kherson races to restore power as Russians retreat

KHERSON: Utility companies in Kherson were working to restore critical infrastructure mined by retreating Russian forces, with most homes in the southern Ukrainian city still without electricity and water, regional officials said on Sunday.

The governor of Kherson region, Yaroslav Yanushevych, said the authorities had decided to maintain a curfew from 5 pm to 8 am and ban people from leaving or entering the city, as a security measure. "The enemy mined all critical infrastructure objects," Yanushevych told Ukrainian TV. "We are trying to meet within a few days and (then) open the city," he said, adding that he hoped mobile phone operators could start working on Sunday.

Ukrainian troops arrived in the centre of Kherson on Friday after Russia abandoned the only regional capital it had captured since its attack began in February. The withdrawal marked the third major Russian retreat of the war and the first to involve yielding such a large occupied city in the face of a major Ukrainian



Local residents celebrate after Russia's retreat from Kherson, in central Kherson, Ukraine, on Sunday. — Reuters

counter-offensive that has retaken parts of the east and south.

The head of Ukrainian state railways said train service to Kherson was expected to resume this week. Another regional

official said, however, that while mine clearance was underway and authorities were working to restore critical services, in humanitarian terms the situation in the city "remains very difficult".

"Most houses have no electricity, no water and problems with gas supplies," Yuriy Sobolevskiy, first deputy chairman of Kherson regional council, told TV. — AFP

Charles III leads first Remembrance Sunday as king

LONDON: Charles III led his first Remembrance Sunday event as king, laying a wreath in tribute to UK and Commonwealth war dead, as Britain's new prime minister also lauded Ukraine's defenders.

The 73-year-old monarch had previously deputised for his mother Queen Elizabeth II, who died in September aged 96 after a year of failing health. Since 2017, she had watched the annual service from a balcony of the foreign ministry overlooking the Cenotaph in central London.

Last year a back complaint forced Elizabeth to miss the ceremony, just weeks after an unscheduled overnight stay in hospital. Charles, who served in the Royal Navy in the 1970s, laid a wreath on her behalf.

Now king and commander-in-chief of British forces, he laid his first wreath at the war memorial as reigning monarch, dressed in a field marshal's ceremonial uniform.

Charles stood in silence after depositing the ring of red artificial poppies — Britain's symbol of remembrance.

The wreath was mounted on black leaves, with a ribbon in the king's scarlet, purple and gold horse racing colours.

Two minutes' silence was observed after Big Ben tolled 11 times, marking the resumption of full operations for the newly restored Great Clock in the nearby Houses of Parliament.

Cannon fire marked the beginning and end of the silence, culminating in buglers



Britain's King Charles attends the Remembrance Sunday ceremony at the Cenotaph on Whitehall in London, Britain, on Sunday. — Reuters

playing the Last Post in front of the Cenotaph, before UK politicians and Commonwealth ambassadors laid their own wreaths.

New Conservative leader Rishi Sunak was attending his first Remembrance Sunday as prime minister.

"This year more than ever, we are reminded of the huge debt of gratitude we owe those who lay down their lives to protect their country," Sunak said in a statement.

"As we fall silent together on Remembrance Sunday, we will honour the memories of the men and women we have lost, and pay tribute to the brave soldiers of Ukraine as they continue their fight for freedom."

Speaking to Sky News, Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Tony Radakin said there was particular emotion attached to this Remembrance Sunday.

"I think there's a special

Six killed in mid-air collision at Texas show

HOUSTON: Six people were killed when a pair of World-War-II-era planes collided in mid-air at a show in Texas and crashed to the ground in a ball of fire, authorities said on Sunday.

"According to our Dallas County Medical Examiner, there are a total of 6 fatalities from yesterday's Wings over Dallas air show incident," Dallas County Judge Clay Jenkins said on Sunday on Twitter.

The incident at Dallas Executive Airport involved a Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress and a smaller Bell P-63 Kingcobra, the Federal Aviation Administration said on Saturday.

Dallas Mayor Eric Johnson called the incident "a terrible tragedy," adding that videos of the incident "are heartbreaking."

Multiple videos posted on social media showed dramatic scenes of the smaller plane descending toward the lower-flying B-17 and crashing into it as both flew in loops around the airport.

After the collision, the planes appeared to break apart into several large pieces before crashing to the ground and exploding in a ball of fire, creating a huge plume of black smoke.

The crash scattered debris across the airport grounds as well as on a strip mall and a nearby highway, which was closed for hours, Johnson said.

Fire and rescue vehicles were already at the show in case of an emergency and responded immediately, authorities said. An estimated 5,000 people were in attendance at the event on Saturday, a few miles south of downtown Dallas. Air show events planned for Sunday were cancelled.

The FAA said its agents and the National Transportation Safety Board would investigate the incident.

Hank Coates, the chief executive of the Commemorative Air Force, whose planes were involved in the accident, said the B-17 "normally has a crew of four or five," while the P-63 is operated by a single pilot. — AFP

Why the best ideas come when you are running



Sandhya Rao Mehta

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

The just concluded Muscat Marathon may have separated the wheat from the chaff of professional or serious runners, but just the fact that so many people participated goes to show the popularity of physical exercise, especially as the weather cools down in Muscat.

While we all know that running is good for the body, keeping cholesterol and blood pressure in check, it is as good, or even better, for the mind.

As the body begins to run or even make quick strides, it releases hormones called endorphins. These are hormones that relieve stress by alleviating pain and giving a general sense of wellbeing.

In fact, psychologists often

recommend going for a run to cure a bout of minor depression, or when trying to make a decision.

That is because running activates the hippocampus — the part of the brain associated with memory and learning and has been known to maximise memory retention, encourage multitasking and elevate mood, according to Johns Hopkins Health.

No wonder that one’s best ideas come when running on the treadmill, or outdoors.

Many writers swear by running for inspiration, guidance and routine. Bloggers compare the pain of reaching the finish line in a running race to the struggle of staring at a blank page that needs to be filled in.

RUNNING A MARATHON IS ABOUT STRATEGY, PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE. THESE ARE REAL LIFE SKILLS THAT WILL HELP AS CHILDREN NEGOTIATE THROUGH THEIR LIFE

Of course, there are other, more obvious ways in which running helps writers: concentrating without other distractions helps to outline a plot or jog a memory; the rhythm of the feet calms one down and helps to focus; and the beauty of the surroundings can only be further inspiration.

Many famous authors seem to agree. Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami said, “Exerting yourself to the fullest within your individual limits: that’s the essence of running, and a metaphor for life — and for me, for writing as well. Even more succinctly, Malcolm Gladwell, essayist and author says, “I free associate [while running]. I suspect a lot of useful thinking is going on on a subconscious level”.

In many ways, writing is like running: the slogging, the pages and miles to be filled up, and the great satisfaction of having done so are immeasurable.

It is also why physical exercise needs to be encouraged at every level in education. Running

a marathon is about strategy, patience and endurance. These are real life skills that will help as children negotiate through their life.

There are plenty of suggestions on how to maximise the benefits of running, particularly for a writer. They include trying to run solo for focus, leaving music and other distractions behind, going on a known route to avoid having to focus on roads and, most importantly, letting go of all stressors to let the mind flow.

No matter what the reason for running, or writing for that matter, knowing that these two activities are connected will help us to engage in both, looking for inspiration through perspiration.

The \$14 billion feud that splintered billionaire family

SAM TOBIN

India’s billionaire Hinduja family has agreed a worldwide truce in a long legal feud over the future of its global business empire, a London court ruling published showed.

The Court of Appeal in London largely rejected an appeal over restrictions on reporting the dispute, which was contested in a specialist court in a case which centred on the health of 86-year-old patriarch Srichand Hinduja.

Srichand’s younger brother Gopichand, 82, had challenged the legitimacy of a lasting power of attorney granted to Srichand’s wife Madhu and later his daughters, Vinoo and Shanu, in the Court of Protection, which makes decisions on financial or welfare matters for people unable to do so.

“The Hinduja family matter regarding the health and welfare of SP has already been resolved amicably between all parties and today’s judgment solely concerned whether those matters should remain private,” a spokesperson for Gopichand Hinduja and his brothers Prakash and Ashok, but not Srichand, said in an emailed statement.

Srichand’s daughters Vinoo and Shanu Hinduja said in a separate emailed statement that they welcomed “the transparency that this ruling will bring to the proceedings”, but said a final agreement had still to be achieved.

“While we are pleased that the dispute surrounding the health and welfare of our father has been resolved, a final settlement with respect to the broader disputes still needs to be reached,” they added. The Hinduja family’s business spans sectors including banking, chemicals and healthcare and employs roughly 200,000 people worldwide and their vast wealth put Srichand, Gopichand and the Hinduja family at the top of this year’s The Sunday Times UK Rich List, with a net worth of more than 28 billion pounds (\$33 billion).

Judge Anthony Hayden said in a ruling in August, which was published on Friday, that the needs of Srichand, who is suffering from dementia, had become “marginalised in a family dispute”.

Hayden said in August that he had been “driven to consider a placement in a public nursing home” for Srichand after his family could not agree on how and where he should be treated.

“We have - as any other children would have done - cared for our parents and have worked in their best interests,” Vinoo and Shanu Hinduja said in their statement.

“Our absolute priority has been to ensure that our parents’ wishes are fulfilled and that their dignity and wellbeing are protected,” the sisters added.

The spokesperson for Gopichand Hinduja and his brothers Prakash and Ashok said that the High Court decision had “no impact whatsoever on the ongoing care of S P Hinduja, on which the family are united, or on any business operations.” — **Reuters**

Can Germans save their beloved Rhine?



Christopher F Schuetze

The writer is a Netherlands-based journalist

It is one of the tightest and fastest bends in the Rhine River, a nearly 90-degree curve where a small rocky island dotted by trees further narrows the shipping channel.

Engineers, surveyors and craftspeople have spent months surveying the area, measuring the flow and speed of the water, which is so clear that the contours of the riverbed and its sediment are visible.

But the team does not need boats to do their work. Instead, a short walk through a warehouse gets them to all spots on the river, laid out before them on a 4,500-square-foot scale model resembling a hyper-realistic miniature railroad set, but for boating enthusiasts.

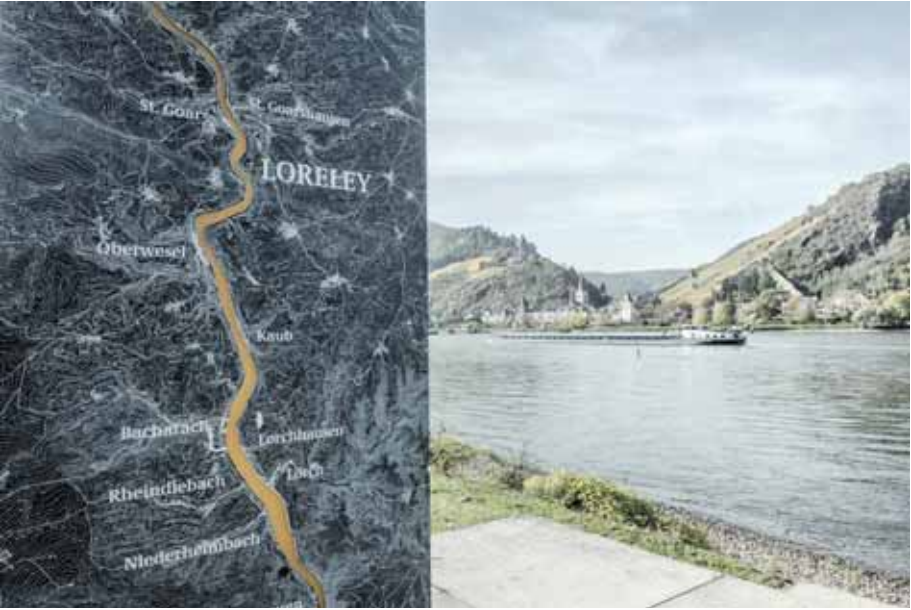
This million-euro (more than \$1.03 million) model is no child’s play. It is a part of one of Europe’s most ambitious and expensive experiments in climate adaptation, a 180-million-euro effort to save the Rhine’s historical role as a vital transport link for Germany’s economy from the adverse effects of climate change.

Floods and droughts have long been part of the Rhine’s history, demonstrated by the “hunger stones” — engravings from the Middle Ages far below the water’s surface that marked historically low levels. They have emerged along with other artefacts recently, serving as something of an alarm.

“Low water is not a new phenomenon, but it will happen more often and last longer,” Oliver Luksic, a state secretary in the federal transportation ministry, said.

These recent low-water events have had a distressing impact on Germany’s economy. Up to 80 per cent of Germany’s ship-bound cargo — everything from coal, wheat and cars to containers from China — are transported on the Rhine on their way not only to the south of the country but also to parts of France, Switzerland and, over the Main-Danube Canal, Eastern Europe.

In 2018, when water ran low for weeks, it cost the German economy an estimated 0.3 per cent, or about 12 billion euros, according to Carsten Brzeski, a chief economist at ING Germany. This past summer’s drought cost the country approximately 8 billion euros because the low water blocked shipments of coal needed to generate electricity.



A tanker ship transports liquid gas past the village of Bacharach, and a display on the opposite bank mapping the Rhine River and surrounding topography in the area.

GERMANY HAS EMBARKED ON ONE OF EUROPE’S MOST AMBITIOUS AND EXPENSIVE EXPERIMENTS IN CLIMATE ADAPTATION, AN EFFORT TO PRESERVE THE RHINE’S HISTORICAL ROLE AS A VITAL TRANSPORTATION LINK.

As it has become painfully evident how important the functioning river is to the economy, the deepening of the Rhine, long treated as a purely technical problem, has become a serious political issue for Germany.

Although investments are likely to pay off in the medium term, the optimisation of the 30-mile stretch does not solve the underlying problem of the low water in the Rhine. The work only takes care of the most obvious bottleneck.

In the western part of Germany, what is known as the “middle” Rhine flows past villages, castles and mountainside vineyards. The area is so culturally rich that UNESCO declared it a World Heritage Site in 2003. Tourists — both domestic and international — flock to the area. On the water, commercial

freighters compete for space with sleek river cruise ships and colourful day-tour boats.

But the bucolic scenery above the water line betrays how treacherous the river can be as it descends fast and shallow through the hills. Climate change is exacerbating the problem of this bottleneck, which is most treacherous in a 30-mile stretch near the village of Kaub.

The optimisation project is focused on making six distinct spots in this critical passage just as deep as river sections above and below the stretch.

In the village of Kaub, a yard-high digital display on the side of an ancient tower on the banks of the Rhine marks the most important number in German logistics: a real-time read-out of the river’s depth at the tightest spot.

When the number dips below 78 centimetres (nearly 31 inches) — meaning the natural river water is only 2 1/2 feet deep and the artificial shipping channel is less than 6 feet deep — transportation is essentially blocked, and only small ships with very limited cargo can pass.

But deepening the river without causing adverse side effects is not easy, said Andreas Schmidt, who runs a department of 125 people at the Federal Waterways Engineering and Research Institute and is overseeing the project.

“We can model highly complex three-dimensional flows numerically, but once you add the movement of sediments, you quickly reach the limits,” he said.

— **The New York Times**

We reap what we sow

TRUE to the saying that we reap what we sow; it happens that what we do, comes back to us! Whatever the deeds we perform in our daily life, whether good or bad, we have to certainly bear their fruits sooner or later. This is the natural law when it comes to dealing with people around us. When we deal with others, it should be the same way that we expect from others. It is as simple as this!

Some people blame life for being unfair! However, it's not true. It's not life, but people are not fair with their misdeeds. It's not life that should be blamed for what happens to us, but ourselves and others whom we deal with. It's because we are not just and do not respect others who are around us. The result is we receive what we do to others as a reward to our deeds.

Hence, it is important for us all to understand that we are responsible for what happens to us. If we are questioned for not complying with the code of conduct in the office, we cannot blame the management because we are at fault. We have to follow the office decorum. This means punishment comes only when we violate the laws. Every action we take is decided by us and hence the result will also be faced by us!

Likewise, the result of all our deeds will be received by us only. Nobody shall say that I've not done injustice to anyone then why I am facing such an awful situation in my life? In fact, our deeds are just like a ball, once thrown will hit the wall and rebounds instantly. A human action may take time, but will definitely rebound today or tomorrow!

All what you need to remember is that life is an echo of a sound that will be heard again and again. You harvest, what you sow and you get what you



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SOME PEOPLE
BLAME LIFE FOR
BEING UNFAIR!
HOWEVER, IT'S
NOT TRUE. IT'S
NOT LIFE, BUT
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FAIR WITH THEIR
MISDEEDS

give. Try to see your reflection in others! So you should always discharge goodness, so you get back the same; otherwise it's vice versa.

This reminds me of an old story of that woman who used to bake (chapatti) bread and gives one to the hunchback man who passes by her house. As this went on, the woman became dismayed over the man as she found him to be an ungrateful man. All what he got to say after taking the bread was "The evil you do remains with you. The good you do, comes back to you". This statement ignited the woman's curiosity.

Therefore, the woman decided to get rid of him and she added poison to the bread she prepared for him. Luckily, she changed her mind after a while and didn't give him that bread, rather she burned it. The hunchback man passed as usual picking up the bread. Suddenly, he got an exhausted and starving man asking for food and he instantly gave him that bread. That man was the woman's son who came back to his mother on that day after years of disappearance.

The woman's son thankfully told his mother about the hunchback man giving him the chapatti bread. The mother was shocked to hear that as she was intending to poison the hunchback and kill him. If she had given the poisoned chapatti to the hunchback, she could have gotten what she did as her son would eat that piece of bread. The revenge could have happened on her son!

Always remember, the evil you do remains with you while the good you do, comes back to you! Thus, keep doing the good deeds that bring back fruitful outcomes to you. As Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), said, "You do not do evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and kindness."

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY



An Armed Forces of Malta King Air aircraft drops poppies as it flies over the War Memorial cenotaph during the Remembrance Sunday ceremony in Floriana, Malta, on Sunday. – Reuters

At COP27, Brazil bets on Lula to reclaim forest leadership

LAURIE GOERING

WHEN Tasso Azevedo, who runs a project tracking forest loss in Brazil, walked around the halls at the COP26 UN climate talks last year in Glasgow, people clapped him on the shoulder, shaking their heads and offering sympathy.

"They said, 'We're so sorry,'" as deforestation soared and environmental and indigenous agencies lost power under far-right Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's government, he remembered.

But since leftist Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva Lula - widely known as Lula - won Brazil's presidency last month, promising to make forest protection a key focus, the mood has dramatically shifted, climate and nature specialists said.

"Now everybody's smiling. It's 180 degrees different," said Azevedo at Brazil's "Climate Action Hub" at the COP27 climate conference in Egypt, as throngs gathered to talk to new indigenous Congress members beneath the country's green, blue and yellow flag.

President-elect Lula is due to arrive in Sharm el Sheikh next week and is expected to deliver what Marina Silva, an Amazon-born former Brazilian environment minister, described on Saturday as a big announcement on policy shifts.

Those are expected to include an overhaul of Brazil's environmental

policies and the creation of a new national climate authority to oversee efforts by all ministries and agencies to combat global warming.

"Brazil is returning as a protagonist" in global efforts to protect forests and drive climate action, Silva told journalists, adding that reversing soaring forest losses is Lula's "top priority".

Under Lula, who unseated Bolsonaro in the October elections, Brazil plans to reforest 29 million acres of land by 2030, as it earlier promised under the Paris Agreement.

It also aims to create a new "bioeconomy" for the Amazon and other natural areas, to displace the current model built on deforestation for cattle ranching and soy farming, mining and other destructive activities, Silva said.

The new approach could involve things like bringing high-speed Internet to remote areas of the Amazon and boosting production of renewable solar, wind and biomass energy.

It may also explore how to inject more forest products into the pharmaceutical and cosmetics industries, she said.

The work Brazil's forests do in absorbing carbon could also be monetised in the form of offsets - but huge amounts of work are needed to verify that any credits reflect real climate protection, she said.

Brazil's stocks of carbon have

their limits, she added - and companies looking for credits to offset their climate-heating emissions must "do their homework" and cut pollution themselves.

Lula's return is expected to reopen international funding taps of forest protection money that were closed under Bolsonaro - but Azevedo said cash was needed more to drive a new Amazon economic model than to enforce forest protection.

"It's not, 'Pay me and I'll save the forest' - the forest enforcement we can do by ourselves," he said. "But if there are funds for the new economy, it would be amazing."

Lula, who will take office in January, will have new allies in Congress - including Sonia Guajajara, Sao Paulo's newly

elected first indigenous member of Congress, widely backed to head a new Indigenous Peoples Ministry in Brazil.

She and Célia Xakriabá, another new indigenous representative congresswoman, are both at COP27, along with many other indigenous Brazilians.

They have emphasised that they will push for protection for all of Brazil's diverse natural areas - not just the Amazon - as well as efforts to formalise protection of more indigenous areas and to better safeguard indigenous people, particularly women.

"We can't think of Amazon protection and indigenous protection separately," Xakriabá said in an interview.

Dinamam Tuxá, a lawyer and coordinator of the Articulation of

the Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), which represents many of the country's 900,000 native people, said repairing the damage to forests and institutions done during Bolsonaro's administration would take time.

Lula's administration "won't fix all our issues," he said at COP27, but "we have hope".

"The rebuilding will start from now," he added.

Lula will face stiff political obstacles too, including from pro-Bolsonaro Amazon governors and congressmen, in a country where illegally seizing and burning forest for grazing and farming has long been highly profitable.

Deforestation reached a 15-year high last year in Brazil, driving its climate-changing emissions up 12 per cent, with changes in land use, particularly deforestation, now accounting for almost half of Brazil's total emissions, Azevedo said. About 21 per cent of the Amazon forest has been lost, an area the size of Spain and Italy combined that is now mainly low-quality pastureland, said Brenda Brito, a researcher with IMAZON, a non-profit group working on Amazon conservation. But the tools available to stem illegal deforestation are growing. Without Congressional approval, Lula's administration could swiftly overturn about 160 decrees or rules that have weakened accountability for deforestation, Azevedo said.

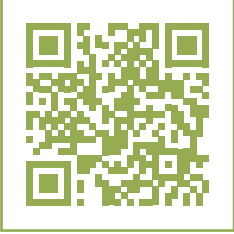
— Thomson Reuters Foundation



Brazilian politician and environmentalist Marina Silva poses for a picture during an interview on the sidelines of the COP27 climate conference in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el Sheikh. – AFP

sport

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Stokes, Curran star as England win T20 World Cup

MELBOURNE: Ben Stokes and Sam Curran starred as England edged Pakistan by five wickets to win the Twenty20 World Cup on Sunday and become the sport's first dual white-ball champions, holding both the 50 and 20-over titles.

Jos Buttler's side held Pakistan to 137-8 in front of a partisan 80,462 fans at a heaving Melbourne Cricket Ground, with player-of-the-match and tournament Curran bagging 3-12 and Adil Rashid chipping with 2-22.

In reply, England slumped to 49-3 in the sixth over as they struggled to get any momentum against a fiery pace attack, with boundaries hard to come by.

But Stokes (52 not out) and Moeen Ali (19) used their

experience and cool heads to guide England to 138-5 with six balls to spare, climaxing a riveting tournament that spanned 45 games over nearly a month.

"In finals, especially when chasing, you probably forget all the hard work before that. To restrict them to 130, the bowlers have to take a lot of credit. Adil Rashid and Sam Curran won us the game," said Stokes.

"Pretty good evening. Representing your country in World Cups is amazing, it has been a good one."

Curran said Stokes should have been player of the match.

"We all look up to him. People question him, but he's incredible. He's the man," he said.

"The way I bowl, I go into the

wicket with my slower balls and keep the batsmen guessing. World champions, how good," he added.

The victory added to the 50-over title England won in 2019, building on the legacy of former captain Eoin Morgan, who retired this year after transforming the team into a white-ball juggernaut.

It was England's second T20 crown after tasting success in 2010, joining the West Indies as the only two-time winners since the tournament's inception in 2007.

The game was billed as a showdown between Pakistan's attack and England's top order, and Shaheen Afridi bowled danger man Alex Hales in the first over of the run chase.

But that only fired up Buttler who smashed two boundaries off

Naseem Shah.

Phil Salt, playing in place of the injured Dawid Malan, didn't last, making just 10 before pulling Haris Rauf to Iftikhar Ahmed

The ball was swinging and seaming and the menacing Rauf claimed the key wicket of Buttler just as he was getting in, edging to wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan on 26 off 17 balls.

The runs dried up as they reached 77-3 at the halfway point of the innings, compared to Pakistan's 68-2. Harry Brook came undone on 20 against the spin of Shadab Khan, holing out to Afridi and came down to needing 41 runs off the final five overs.

RASHID STRIKES

Stokes relieved the pressure with

a four and a six off Ahmed and there was no stopping them with the England all-rounder hitting the winning runs.

With forecast rain staying away, England produced disciplined and economical bowling to stymie 2009 champions Pakistan, with Shan Masood's 38 the top score.

Stokes was given the new ball after England won the toss and chose to field with Pakistan lucky to survive the over intact as opener Rizwan was almost run out going for a risky single.

Rizwan and Babar Azam shared a century partnership in their semi-final against New Zealand, but another big stand wasn't to be, with Rizwan dragging a delivery from Curran on to his stumps on 15.

The introduction of Rashid soon after the six-over powerplay reaped an immediate reward with Mohammad Haris (8) attacking him on his first ball only to sky a simple catch to Stokes.

Masood began swinging the bat in the second half of the innings, hitting a four and six off Liam Livingstone.

But once again Rashid got the breakthrough, pulling off a diving catch from his own bowling to claim the vital wicket of Azam, whose 32 came off 28 balls.

Ahmed only lasted six balls before Masood and Shadab Khan (20) fell in the space of two runs as Curran and Chris Jordan kept the lid on any hope Pakistan had of a late flurry.

— AFP

Iconic Himam Trail Run set for greater edition in Dec

MUSCAT: The popular Himam Trail Run Race has started the countdown to kick off yet a greater edition from 1 – 3 December, with sign-ups already exceeding last year's record high. Over 570 trail runners from 41 countries of all ages and experience levels have registered to take on the breathtaking challenge that has been curated around diverse landscapes, heritage sites and lush plantation in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Al Hamra and Birkat Al Mouz.

Supported by Petroleum Development Oman as main sponsor, the race has been made bigger since its last edition and will feature a 25km and 55km races that will begin at Birkat Al Mouz, whereas the Al Hajar Range Challenge 100km will start in Al Hamra. Each course will then circle the foothills of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar through traditional plantations and picturesque villages before heading to the gates of the old Fort in Birkat Al Mouz



where the finishing line awaits.

Dr Zahir al Riyami, Himam Adventure President, said, "The response so far has been incredible, and we are now gearing up for the biggest ever Himam Trail Run Race. This is a great opportunity to broaden the appeal of Oman's unique landscape and shine a light on the beautiful scenery and culture of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar,

Al Hamra and Birkat Al Mouz. Registrations have been pouring in from around the country and across the world and we look forward to welcoming runners of all ages to experience a brand-new course developed especially for this race and take part in one of Oman's fastest growing sporting events."

Each race carries points from

the International Trail Running Association (ITRA) which will help more experienced runners enter trail running races around the world. The 25km 'Start-Up Challenge' will award all finishers one ITRA point, the 55km race, known as 'The Adventure', carries three ITRA points, while the 100km 'Al Hajar Range Challenge' course will give four ITRA points

to all finishers.

2021's Himam Trail Run proved to be an event for all, attracting 421 runners from 36 countries, including 50 female athletes and 29 runners aged over 50 years of age. It was managed by a dedicated team of 70 organisers and 350 volunteers. This year's event has already shown that the appetite to explore Oman's spectacular

landscape on two feet is growing, particularly among female athletes, runners of all ages from across Oman, and those around the world now able to test themselves in a new and unique setting. The third day of the event is dedicated to shorter distances and family runs looking to experience running and embark on a journey to fitness and self-challenge.

Aiming to promote sport, celebrate health, the environment and tourism in the Al Dakhiliyah Governorate of Oman. The 2022 Himam Trail Run is organised by Al Sahwa Team under the umbrella of Nizwa Club, and supported by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Oman Athletics Association OMRAN, Visit Oman, the SMEs Development Authority, Oman LNG, Al Safa Foods, Mazoon Dairy and Golden Tulip Nizwa. The event is also supported by Aventuras as the trusted partner for trail and running gear.



Oman Olympic team to meet Syria for third spot in WAFF tourney

HCC emerge champions in Al Yam-Mumbai Stars cricket

Man of the Match for his brilliant contribution. Arif was awarded best bowler for taking 8 wickets in the tournament. Best batsman was Rakesh Patel and Man of the series was given to Kathik of Friday Freeks for his all-round performance.

The winner's trophy was presented by Sanjit Kanojia representing Al Yam Enterprises LLC and Sun Shine International SPC.

Sanjit said he was delighted to be part of the tournament and witnessed one of the best final matches. "Cricket in Oman is growing day by day and we have seen the best local talent in these domestic tournaments. We promise to support such tournaments and provide such platforms in future," he added.

The runners-up trophy was presented by Deepak Thanki.

INVITATION TO TENDER		 SOHAR ALUMINIUM	
Sohar Aluminium LLC (SA), PO Box 80, PC- 327, Sohar, Sultanate of Oman hereby invites qualified Suppliers/Contractors for the following tender:			
Tender No.	: PR 10219087		
Tender Title	: Major Earth Pit Maintenance Services (268 Nos)		
Scope	: Earth pit Maintenance services includes the materials supply and services like testing, drilling, supply of chemicals, rods etc.		
Tender No.	: PR 10217590		
Tender Title	: Inspection, Overhauling and Testing of 220kV AIS for Harmonics Filters		
Scope	: The precise inspection and condition monitoring for the 220kV AIS for Harmonic Filters of 12 years service.		
Document Issue Date	: 15 November 2022	Last Date For Applying	: 17 November 2022
Kindly send your email and company profile to: tender@sohar-aluminium.com For list of active tenders visit: https://www.sohar-aluminium.com/en/content/tender-listing			



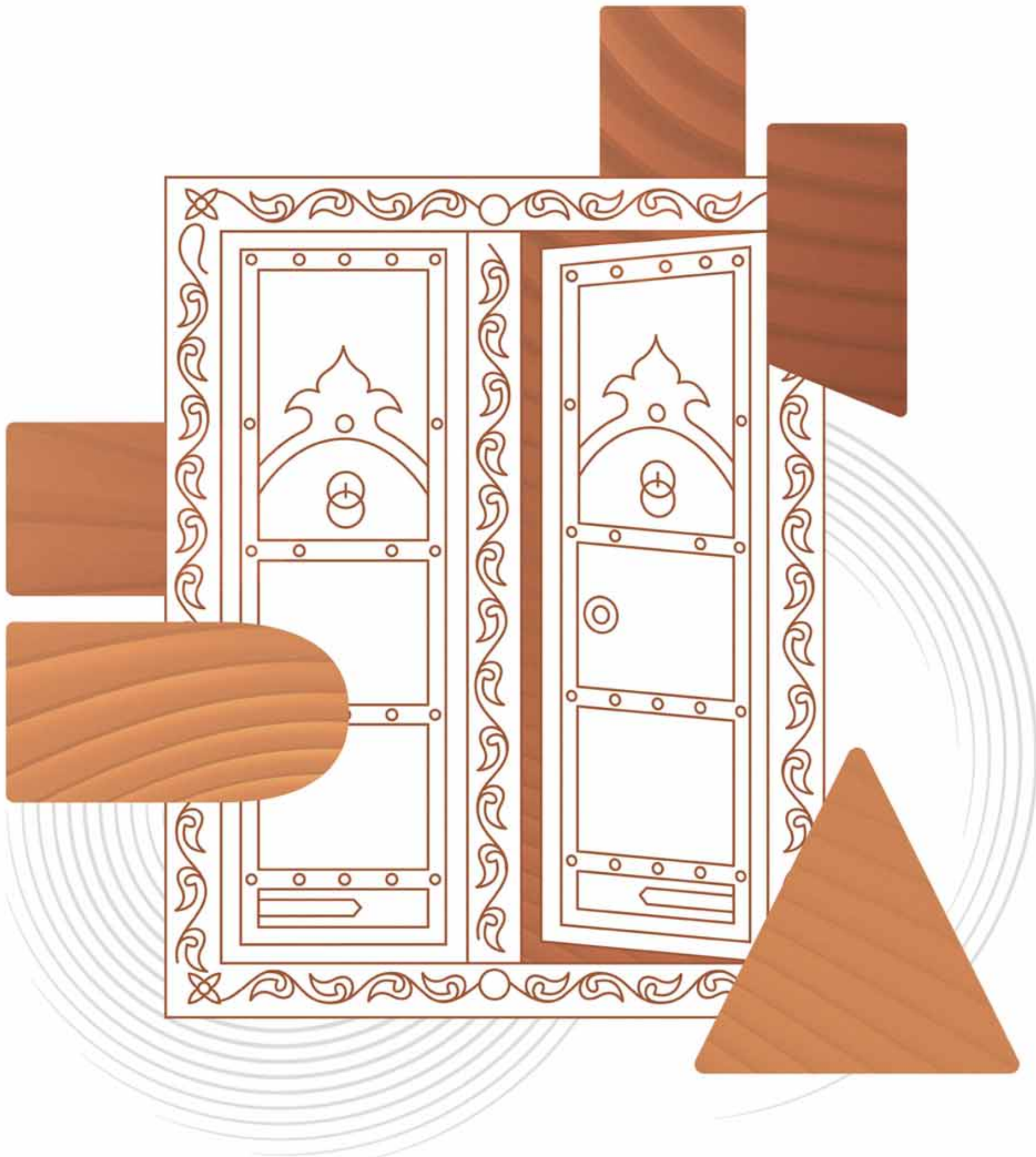
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Oman’s first calcined petroleum coke project launched

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 13

Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, inaugurated the calcined petroleum coke production plant of Sanvira Carbon FZC LLC in Sohar Freezone on Sunday, November 13, 2022.

The project — the first of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman — processes petroleum coke into products of highly industrial value used in aluminium industries and other mining industries.

Sanvira Carbon FZC LLC was established by a partnership of Omani and Indian investors, comprising Oman National Investments Development Company (Tanmia), United Business Company (Oman) and Sanvira Industries Limited (India).

The plant has a capacity to produce 600,000 tonnes of



calcined petroleum coke annually while total GCC demand for the commodity is estimated at 1.5 million tonnes annually. Around 200 jobs have been created by the project, with Omanisation projected to rise to 50 per cent within five years. Besides, the company is also planning to establish a limestone facility in collaboration with Minerals Development Oman (MDO).

Significantly, the project will play an important role in Oman’s economic diversification and local value creation. It converts petroleum coke from refineries into a commercially valuable product that is used in the aluminium, industrial and mining industries.

“It is a uniquely distinguished project that has satisfied all appropriate criteria to create

successful partnerships, gain foreign direct investments into the Sultanate of Oman and realise return on investment,” said Khalid bin Awad al Balushi, CEO - Tanmia.

Steam produced through the calcination process is used to generate 24 megawatts of electricity which is supplied to companies in Sohar Freezone at a competitive cost.



Said bin Salem al Hajri, Partner, said the company has signed memoranda of cooperation with several companies in Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia, as well as BP in France, to support the offtake of its products.

Additionally, the project will add economic value to the petroleum coke produced by Sohar Refinery, which is currently exported as a raw material outside the Sultanate.

“Remanufacturing petroleum coke to become a final product

used in aluminium industry increases the economic value of the raw products produced by the refinery, and thus achieves good returns for the national economy,” he stated.

Besides Tanmia, the project is backed by Sanvira Industries Limited, a leading Indian manufacturer of calcined petroleum coke. Another partner is United Business Company, an Omani company specialised in the production and marketing of various chemical products.

Stone laid for RO 43 million Sohar Titanium project

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 13

Sohar Titanium Company — a subsidiary of Minerals Development Oman (MDO) — celebrated the foundation stone laying of its integrated titanium dioxide plant in Sohar Free Zone on Sunday, November 13, 2022.

Set on an area of 120,000 square metres, the plant is being established with an investment of RO43 million and will feature a capacity of 150,000 tonnes per annum. It will come into commercial operation by 2025.

Sohar Titanium project is a strategic partnership between Minerals Development Oman (MDO) (35 per cent), Dubal Holding Company and Stork International Group through the Gulf Titanium Company.

On the occasion, Eng Nasser bin Saif al Maqbali, MDO’s CEO, said: “Today’s celebration of laying the foundation stone for Sohar Titanium project marks the beginning of a significant journey of construction works for the company’s plant to produce titanium dioxide in cooperation with our partners. We are looking forward to celebrating the reopening and operation nearly two years from now.”

He added: “MDO’s investment in this project reflects its commitment towards developing downstream industries associated with the mining sector, due to their importance to mining’s role as a tributary of the national



MDO’s investment in this project reflects its commitment towards developing downstream industries associated with the mining sector, due to their importance to mining’s role as a tributary of the national economy

ENG NASSER BIN SAIF AL MAQBALI
*Chief Executive Officer,
Minerals Development Oman*

economy. MDO is pursuing this approach through a number of other projects which are under studies.”

“MDO is following a clear approach when it comes to investing in exploration projects

in its concession areas. After the company confirms that commercial reserves existing, it starts to develop a value-added chain, which allows manufacturers to either invest in the minerals, attract foreign investment, or promote them and support the private sector in investing in them,” he added.

Abdullah Jassim bin Kalban, Sohar Titanium Company’s Chairman, said, “This step marks a valuable achievement for the industrial sector in the Sultanate of Oman and the region in general, as the project will contribute to the development of industries related to titanium dioxide. In addition, this partnership offers an encouraging mining investment in the Sultanate, taking advantage of the country’s modern industrial infrastructure.”

Omar al Mahrizi, Chief Executive Officer of SOHAR Freezone and Deputy Chief

Executive Officer of SOHAR Port said: “Mining has been identified as one of the core pillars to economic diversification within Oman Vision 2040. It is also a key driving sector alongside logistics to attract Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) into Oman.

This is due to the Sultanate’s proximity to core markets, sea access to marine’s busiest global routes, and competitive value propositions for doing business.”

He added: “The titanium dioxide production plant is another exciting prospect reinforcing SOHAR Freezone’s ability to offer potential investors access to world-class infrastructure, facilities, and ancillary services.”

Titanium dioxide is used in a wide variety of applications, including paints, food colouring, papers, inks, toothpaste, and cosmetics. The material is also used in the production of titanium metal.

Sumitomo announces decarbonisation pact with start-up 44.01

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 13

Sumitomo Corporation, a leading Fortune 500 global trading and business investment company, has announced the formation of a capital and business alliance with UK-based Protostar Group Limited (brand name “44.01”), a provider of carbon dioxide (CO2) mineralisation services, to jointly engage in the development and deployment of decarbonisation services.

44.01 is a start-up established in 2020 with operations in Oman and the United Arab Emirates. It is also funded by various leading climate technology investors globally. 44.01 is the only company in the world working on CO2 mineralisation into peridotite formations (a rock that makes up the Earth’s interior).

CO2 is mixed with water and injected into peridotite formations under certain conditions in order to support the chemical reaction which causes mineralisation. The company has world-renowned researchers in the field of CO2 mineralisation, and has established the optimum injection conditions and methods for CO2 mineralisation

CO2 mineralisation is attracting attention due to advantages such as durability and stability, as CO2 can be permanently fixed underground



as a mineral. 44.01 provides CO2 mineralisation as a service to Direct Air Capture operators and CO2 emitting companies. In addition, 44.01 plans to offer a complete in-house CO2 capture-to-mineralisation turnkey solution.

Having successfully completed a small-scale field demonstration, 44.01 will confirm the feasibility of future large-scale commercialisation through additional demonstrations and the implementation of individual projects currently under consideration.

In particular, suitable sites for CO2 mineralisation are widely distributed in the Middle East as well as in the USA, Europe and Japan, where peridotite has been confirmed to exist close to the surface. 44.01 aims to mineralise one billion tonnes of CO2 by 2040, starting in Oman and expanding worldwide.

“The Sumitomo Corporation Group places great importance on the Paris Agreement, and we seek to contribute more actively towards the achievement of the carbon neutrality targets for society, as set forth in the accords.

Bank Muscat wins Best Retail Bank in Oman Award at MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2022

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, was awarded the Best Retail Bank in Oman Award at the MENA Banking Excellence Awards 2022 held in Dubai earlier this year.

Organised by MEED in partnership with Retail Banker International and Private Banker International, the inaugural MENA Banking Excellence Awards sought to recognise institutions in the Middle East and North Africa region which is considered to be one of the fastest growing banking and financial services markets in the world. Bank Muscat was recognised for its customer-centric vision, innovative offerings backed by state-of-the-art technology and commitment to constantly enhance customer experience. Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking, Bank Muscat, said: “We would like to take this opportunity to thank MEED as well as its partners Retail Banker International and the Private Banker for recognising the bank as the Best Retail Bank in



Oman. Over the last four decades, Bank Muscat has carved a name for itself for the largest branch and ATM-CDM-FFM network, its cutting-edge omnichannel Mobile and Internet banking, its constant stream of innovative products and services and total commitment to customer-centricity, all of which are unmatched in Oman. Going ahead, the bank will aim

to continue its market-leading position in the Sultanate of Oman's financial services sector by further enhancing Customer Experience, Digital Transformation and Public-Private Partnership in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.”

Bank Muscat, which is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year has made a name for itself with a large number of firsts in

the banking sector over the past 4 decades.

Today, the bank leads the financial services sector in the Sultanate of Oman with 174 branches and more than 800 touchpoints including Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs), Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) and Fully Functional Machines (FFM) installed across the country.

It is the first choice for over 2 million customers in Oman and has been playing an important role in enhancing financial inclusion in Oman with different innovative products for its customers.

Bank Muscat's continuously upgraded omnichannel Internet and mobile banking offer customers a fast and secure banking experience, and today, over 1.3 million retail banking customers use various features like real-time bill payments for utilities in Oman, fund transfers within the bank and in Oman, fund transfers across the world via the SWIFT network amongst a number of other services and benefits.

There has also been a rapid uptake in contactless payment through its various debit, credit and prepaid cards as well as contactless wearables.

The bank is working towards upgrading its phygital network (physical / digital) by replacing more than 150 CDMs and FFM during the 1st quarter of 2023. During the year as well, the bank is planning to add more than 50 new ATMs/CDMs/FFMs in various

locations across Oman.

The bank has also started rolling out Multi-Function Kiosk, which enables customers to instantly issue and activate new or replaced debit cards around the clock. Meanwhile, Premier Banking clientele have the advantage of being able to benefit from some of the most exclusive and differentiated services available in the Sultanate of Oman through Bank Muscat Private banking, Asalah Priority banking and Al Jawhar Privilege banking.

On the occasion of its 40th anniversary, the bank has also recently launched a number of attractive offers for its customers including highly discounted offers on Baituna, Sayyarati and Personal Finance loans.

Bank Muscat consistently wins a number of international and local awards and accolades in recognition of its prominent leadership position in Oman. In 2022, Bank Muscat was ranked by Forbes Middle East as one of the Top 30 banks as well as one of the Top 100 Listed Companies in the region.

Bank Nizwa makes home ownership easy

MUSCAT: In an effort to enable customers to own their dream homes, Bank Nizwa, the leading Islamic bank in the Sultanate of Oman, has announced that it has made ethical, Sharia-compliant home finance more affordable.

Bank Nizwa Property/Home Finance, based on the Sharia concept of Ijara, Murabaha, Forward Ijara and Diminishing Musharakah, offers quick and hassle-free solutions designed to help lighten one of the most demanding commitments. Through the service, customers will be able to finance lands or purchase a ready or under-construction property.

Locals and residents working in the public or private sectors who make a minimum monthly salary of RO 400, in addition to self-employees are all eligible for Bank Nizwa's Home Finance. Flexible payment options are available for up to 25 years.

To avail of the service, customers who have not yet identified a house to buy can visit any Bank Nizwa branch and speak to a customer service representative who will calculate the amount they are eligible to receive. On the other hand, the bank will process an application if they have already found their ideal home and guide them through every step of buying a home. With Sharia principles in mind, Bank Nizwa is striving to assist customers in securing their dream homes.

“The salient feature of an Islamic home finance facility is that an ethical overlay is applied to it, whereby both finance funding and finance purpose have a moral requirement. Moreover, it provides highly competitive rates and is reasonable as well as sustainable since the transaction is asset-based,” said Arif al Zaabi (pictured), Assistant General Manager — Retail Banking at



Bank Nizwa.

“Bank Nizwa provides Islamic banking solutions that have been vetted, accepted and maintained by the Sharia Supervisory Board to provide our customers with a wide range of benefits. We strive to pioneer global best practices and offer Islamic banking solutions that are suitable for all. Continually engaging with customers to better understand their needs has led to sustained improvements in the bank's services and product offerings,” he added.

The Ijara home purchase plan lets you finance your final purchase with a combination of rent and capital payments. As a result, your ownership share remains consistent throughout the life of the plan. The Murabaha is a financing arrangement in which Bank Nizwa buys the property and sells it to the customer with known cost and markup for both parties, and then the customer pays a monthly instalment.

A Diminishing Musharaka agreement is a joint purchase agreement between the customer and Bank Nizwa. The customer pays off the provider's share each month, so their ownership share grows as the banks decrease. In Forward Ijarah, the Islamic bank pays for the construction whilst the customer begins making payments after completion.

The Home Finance service offered by Bank Nizwa will allow customers to realise their dreams.

Oxy Oman sponsors equestrian endurance race

MUSCAT: Oxy Oman representatives recently attended the sponsorship signing ceremony for the Oxy Equestrian Endurance Race, which is exclusively sponsored by the company; in cooperation with the Oman Equestrian Federation, and the Al Dhahirah Equestrian Committee. Under the sponsorship agreement, 3 vehicles will be awarded to the top three winners of the 100KM race.

The signing event was held at Oman Equestrian Federation. Steven Lauver, President and General Manager of Oxy Oman, and Sayyid Munther bin Saif bin Hamad al Busaidy, Chairman of Oman Equestrian Federation signed the sponsorship agreement on behalf of their respective organisations.

The Oxy Equestrian Endurance



Race will be held in Ibri, Al Dhahirah Governorate in December, 2022. Oxy Oman's exclusive sponsorship marks the company's second year in supporting equestrian racing, in addition to its long-term engagement with camel racing in the Sultanate of Oman as a local support historically tied to the

culture of local communities.

“Oxy is committed to supporting projects which directly impact communities located within our concession areas, and to enhance social development through long-term projects in the region that aid in diversifying the economy. This sponsorship reflects the company's long-standing

strides in support of historic cultural sports in the Sultanate of Oman, and we are proud to engage with the regionally recognised and acclaimed sport of equestrian racing,” said Steven Lauver.

In the field of cultural sports, Oxy has supported 29 camel races during the last 8 years, and has supported the renovation of the Haima Camel Race track, which is considered the main camel race track serving the Wilayats of Al Wusta Governorate.

This agreement comes within the framework of Oxy's long-term commitment to strengthen its social ties with the communities located in its concession areas and the wider Omani population, and enhancing the strategic partnerships and continuous collaboration with key stakeholders.

Omantel to host GCCM conference

MUSCAT: Omantel, the leading provider of integrated telecommunication services in the Sultanate of Oman, is set to host the 8th annual Global Carrier Community Meeting (GCCM) in Muscat from November 14 to 15, 2022, to be attended by more than 500 delegates and decision makers from over 300 operators representing 50 countries.

Organised by the Carrier Community, Omantel is set to host the global event for the second time after its successful hosting of the 2019 edition in Muscat. The conference is considered one of the largest telecom gatherings, especially on the wholesale front.

Moreover, the event brings together telecom operators, hyperscalers, content and cloud providers and vendors to meet and network.

During the event, attendees specialised in the domains of voice, data, messaging, subsea



Yasser bin Redha al Lawati

cables, satellite, data centres and other related sectors will enjoy full access to all meeting facilities, executive panels and knowledge sharing sessions, leisure activities as well as evening networking receptions.

Yasser bin Redha al Lawati, General Manager of Marketing Wholesale at Omantel, said, “As an industry leader and a global wholesale provider, Omantel is delighted to host this gathering of the world's key operators for the second time in Muscat.

By supporting this event, our aim is to increase the awareness of



Wida Schmidt

Omantel's international business through wholesale among an international audience. We will also utilise this gathering to launch our revamped wholesale website along with a new corporate video.”

“Omantel has strong partnerships with major international telecom players and hyperscalers, many of them are already having their regional servers hosted in Oman.

The event is a great opportunity to highlight our achievement on that front, and we also seek to put the spotlight on the challenges and opportunities in the wholesale

industry,” Al Lawati concluded.

Wida Schmidt, the Co-Founder of the Carrier Community commented “On behalf of the Carrier Community team, valued members and partners globally, I am very much looking forward to this year's renewed potential for delegate members from around the world to return to the Sultanate of Oman with the support and warm welcome of Omantel, our Host Diamond Sponsor for the Middle East 2022 GCCM — Muscat, and the Carrier Community's premier partner in the region.

The Sultanate of Oman's value as a marketplace, as a growing digital hub, as well as a knowledge-sharing meeting point cannot be underestimated, and I am proud to present this 8th annual Middle East GCCM alongside our colleagues at Omantel, the region's forerunning telecommunications service provider.”



IEA lauds Oman's decarbonisation efforts

JOMAR MENDOZA

@JmObserver

The International Energy Agency (IAE) has applauded the Sultanate of Oman's decarbonisation efforts. "The reason Oman is such an important country for us at the IEA is because (the country) is playing a leading role in decarbonisation efforts in the Middle East and North Africa region," said Ali Al Saffar, Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa at the International Energy Agency.

Speaking at the Oman pavilion on the sidelines of the UN COP27 climate conference in Sharm El



Sheik in Egypt, Al Saffar added, "The work that Oman is doing on decarbonisation effort, in its domestic industry and at the same time looking for ways to diversify its energy and economy is, in the vision of the IEA, quite an

When we talk of energy transition, this is for the prosperity of the people, that nobody is left behind, that it can create good quality job and that it can create good economic resilience.

ALI AL SAFFAR

Regional Director for MENA, IEA

exemplary story."

The IEA, with the government

of Oman, the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, PDO and other industrial players, work together to decarbonise oil and gas, look towards low carbon fuels — including low carbon hydrogen — and find ways to propel further industrialisation and make sure that economic diversification happens at the same time as the energy transition does.

"The reason for this is because what exists Oman can be implemented further. If we can use Oman as an example to show the successes in the energy transition and economic diversification then it can lead the way to a much

more successful and much more economically prosperous region," Al Saffar said.

"When we work with Oman or with other country, it's very important that when we talk of energy transition, this is for the prosperity of the people, that nobody is left behind, that it can create good quality job and that it can create good economic resilience. The reason Oman is so important to us is that, it is in some ways an exemplar in the region; it is doing things before many countries are, and we are very excited to part of this journey," he concluded.

Sumitomo announces decarbonisation pact with 44.01

FROM PAGE 13

In 2019, Sumitomo Corporation declared the Group's Policies on Climate Change Issues, and we continue to review these policies in light of global circumstances surrounding climate change. The capital and business alliance with 44.01 is one of the initiatives in line with these policies," Sumitomo said in a statement.

"Through this partnership, we will provide business development support, as well as technical support around drilling technology and sub-surface evaluation, making use of the knowledge and networks we have accumulated over many years from the tubular business and natural resource business.

We will also create synergies with 44.01 in the various sectors in which we are involved, such as steelmaking, power generation, natural gas, aluminium smelting, hydrogen and ammonia, as well as jointly developing and deploying decarbonisation services.

Under our corporate message 'Enriching lives and the world,' we will contribute to solving the global social challenge of climate change through collaboration with 44.01," it further added.

First Omani Cloud Kitchen announces new partnership

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 13

Fried-chicken sensation Sides will be launching in Oman as part of an exclusive partnership with the first and leading Omani Cloud Kitchen - IO Kitchens.

One of the most globally renowned and popular fried-chicken brands globally, 'Sides,' will be launching in Oman this November in an exclusive partnership with the first and leading Omani Cloud Kitchen - IO Kitchens.

There are over 100 Sides kitchens operating globally, but this will be the brand's second

ever physical unit, alongside BOXPARK Wembley, London, United Kingdom.

Sides was developed by legendary YouTube collective The Sidemen, arguably the most popular and engaged content creators in Europe with over 20 million followers. Since launching in 2021, Sides have received over a quarter of a million orders across the UK.

Sides will be available for dine-in at the IO Kitchen's premises in Al Mouj Street, and for delivery via local food delivery app Talabat to all other areas in Muscat, facilitated by IO Kitchens. Customers can also order online and pick up their



orders directly from IO Kitchens in Al Ghubrah, Al Mouj Street, and soon from Al Qurum.

Hisham Hasan, Co-Founder and CEO of IO Kitchens said: "We couldn't be more excited to welcome Sides to our growing network of local, regional and globally renowned F&B brands. Sides' expansion into Oman is a significant step in their growth

strategy across the region. We look forward to working very closely with them to introduce their hugely popular menu to Oman, whilst demonstrating how local and global brands can use our platform to scale quickly."

They will be serving up their hugely popular and mouth-watering chicken with the option of choosing one of their seven signature sauces, including Chipotle, XIX Buffalo, Classic BBQ, Korean BBQ, Teriyaki, Garlic Vegan Mayo and Louisiana. Customers will also be able to indulge in all of the classic dishes like their crispy waffle fries, gooey mac and cheese bites, cheese

poppers, onion rings and fresh chicken tenders.

"Launching Sides in Oman is a huge milestone for us" says Marketing Director at Sides, Adam Maddock. "It's been an incredible journey since we launched almost a year ago in the UK and UAE, since then the response has been phenomenal. We're excited for our fans in Oman to order Sides!"

Joshua Bradley aka Zerkaa, The Sidemen says: "This is a huge moment for us! Seeing the response to Sides has been mind-blowing. We're so proud to be in a position to do it all over again in Oman, and to be able to give the fans what they want!"

Solar-powered desalination an imperative for GCC states: WB experts

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, NOV 13

Oman and its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) peers face steeper costs in securing their potable water needs unless they switch to renewables-powered water desalination, key experts of the World Bank (WB) have stressed.

Issam Abousleiman, World Bank Regional Director for the GCC, and Anders Jagerskog, Senior Water Resources Management Specialist - World Bank Water Global Practice, warned in a joint paper that the water-stressed GCC region must also move away from subsidies to incentivise judicious consumption of water resources.

"Currently, water and energy subsidies deepen each sector's dependence on oil revenues. In a region that is only growing hotter and dryer, securing water and energy for nearly 60 million people grows more expensive everyday," the experts noted.

They warned that the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea, along the coasts of which most of the Gulf's desalination plants are located, are turning saltier due to higher evaporation rates and reduced freshwater inflows. The presence of hundreds of desalination plants along these coasts, they pointed out, results in the massive quantities of hypersaline waste ending up in shallow coastal zones.

"New desalination plant effluent triggers a vicious cycle of unsustainability: The higher the salt concentration in waste emptied near source intakes, the



more energy required to remove that salt when new seawater is taken in for desalination.

Poor or nonexistent brine abatement is degrading coastal marine life and will eventually impact the prospects for coastal tourism," the experts cautioned. The long-term consequences of increased dependence on fossil fuel powered desalination will be disastrous – environmentally and economically – for countries of the GCC, the experts warned.

"Left unchecked, by 2050 this effluent will erode species' integrity and diversity, hurting fisheries, tourism, and coastal communities. Current policies do not adequately respond to these challenges. The strong reliance on cheap energy for the provision of water security will, in the long run, be unsustainable."

In this regard, the World Bank experts called for 'green' reforms to make water production more

ALTHOUGH NOT SPECIFICALLY REFERENCED IN THE PAPER, OMAN TOO HAS MADE MODEST STRIDES IN SOLAR BASED DESALINATION

sustainable as part of a wider regional pivot to a low-carbon economy. They cited in this regard the example of Saudi Arabia, which is building the world's largest solar powered desalination plant.

Although not specifically referenced in the paper, Oman too has made modest strides in solar based desalination. Omani firm Sharqiyah Desalination Company, which operates a major Independent Water Project (IWP) at Sur, recently announced that a 17 megawatt-peak (MWp) solar farm will start generating green electricity for the desalination plant from early 2023. But the experts did laud Oman for restructuring water tariffs

with a view to incentivising rationalisation of consumption.

"Oman has a good example model of how to ensure fair yet efficient consumption. It combines targeted subsidies for low-income households with tiered rates that raise prices per unit of demand," they noted. They also appealed for a mindset change in how the Gulf states view wastewater not as a problem but as a valuable resource.

"GCC countries should rethink of wastewater not as a problem but as valuable resource. The failure to treat wastewater pollutes land and marine ecosystems. Recycling it, however, offers an indispensable and affordable, green way to augment and diversify water and energy supplies. Other regional experiences suggest the GCC region could recapture up to 90 per cent of wastewater for agricultural, industrial, and domestic use," the experts added.



Fish oil plant opened in Duqm SEZ

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 13

A fish oil refining plant was inaugurated at the Special Economic Zone of Duqm under the auspices of Eng Ahmed Akaak, Acting CEO – SEZAD Gold Fin International, a company specialising in the production of fish meal and fish oil, launched this first ever plant that produces fish oil for human consumption.

The unit has the processing capacity of 10 tonnes per day. The plant can extract fatty acids (Omega-3) found in fish which is suitable for human consumption.

"We are pleased today to inaugurate the fish oil refining unit, which represents an added value to the fish and food industries in the region, and which uses the latest technologies in refining fish oil and which produces oils for

THE PLANT IS CONSIDERED AS THE FIRST IN OMAN TO EXPORT SUCH HIGH-QUALITY FISH OIL PRODUCTS FROM DUQM TO THE WORLD

human use," said Eng Akaak Muhammad Basheer, Chairman – Gold Fin International.

"The plant is considered as the first in Oman to export such high-quality fish oil products from Duqm to the world. We export our products to meet the needs and requirements of the international market," he added.

The fish oil unit is part of a larger plant that was opened in 2018 in the zone earmarked for fisheries and food industries. Set up with an investment of \$3 million, the plant processes fish into fish meal for use as animal feed, pet food and aquaculture industry.

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Beyond mats: Local artisan reimagines what more can be done with palm fronds

Rabae al Maskari is in his 60s but he doesn't show any sign of slowing down. Finding him recently under the canopy of date palms in Al Qabil for a once-a-month on Saturday souq, he was busy hammering away to demonstrate that the mandoos he sells are a product of his own craftsmanship and genius... **P20**

Top museums issue statement against eco- attacks on paintings

DOZENS OF THE WORLD'S top museums issued a joint declaration on Thursday saying environmental activists who attack paintings "severely underestimate" the

damage that could be caused. Protesters have attacked numerous masterpieces across Europe in recent weeks to protest the lack of action against climate

change. They have glued themselves to a Francisco Goya in Madrid, thrown soup at Vincent van Goghs in London and Rome, and mashed potatoes on a Claude Monet. "The activists responsible for (these attacks) severely underestimate the fragility of these irreplaceable objects, which must be preserved as part of our world cultural heritage," said the statement. It was spearheaded by the Prado in Madrid, and signed by the directors of more than 90 world-renowned museums including the Guggenheim in New York, Louvre in Paris and Uffizi in Florence. "As museum directors entrusted with the care of these works, we have been deeply shaken by their risky endangerment," the statement said. "We will continue to advocate for direct access to our cultural heritage. And we will maintain the museum as a free space for social communication." — AFP



READ

GOING ROGUE

BY JANET EVANOVICH

The 29th book in the Stephanie Plum series. The man who abducted the office manager at Vinnie's Bail Bonds demands a mysterious coin in exchange for her.



TRAVEL TALES

Colombian artists perform a folk dance during Amritsar International Folk Festival at Khalsa college for women in Amritsar. — AFP



DISCOVERY

A general view of the archaeological site where over 2,000-years-old bronze statues are discovered at the sanctuary of San Casciano dei Bagni, in Tuscany. Italian archaeologists announced the extraordinary discovery of more than 20 bronze statues created over 2000 years ago, almost perfectly preserved in the mud of hot springs in Tuscany. — AFP





Made You Look: The Cubist Art of Deception

PARIS, AND THE YEAR is 1910; four years from now, Europe will shatter, but painting is already in pieces. Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso aren't even 30 yet, and in their studios in Montmartre, they are making paintings that look like nothing that came before. Flat paintings. Fractured paintings. Paintings that boil down human experience to a stew of signs and symbols, and set the 20th century on the path to abstraction.

From their hero Paul Cézanne, they had learned to break down and reassemble multiple perspectives. Scrutinising central African sculpture in Paris' colonial ethnology museum, they had learned to clarify bodies into pure geometry. Crossing those two wires, they jolt the history of Western art and spark a whole new kind of image that, for the first time in 500 years, is done with simulating real life. Not satisfied with revolutionising painting, they then go on to forge an even more radical form: collage, which contaminated the realm of fine art with detritus from newspapers and the shops.

That, at least, is how the story of cubism usually goes: a story of an utter break with illusionism. That's how the textbooks still teach it. That's how critics like me reflexively narrate it. And that's the story that is getting an almighty shake-up right now in "Cubism and the Trompe l'Oeil Tradition," an eye-bending, wonderfully frisky new exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. What if Picasso and Braque had other aims than shooting the starting pistol for abstract art? What if cubism, for all its debts to Cézanne and central Africa, also drew on another, lower kind of imagery? What if our view of cubism as an art of no illusions was ... all an illusion? The exhibition, seven years in the making, overturns the modernist gameboard by putting these great puzzles of modern Paris — by Picasso, Braque and Juan Gris, many from the transformative gift that cosmetics tycoon Leonard Lauder made to the Met in 2013 — alongside several dozen earlier paintings that aimed to trompe l'oeil: trick the eye.

During the 17th century, trompe

l'oeil had fans among both the European aristocracy and a new middle class, who paid top dollar for pictures of letter racks that appear to be stuffed with real envelopes, or wrinkled papers as if they were tacked right to the canvas. Trompe l'oeil artists were also highly in demand in the decorative arts, and wealthy patrons would hire peintres-décorateurs to shellac their drawing rooms with imitation marble and porphyry.

By the time of the Enlightenment, though, trompe l'oeil was badly out of

lustrous stone, which made books and letters appear so real that you could grab them — was rarely as simple as a one-liner.

It was a trickery that showcased its trickery. And this show, organised by Emily Braun and Elizabeth Cowling and full of rigorous scholarship and some naughty puns, proposes that the cubists took lessons from these dissemblers that were decisive for how we see today. They're lessons that may clarify matters if you've never really warmed to cubism, which, for all its importance, still has an unfortunate reputation as forbidding or insidious. And they're lessons that underscore just how the cubists plunged into a new world, without fear, and gave us a vital example for a contemporary culture desperate for its own smashup.

LESSON ONE: A painting is just a painting. It's a flat surface slathered with oils, rather than an illusionistic window on the world, and there's nothing wrong with reminding viewers with a gotcha joke. Take, for example, one of the earliest cubist pictures: Braque's 1909 "Violin and Palette," loaned from the Guggenheim. The musical instrument and the artist's implement lie in planes so shallow that space becomes a mosaic. A nail, represented as nothing more than two perpendicular black lines, casts a shadow as bent as a dislocated shoulder. Black outlines give zero sense of depth, and hasty green brushwork in the top-right corner suggests a pulled-back curtain, as if all this is just a stage set.

LESSON TWO: Humble subjects can have profound meanings. Even still life, once seen as a workaday genre of sim-

ple copying, could have the highest philosophical complexity. Picasso's and Braque's cubist still lifes of 1910-12 do away with the Cézanne-esque fruit bowl and absorb elements from earlier Dutch art, including string instruments, wine goblets and tobacco pipes. When seen alongside these rich 17th-century still lifes — one table with fading flowers, another with a half-burned pipe lighter; none is really trompe l'oeil;

LESSON THREE (the most important): Nothing about culture will ever be pure. High art should not, indeed cannot, be walled off from the world outside. The trompe l'oeil artists loved to paint letters, calling cards, books and etchings; the cubists, by turn, infected French art with advertisements, sheet music and pulp novels. With the invention of collage in 1912, the cubists opened a second path for modernism. You could hold to the independence and self-determination that would come to animate abstract art. Or you could give form to the modern world through aggregation, stitchups, reuse, misuse.

Picasso, in the bafflingly dense "Still Life with Chair Caning" (1912), showed what was possible for an artist ready to slip between real and fake, found and painted. It's another scene of a cafe table, laid with newspaper and glass, on which Picasso pasted what looks like the rattan caning of a cafe chair — but turns to be a commercial tablecloth printed with the image of caning. (This is an epochal Picasso, loaned from Paris to New York for the first time in 30 years.) Braque, the son of a housepainter, had a particular gift at simulating wallpaper, and mixed commercially printed decorations with painted replicas: a copy of a copy, a commodity devalued and revalued.

With its attention to visual trickery, "Cubism and the Trompe l'Oeil Tradition" concentrates mostly on cubism's second, more percussive stage, usually referred to as synthetic cubism. That focus leaves Picasso in slight shadow, gives Braque his fair due and crowns a new champion of media monkey business and painterly legerdemain. Step forward, Gris: the eternal third wheel in Picasso and Braque's classic rivalry, who graduates here to the TKO champion of cubist illusion.

A new age needed new images, and there was no way out but through! Three young men in Montmartre understood that in different ways, but with equal intensity — and the Met's exhibition, following on a small but important Gris retrospective last year in Baltimore and Dallas, confirms with panache that cubism's visual innovations did much more than just reflect a new world. When information got so fast they could hardly keep up, when crises seemed perpetual and war was on the way, the cubists did something better than representing life; they constituted life through art. They made a whole new culture out of the shards they picked up, and in its pasted pieces — right down to the headline spelling GRIS — they found themselves transformed.

You could say that those times demanded an art of that ambition, but ours do, too, and everyone knows it's not happening. Wars of intolerable brutality. Savage technologies. Epidemics not seen for a century. Climatic upheavals not seen for a whole geological epoch. And against this backdrop of disruption — nothing new? Autofiction and Anna Weyant? Self-esteem and "Stranger Things"? "The goal," said Braque, "was not to be concerned with the reconstitution of an anecdotal fact, but with the constitution of a pictorial fact." Who is going to face our time head-on, dive into the wreck and constitute something new? — **NYT**

DIGITAL TRENDS

Fact Check: How to spot impostor Twitter accounts



THE ROLLOUT OF TWITTER'S subscription service has prompted a string of accounts impersonating public figures, sparking concerns about the potential for scams and disinformation.

Multiple accounts posing as politicians, celebrities and corporate brands have been suspended after being identified as inauthentic.

The impostors had paid the \$7.99 required to display a verified blue tick — an identifier previously reserved for notable people or institutions — under changes brought in by new Twitter owner Elon Musk.

Dan Evon, senior manager of education design at the non-profit News Literacy Project, said people can always "perform a logic check."

"Many of these impostor accounts are posting overtly inflammatory messages," Evon said. "If the account is posting something newsworthy, has it made the news?"

FAKE ACCOUNTS QUICKLY CREATED -

Twitter, which did not respond to an AFP inquiry, has rules against misleading and deceptive identities. Musk tweeted on Sunday that "any



There are steps people can take to determine whether a Twitter account with a blue checkmark is authentic, including checking the account's handle, creation date and how many followers it has — and noting who is following it.

For example, one account purported to show NBA star LeBron James requesting a trade from his team. James' authentic handle - @KingJames - was created in 2009 and has more than 52 million followers. These include other NBA players and the Los Angeles Lakers, his team.

But the account that impersonated him used the handle @KINGJamez, came online in November 2022 and had fewer than 200 followers, according to archived captures.

Twitter users can click a profile's badge to see whether the account

Twitter handles engaging in impersonation without clearly specifying 'parody' will be permanently suspended."

But the problem remains.

"It has simply become more difficult to determine credibility on the platform," said Gordon Pennycook, a behavioral scientist at the University of Regina.

Brian Whelan, who created a fake Donald Trump account, said the process was quick.

"I rebranded an old account in less than five minutes, got the verification immediately using a Revolut card in my own name, then was able to use the account for two hours," said Whelan, head of video and social at the London-based Times Radio.

Other copycat accounts used paid badges to pretend to be lawyer Rudy Giuliani, the video game company



paid for it. The pop-up on paid accounts reads: "This account is verified because it's subscribed to Twitter Blue."

For accounts verified for notability, it says: "This account is verified because it's notable in government, news, entertainment, or another designated category."

Government agencies and public figures often list Twitter information on websites and other platforms, such as Facebook.

Nintendo, and Twitter itself.

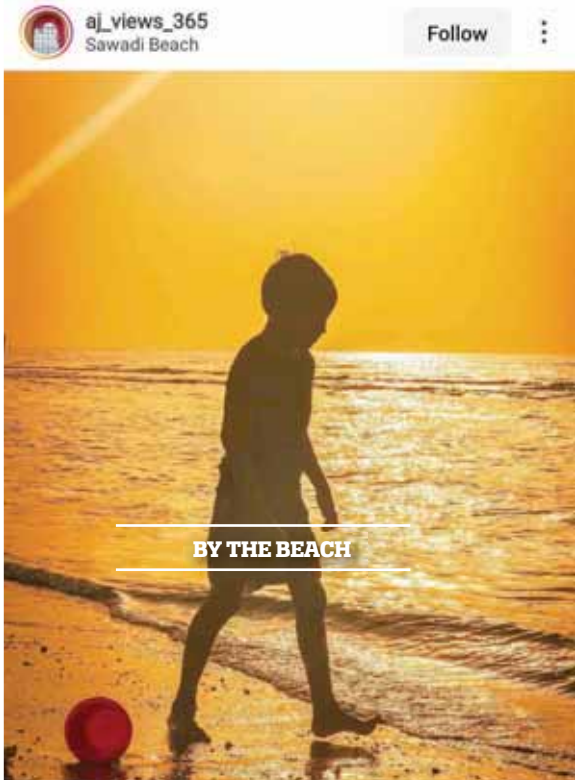
The new ease of obtaining a blue badge makes media literacy more crucial than ever, as the new system could open the door to disinformation from accounts posing as government leaders and agencies, health officials, weather channels, financial advisors and more.

"This change opens so many possibilities for bad actors that it's going to be difficult for fact-checkers to keep up," Evon added. — **AFP**



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Kurt Cobain's smashed guitar, Lennon's glasses hit the auction block



A KURT COBAIN smashed guitar is expected to fetch top dollar at Julien's Auction's annual Icons & Idols: Rock 'N' Roll Auction in New York. The taped-up instrument is considered by some a piece of rock and roll history and estimated to be worth \$200,000 to \$400,000. "This guitar was actually smashed in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, 1989," said executive director of Julien's Auctions, Martin Nolan. "He's actually written on the guitar."



Over 1,500 lots are included that features items from Beyonce, Prince, and Carrie Underwood. Glasses worn by John Lennon are estimated to sell for over \$80,000. "You sort of identified John Lennon as wearing those type of round granny glasses, as he called them himself. And their photo match to a photograph taken by Ian McKellen for the book The Lives of John Lennon — it comes with that book as well." Nolan said since the pandemic there has been a surge in people wanting to own iconic items. "People are sort of taking their money out of sort of intangible items or even real estate items that they have in their investment portfolio and choosing to own something cool, something that they can relate to." The sale will take place live at the Hard Rock Café in New York City's Times Square and online from November 11-13. — Reuters

CHANGING WORLD

'Voracious' giant snails spark alarm in Venezuela



A "PLAGUE" OF giant African snails that pose potential health risks to humans is causing alarm in Venezuela where sustained rains have facilitated their proliferation. The first colonies of the sub-Saharan Achatina fulica snail were discovered at the beginning of November on the shores of Lake Maracaibo in western Venezuela. Since then, more snails have been found in agricultural areas in the region, as well as in neighbouring Tachira state. "Specific sites have been verified... where approximately 350 to 400 snails are being collected per day," Rafael Ramirez, the mayor of the city of Maracaibo, told AFP. He said authorities were working hard to combat the snails. The giant African snail is considered an invasive species because of its reproductive capacity — up to 600 eggs every two weeks — and its relatively long lifespan of six years on average. It can be devastating to crops and also carries parasites that can cause meningitis, encephalitis and intestinal disorders in humans. The snail has been present in Venezuela since 1997 with the last plague



detected in 2017 although in smaller quantities, said Jose Sandoval, director of wildlife at the Azul Ambientalista NGO. "This will be unstoppable because they are big and

already adults: They have already laid eggs," said Sandoval. "We are faced with an invasion, a plague, and so it is hard to eradicate them when they reach these numbers, but they can be controlled." Sandoval took AFP on an eradication mission in Maracaibo in which he collected 437 snails in just two hours. He said the prolonged rainy season was to blame for the snails' reappearance and rapid reproduction. "They will remain until March, they will damage crops... they are voracious," he added. — AFP

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Homage to Catalonia

A FEW MONTHS after the Spanish Civil war broke in 1936, George Orwell travelled on the pretense of covering it but, his true intention was joining the fight against fascism. He enlisted in an anti-Stalinist group called POUM (Worker's Party of Marxist Unification) that fought for the Republicans (along with anarchists and socialists) against the Nationalists under the leadership of Franco. Orwell shares his 115 days on the war front in a book called Homage to Catalonia (published in England in 1938). The book is divided into 12 chapters that spans between his arrival to Spain on December of 1936 to his lucky escape on June 1937, accompanied by his wife Eileen Blair. To Orwell's great surprise, his comrades in arms were poverty-stricken Spanish peasants — few were young teens whose fathers had exchanged them for bread with no military discipline. Many were equipped with malfunctioning weapons — mostly from the 1890's- that caused fatalities when not handed well. This motley crew kept expanding as more Spaniard volunteers joined in — especially from Málaga that was just conquered by Franco — with one common factor uniting them: the majority were ignorant of the fighting factions and their political agendas; all they cared about was fighting for justice and freedom. Orwell admires their kindness and down-to-earth attitude with foreigners like him who came to fight by their side, but not their easygoing attitude where everything is done mañanā! His days on the frontier were not as exciting as expected: there was no action happening as each side awaited the other to attack. The soldiers were either digging trenches, firing warning bullets at the enemy that was far away, collecting food and sodden wood for the fire. As for Orwell, he's either reading, drinking tea, fighting lice infestation, or trying to communicate in super bad Catalan with his comrades. Unfortunately, Orwell leaves the frontiers after receiving a bullet in his neck and is suspended from the

POUM. He returns to Barcelona for recovery and witnesses the general change of mood of the public: at the beginning of the war the people's concern was the obliteration of social ranks and being treated equally, now they're queuing for hours to get bread while street wars break around them. The May events starts and within days from them the POUM is declared a fascist party. This gives rise to an inquisition of its former members — including Orwell — who had spent a few days hiding in abandoned buildings before managing to escape to France. However, Orwell's description of his surroundings is astonishing as nothing seems to escape his attention: from seasonal and terrain changes that he comes across while travelling through northern Spain to detailed description of the war-burdened atmosphere surrounding him. The comrades he mentions are competent and impressive. Moreover, the book has two appendices that describes different factions participating in the civil war and the Western ignorant view of it — obviously politically driven — which could be boring to some readers. Orwell struggled to find a publisher for a year as the book's content was considered socialist and anti-Stalinist. Even though the book is very Spanish in nature, yet the Spanish censored version came to light in 1970 (20 years after Orwell's death), with many changes that didn't vilify Franco's dictatorship. Fortunately, this censorship was lifted in 2003 — almost 30 years after Franco's demise — enabling Spanish readers to peruse the original text. Homage to Catalonia — along with Franz Borkenau's the Spanish Cockpit — are rare firsthand accounts of the Spanish Civil war. As other Orwell's books, it's richly textured, skillfully structured, and truly enjoyable. An epic treat for history lovers.

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art & life

Local Scene

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Beyond mats: Local artisan reimagines what more can be done with palm fronds

By Yeru Ebuen
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Artisans in Oman are becoming more creative when it comes to materials to use for their crafts. On a farm in Ibri, a local artisan is diversifying his portfolio by transforming date palm fronds and leaves into something more than just mats and qafeers or traditional weave containers.

Rabae al Maskari is in his 60s but he doesn't show any sign of slowing down. Finding him recently under the canopy of date palms in Al Qabil for a once-a-month Saturday souq, he was busy hammering away to demonstrate that the mandoos he sells are a product of his own craftsmanship and genius.

Mandoos sold in Oman are typically made from wood and take different ornate shapes and sizes. In the past, they were gilded with different gemstones, silver and even gold and they are treasured possessions passed down to family members.

Over time, the creation and the ornaments added to the mandoos also make use of available resources within a particular locality. Artisans coming from the coastal areas used shells to decorate their products while others added more metal elements to the design.

"I've learned how to use certain portions of date palms in creating mandoos. It was a lot of testing but I discovered that the materials work just as well as the original wood products," he said.

For Rabae's mandoos, the date leave's midrib served as the base of the boxes. Cut into different sizes, they also served as embossed decorations attached by golden nails.

They come in different sizes, usually depending on the customised order of his buyers but the smallest he has on display is about half a meter wide by one meter long. They also come in muted colours usually pale brown or pale green respecting the original colour of the palm fronds giving the mandoos a nice finish.

"The bigger ones usually take three days to finish while I can do the smaller ones in a day," Rabae shared.

"The designs are inspired by Islamic and Arabian art and are also very symmetrical. It's an Omani product created by an Omani craftsman — it's very unique compared to those marketed in big markets," Rabae said.

"I use organic products that are available on the farm. Some come with rope decorations or I sometimes mix them with weaved date leaves. The flexibility of the materials also allowed me to be able to attach photos on the mandoos and it can serve as a family heirloom where they can put their photos if the buyer so wishes," he said.

Some of his earlier products were decorated with photos of the late Sultan Qaboos and His Majesty Sultan Haitham.

Rabae shared that he usually puts his finished designs on display in different morning souqs near his home. He said that as a small-scale producer and with this style requiring lots of technicalities, he can only produce a limited number of mandoos which makes them more special.

AN EVOLVING CRAFT

Rabae shared that other than mandoos, his family also produces other palm frond products like qafeer and mats being the base of their small business.

He is also venturing into producing other products made from palm fronds and now offers tissue holders, photo frames, small display tables, ornamental displays for homes and even palm frond benches.

"For those who like to infuse their homes with traditional decorations and crafts products, these are fitting additions to your homes," he said.

He added that what he does is an evolving craft and that the products he can make depends solely on his imagination. So far though, he is happy that they are moving to other territories some people can't believe are from date palms.

While his products are not available yet in big supermarkets and department stores, Rabae said that he is happy to be able to market his products in different morning souqs so that he can physically interact with his buyers and share information about each of the products they are buying.

It can be challenging to move his items from one location to another but he said that seeing people becoming more interested in local crafts gives him a sense of happiness.

He hopes that he will be able to market his products to a bigger audience and give even non-Omanis an opportunity to buy local products of good quality.

To check out other products and updates from Rabae, you can follow him on Instagram @rabae_almaskri or call him at 99005501.

