

P10

OMAN TO TAKE ON
LEBANON IN FRIENDLY
ON MARCH 27



P13

JAPANESE CORPORATION
TO EXPLORE ROLE IN OMAN
GREEN AMMONIA PROJECT



P20

AL-SHIYAH:
LITTLE EDEN
ON EARTH



MUSCAT

**HM GREETINGS TO
EMPEROR OF JAPAN**

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Emperor Naruhito of Japan on the occasion of his Birthday. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health, happiness and long life to Emperor Naruhito. His Majesty also wished the people of Japan further development and growth. — ONA

**HM GREETINGS TO
BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei Darussalam on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to Sultan Bolkiah. His Majesty also wished the people of Brunei Darussalam further progress and prosperity. — ONA

**HM GREETINGS TO
GUYANA PRESIDENT**

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Mohamed Irfaan Ali of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Dr Mohammed and the people of his country. — ONA



OMAN OBSERVER
FIRST DEDICATED ENGLISH
NEWS APP IN OMAN
DOWNLOAD TODAY

INSIDE



FRANCE EYES WATER CURBS
AFTER DRIEST WINTER



A YEAR OF DEATH, MISERY
YET THE WAR CONTINUES

Honourable Lady to preside over passing out of female police



MUSCAT: Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, will preside on Sunday over a celebration of Royal Oman Police (ROP), marking the passing out of a new batch of female police.

The ceremony will be held at Sultan Qaboos Academy for Police Sciences in the Wilayat of Nizwa, the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

Alongside with the Honourable Lady, female attendees will be present at the ceremony, including some members of the Royal family and the State Council, as well as under-secretaries, senior ROP officers and officials of various government units in Al Dakhiliyah. — ONA

GREETINGS ON TEACHERS' DAY

HH The Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, Spouse of the Sultan of Oman, addressed a message of greetings to teachers on the Teachers' Day, which falls on February 24 every year.

The greetings read as follows: "Over the course of time and throughout the ages, a teacher was, and still is, a symbol of enlightenment, the carrier of the flame that illuminates the paths of

progress. Teachers constitute the cornerstone in every edifice of civilisation.

"While our country celebrates Omani Teacher's Day tomorrow, we are delighted to express our congratulations and gratitude to every male and female teacher in our dear homeland for the sincere efforts that they exert in the upbringing of our children, arming them with lofty human values and worthwhile knowledge.

"A teacher carries a valuable message and bears a great responsibility. Teachers take the credit for grooming generations of young minds, instilling in them the love of the homeland and its leader. Hence, they effectively contribute to the advancement of the country, so that it could enjoy continuous growth and prosperity. "Teachers! you are the pillars of the nation and its best messengers." — ONA

27th Muscat International Book Fair opens

826 PUBLISHING HOUSES AT THE BIGGEST CULTURAL EVENT



Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, and other dignitaries at the opening of the Muscat International Book Fair.

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The 27th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair was opened on Wednesday under the auspices of Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The exhibition which lasts for 11 days, includes around 32 participating countries, 826 publishing houses, and 533,063 titles. The number of Omani publications at the book fair stands at 22,950 alongside 5,900 new releases, in addition to 204,411 foreign books and 260,614 Arabic books.

The 27th edition of the book fair includes 165 cultural events and 166 children's activities - all to come up in 1,194 pavilions. A

special corner will be dedicated to Omani authors and publications, including those written in Zanzibar, Arab, and European countries.

Ahmed al Sabahi, Head of the Exhibition Organising Department at the National Records and Archives Authority, said the authority's participation comes in publishing Omani history through the publications issued by the authority. The participation came with the presentation of 31 publications of the authority.

Yang Shapjun, editorial director for the Fine China series, said: "This is our first participation in the book fair, and we have many books, the most important of which is the smart approach to learning Chinese language." SEE ALSO P4

Israeli troops kill 10 Palestinians

NABLUS: Israeli troops killed 10 Palestinians including a teenager on Wednesday in a raid on the occupied West Bank city of Nablus, while more than 80 suffered gunshot wounds, the Palestinian health ministry said.

The Israeli army said the raid targeted suspects "in a hideout apartment" accused of shootings in the West Bank. It added troops

came under live fire but suffered no casualties. Top Palestinian official Hussein Al Sheikh decried the incursion as a "massacre" and called for "international protection for our people".

The death toll is equal to that of an Israeli army raid last month in Jenin, further north, which was the deadliest West Bank operation since at least 2005.

Meanwhile, United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday called for an end to Israeli settlements in occupied Palestinian lands.

Israel's right-wing government has in recent weeks faced intense international criticism over a decision to give retroactive permission to multiple settlement outposts. SEE ALSO P7

A lot to explore on Empty Quarter Oman-Saudi road

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has said that the opening of the Empty Quarter Road has reduced the travel time between the Sultanate of Oman and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 18 hours to six, making Oman the nearest tourist destination for Saudi citizens and residents.

A report issued by the ministry said that prior to the opening of this new road, travellers to and from Saudi Arabia had to take a long route.

The positive impact of the new

road was reflected in the increase in the number of hotel guests in Oman from January to November 2022, which increased by 418.8 per cent from 27,980 at the end of November 2021 to 145,100 guests until the end of November 2022.

With the Empty Quarter easily accessible via the new road, travellers between Saudi Arabia and Oman can now enjoy desert scenes, especially sand dunes whose heights range between 50 and 250 meters, transverse and linear dunes.

"As of September 2022, nearly half a million tonnes of goods and



nearly 400,000 passengers have used the new direct road between the two countries. We expect this number to easily double and triple in the next five years because the movement on this road does have much transit or third-party traffic," Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maaali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, added.

He said that the long-term goals discussed between both sides include a feasibility study for a direct railway link, and the short-term goals include agreements for the quick turnaround of goods via sea and land border crossings.



MUSCAT BOOK FAIR ATTRACTS RECORD NUMBER OF PUBLISHERS



The 27th edition of the Muscat International Book Fair opened on Wednesday at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The exhibition includes around 32 participating countries, 826 publishing houses, and 533,063 titles.

MUSCAT MUNICIPAL COUNCIL APPROVES SITE FOR CAMEL SHOWS IN AMERAT



MUSCAT: The Municipal Council of the Governorate of Muscat on Wednesday viewed the programmes proposed for the development committee of the governorate. These programmes include infrastructure projects, urban planning and design, land use and development of commercial sectors. The second meeting of the council, held under the chairmanship of Sayyid Hilal bin Saud al Busaidy, Governor of Muscat, Chairman of the council, also approved the site proposed for camel shows in the Wilayat of Al Amerat. The council also discussed a set of relevant topics and took appropriate decisions on their regard. – ONA

STUDENT-LED BREAKTHROUGH



MUSCAT: A team of students at Sultan Qaboos University had developed a technology to utilise graphene-based polymeric solar cells in alternative energy applications. The promising project will add value to the locally produced Polyethylene, bolster the Omani economy and potentially create new job opportunities.

Get ready to explore the best of the past and the present

مهرجان الداخلية ٢٠٢٣ A'Dakhiliyah Festival 2023

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahalbalushi

Al Dakhiliyah Festival is an opportunity for everyone in the Sultanate of Oman and tourists visiting from other parts of the world to understand the country's cultural past and its impact on people's way of life today.

The festival starts on Thursday under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. The festival's opening coincides with the official opening of the Bisya and Salut archaeological centres in the Wilayat of Bahla.

Al Dakhiliyah Festival will continue from February 23 to March 4.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has organised several

activities where all the wilayats have something to showcase.

The 10-day extravaganza will have activities related to the governorate's heritage and culture, while entertainment, adventure activities and other programmes will keep the visitors engaged as per their age, taste and choice.

There are seminars and dialogue sessions that will extend for about two weeks.

Activities depicting daily life in castles, making Omani halwa, experiencing Omani barbecue, pottery-making, folklore performances, horse and camel shows, paragliding, youth initiatives exhibition, youth dialogue session, traditional and artisan markets, entertainment games for young and old, theatre for accompanying events,



mountain walking and mountain bike racing, will be highlights of the festival.

Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah, stated during his meeting with the Governor of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, government agencies and other stakeholders

of the festival that the festival aims to involve small and medium enterprises, members of the local community, and introduce visitors to the cultural and historical heritage and tourist destinations in the governorate.

Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, General Director of

Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said, "The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has been organising tourism festivals in the governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, which benefit from the comparative advantage of each governorate and its unique elements."

Nizwa Fort will witness cultural activities, plays, various competitions and juggling, and the Wilayat of Bahla will witness the opening of the Bisya and Salut Archaeological Visitor Centre, with many accompanying events.

The festival's activities also include cart tours through farms, aflaj and houses, accompanied by a tour guide, in the old neighbourhood in the Wilayat of Al Hamra, astronomy-related events and activities in Jabal Shams, paragliding shows in Manah Public Park "Matan", and various activities in Bahja Samayil Park and Izki Public Park.

There will be a mountain race in the Al Ain and Al Sawad lanes, a presentation of the traditional horse sports "Al Ardah", a peg-picking competition in the Wilayat of Adam, and a 'Camel Ardah' in the Wilayat of Bidbid.

Organising festivals in the governorates are in line with boosting the local economy within the framework of achieving the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.



Follow us on **Twitter**
@omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 23 | 2023

3

Over 12,000 register online for Haj, including 1,431 expats

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs has said over 12,000 people, including 1,431 expatriates, have registered on its website to perform Haj in 2023.

The ministry opened the registration for citizens and residents wishing to perform Haj rituals for the 1444 AH from February 21, which can be done online until March 4 at Hajj.om/en. Most registrations were received from Al Dakhiliyah Governorate (2,253). Other governorates included Muscat (1,720), Al Dhahirah (656), Al Wusta (61), Dhofar (828), Musandam (103), Al Buraimi (158), Al Batinah North (1,655), Al Batinah South (1,158), Al Sharqiyah North (1,211), Al Sharqiyah South (769) and expatriates (1,431).



The Saudi government has said the minimum age for performing this year's Haj is 12 years, as the number of intending pilgrims returns to the pre-pandemic era.

Saudi Ministry of Haj has also pointed out that priority for registering to undertake this year's pilgrimage would be given to first-timers.

The ministry said there would be no limits on the number of pilgrims worldwide for the upcoming pilgrimage, reversing earlier restrictions imposed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in the past two years. Saudi Arabia is set to host 2 million pilgrims for Haj this year, says a government official.

Last year, around 900,000 pilgrims were welcomed as the kingdom reduced the number of Muslims allowed to perform the Haj rites to prevent the spread of the virus.

US official received



MUSCAT: Dr Mohammed bin Nasser al Za'abi, Secretary-General at the Ministry of Defence, received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Wednesday Daniel Benaim, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Arabian Peninsula Affairs in the Near East Bureau at the US Department of State. During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views and discussed several matters of mutual interest. – ONA

MoU to advance sailing programmes and events



MUSCAT: Oman Sail has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Yacht Club de Monaco based in Monte Carlo to develop a robust programme to benefit both organisations in terms of athlete and coach development, and participation in youth sailing events. The agreement will initially run until December 31, 2024, and see teams from Oman Sail join their European counterparts at training camps and regattas, and the potential for collaboration on a joint Keelboat programme.

As part of the agreement, an Organising Committee will be established comprising members from Oman Sail and the Yacht Club de Monaco to combine expertise and deliver mutually beneficial activities.

Dr Khamis al Jabri, CEO of Oman Sail, said, "This is an exciting opportunity to provide our talented sailors and coaches

with more exposure in the world of sailing. The chance to collaborate with a prestigious club like the Yacht Club de Monaco and offer our facilities to their programmes is a huge step forward for both organisations, offering year-round access and event preparation in ideal conditions."

"The agreement also contributes to our goal of strengthening the economy through sport. By adding another regatta to our calendar, we are able to empower local businesses throughout the hospitality sector and share the beauty of our country with new visitors. For over 14 years, Oman Sail has proudly promoted the Sultanate of Oman around the world through sailing and provided long-term learning opportunities for the youth of Oman, and this is another important step towards achieving this goal," he added.

ORA launches GOLANDS 2.0 app for online land trade

MUSCAT: The Oman Real Estate Association (ORA) launched the second version of "GOLANDS 2.0" on Wednesday, a first-of-its-kind application that serves as an online marketplace for land trade. The app was introduced during the association's first meeting of the year held at the Hormuz Grand Hotel Muscat in partnership with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

The updated version of the app offers new features that give sellers an optimal reach to potential buyers, providing a perfect give-and-take experience at their fingertips. The new improvements include a brokers list, land request, verification tick for verified lands,



GPS to locate a land, recently listed lands, previously displayed lands and finance request. The app allows brokers to evaluate lands with an easy approach to view, buy and sell.

The Chairman of ORA, Sadiq Jaffer Sulaiman, stated that the real

estate sector was highly impacted by the Covid-19 repercussions, economic and political variables that have slowed down the growth of the sector in the past three years. However, despite all the challenges, the real estate sector appears to

have weathered the pandemic and moved into the recovery stage triggered by energy price rise and the good performance of the state budget.

During the meeting, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning reviewed the five-pillar-based national real estate strategy. The event was attended by developers, brokers, experts and interested individuals in the real estate sector.

With the launch of "GOLANDS 2.0," the Oman Real Estate Association aims to facilitate the trading of land, streamline the process of buying and selling, and promote growth in the real estate sector.

Barzman School Run 2023 to promote healthy lifestyles

MUSCAT: The Omani Association for School Sports will organise the Barzman School Run 2023 on Friday at 3:30 pm in Al Sahwa Gardens. The event will witness the participation of 200 students from schools in Muscat Governorate, along with parents, children and the public.

The Barzman School Run, a running competition for male and female students in the third and fourth grades from public, private and international schools in the Governorate of Muscat, will cover a 1.5-kilometre distance for boys and 1 kilometre for girls.

The aim of the event is to instil healthy lifestyles among children and young students and promote awareness and a beneficial sports culture among students.

The event also aims at building bridges of cooperation with private sector institutions to create a healthy and athletic school community. The event is aimed at raising the technical and skill levels of talented students in the sport of running, and work to raise their physical and health competence



and abilities.

A number of institutions, including Muscat Municipality, Ministry of Health, Royal Oman Police, Oman Diabetes Association, Sultan Qaboos University (Department of Physical Education and Sports Sciences), and government and private media agencies and institutions, are contributing to the

event.

On the sidelines of the race, several accompanying activities for participating students and their families will be held, including a children's theatre in which fun competitions will be held for children, activities in general hygiene, preserving the environment, implementing health awareness campaigns,

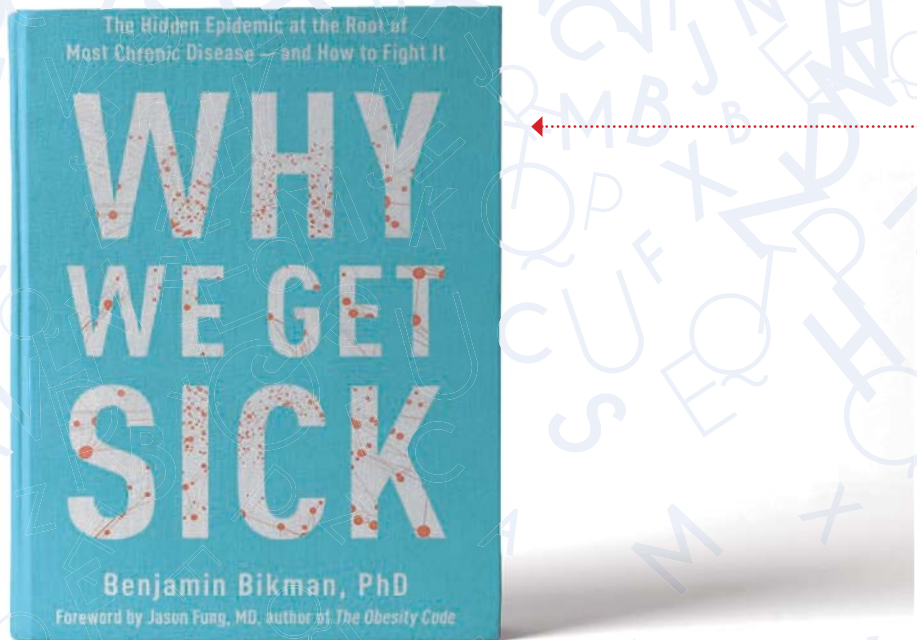
face painting, walking activity for parents and children not participating in the race, and children's characters (mascot), along with a corner for the Omani Diabetes Association and life skills games.

Competitors will receive a medal for the race upon reaching the final line, and there will be special prizes for the contestants.





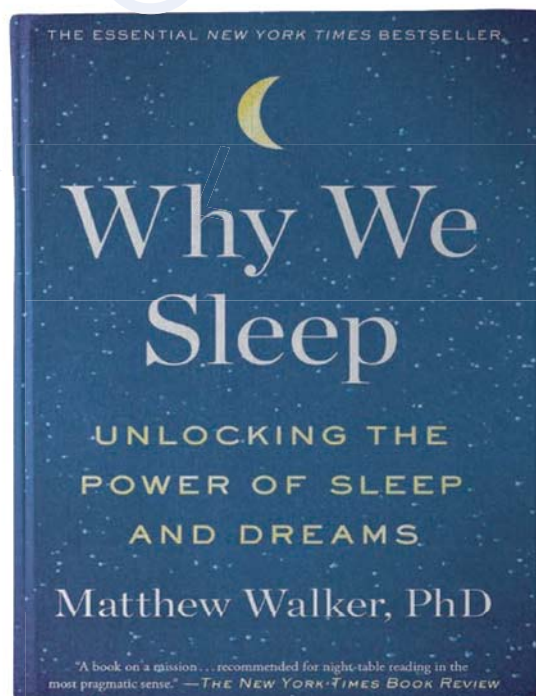
DISCOVER NEW BOOKS AND EXPAND YOUR KNOWLEDGE



A happy place where authors, publishers and book lovers come together to celebrate the written word, the Muscat International Book Fair offers an excellent opportunity to discover new book releases, new writers and attend reading events. It is also a chance to raise knowledge and expand horizons in different fields. Some books on medicine give you a good idea about the world of medicine. The books are available at the Muscat International Book Fair.

WHY WE GET SICK by Benjamin Bikman unpacks the root cause of modern diseases. He provides a concise road map to help you regain or maintain your health. This book is a unique, rigorous contribution to understanding insulin resistance as an underlying cause of chronic disease and ageing.

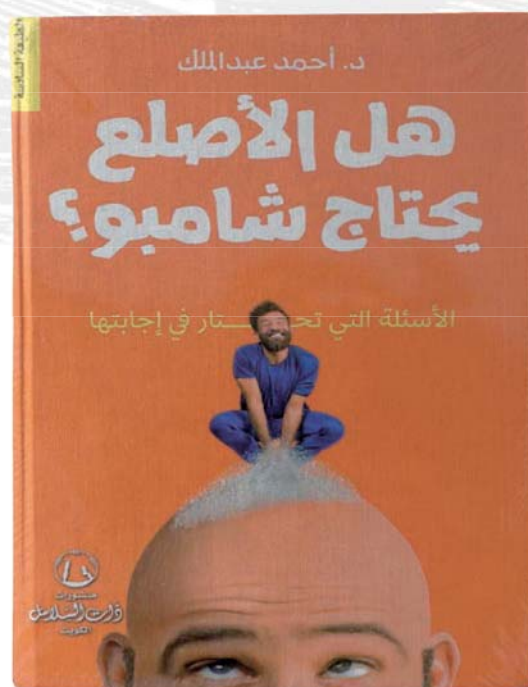
WHY WE SLEEP by Dr Matt Walker brilliantly illuminates the night, explaining how sleep can make us healthier, safer, smarter and more productive. Clearly and definitively, he provides knowledge and strategies to overcome the life-threatening risks associated with our sleep-deprived society. This book is extremely precious because it is the intuitive summary of more than 50 years of research on different facets and functions of sleep and also because a proficient neurologist writes in a way that anyone can easily understand the intricate functions of the brain, hormones, body etc.



THINK OUT OF THE FRIDGE by Dr Faisal Saud starts with an excellent introduction to food and customs in the Arab world and concludes the introduction in a way that provokes and motivates. He says, "Before you read the book, clear your mind from all the information you know about nutrition and diet". The next chapter destroys all nutritional myths and builds information scientifically easily and smoothly to absorb Dr Faisal's innovation in calories, fat storage, burning rate, weight loss, sports, body shapes, BMI, etc, and the number of meals. The book deals with practical topics such as fat mass, metabolism, energy expenditure, heat generation, numbers and equations.



DOES THE BALD NEED SHAMPOO? The book by Dr Ahmed Abdul Malik has the story of baldness that began on May 14, 2017. It started with a real question from one of my followers and ended with writing a book. The book does not only talk about baldness, but also various strange questions in a simple, light-blooded, scientific medical manner: Why isn't there a cardio-cancer? Why do women live longer than men? Why don't we sneeze while we sleep? Why are our veins green when our blood is red? And many other questions that need clarification about their answers.



NOT AN APPLE by Leen Abdulkareem includes the following nutritional sections: the baby, pregnancy and breastfeeding, pressure feeding, the kidneys, cancer, weight gain and obesity, diabetes, gagging operations, food allergy, sports, hormones, vitamins, minerals, food products, miscellaneous questions.





Follow us on **instagram**:
omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 23 | 2023

5

Al Dakhiliyah Municipal Council discusses ongoing, future projects

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, FEB 22

A meeting of the Municipal Council was held in the Office of the Governor of Al Dakhiliyah on Tuesday. Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah and Chairman of the Municipal Council, headed the meeting in the presence of all members.

The meeting began with a welcome by the session chairperson, thanking their efforts and cooperation in everything that serves the public interest. Then, he approved the minutes and recommendations from the previous meeting. He also reviewed the action taken in those recommendations.

The meeting reviewed the agenda's topics, including reviewing the efforts made in the governorate in aspects related to the municipal sector and investment.

The council also discussed the statement of the Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in Al Dakhiliyah



Governorate regarding a request to allocate part of the schools' lands near the main street for commercial investment. The council also reviewed the committee's minutes and reports and the responses from some government agencies on many issues.

An important meeting issue was

traditional industries and crafts in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate and activities prohibited for foreign investors.

At the end of the session, the Governor, the Chairman of the Council, responded to the questions and inquiries of the members of the council with total clarity. He stressed the importance

of concerted efforts between the Municipal Council, government institutions, and private sector institutions in everything that benefits the country and serves the public interest.

The meeting came out with several recommendations, visions and aspirations that would develop the governorate in various aspects.

Oman participates in Sharia disciplines, economics session in Jeddah

JEDDAH: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, is taking part in the twenty-fifth session of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) being held in Jeddah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

Oman's delegation is led by Shaikh Dr Kahlan bin Nabhan al Kharousi, Assistant to the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate of Oman.

The current session witnesses the participation of 200 scholars from the OIC member states with expertise and specialisation



in Sharia disciplines, economics, medicine and sociology to discuss 160 research papers on the issues and topics of the session.

Scholars and experts discuss the principles for implementing the

objectives of Islamic law (maqasid) in conducting contemporary financial transactions in accordance with Sharia.

It is expected that the IIFA will issue resolutions dealing



with a spectrum of issues within the framework of the authentic collective jurisprudential reasoning (ijtihad) of the scholars of the Islamic world in the current era. — ONA

\$700,000 to inventors of low-cost desalination device

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The Middle East Desalination Research Centre (MEDRC) has announced the opening of team registration for this year's Oman Humanitarian Desalination Challenge Prize Competition. The Prize Competition is a global water prize that looks to award \$700,000 to the person or team that can invent a small, cheap and easy to use desalination device that would enable people in emergency situations to single handedly purify salty or contaminated water to a safe drinking standard.

The announcement comes after MEDRC has completed the screening process for all the 2020-2021 entries and officially declared that no winning device was found.

A joint initiative led by MEDRC and the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, the Oman Humanitarian Desalination Challenge Prize Competition was first launched in 2018 in Muscat. This is the third time the Prize Competition has been open to competitors. Competitors may be individuals, companies, academic institutions, non-profits and others.

The complexity of the challenge and the enormity of the cash prize has helped to attract global attention. MEDRC reports that 48 registrations were received in 2020 from 20 different countries around the world. Competitor backgrounds were notably diverse, with leading water research



Ciaran O'Cuinn

entities, commercial organisations, entrepreneurs and individual problem solvers all participating. Following an initial screening process conducted by MEDRC, 32 qualified teams went on to participate, 13 of which reached the deadline to submit their entry. One device was tested by MEDRC and came very close to meeting the competition selection criteria.

On opening the application for 2023, MEDRC Director, Ciarán Ó Cuinn, said: "Current technologies that turn seawater into fresh water are a miracle. But they are expensive, energy intensive and involve large-scale industrial processes. That needs to change. The Oman Humanitarian Challenge is about miniaturising that technology, making it cheaper, more environmentally sustainable and accessible globally. We're getting scientists and engineers to focus on delivering a \$20, off-grid, handheld device that can desalinate enough seawater to sustain a human being for 30 days. Delivering this will be a humanitarian and technological game-changer. Each year we get a little closer.

CLIMATE CHANGE'S IMPACT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ADDRESSED



RABAT: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC), took part in the 51st session of the Arab Permanent Committee on Human Rights, held at Al Sokhairat in the Kingdom of Morocco. The session discussed a range of topics related to human rights, including promoting cultural diversity and the effects of climate change on human rights, among other topics. — ONA

CPA fines establishment RO 3,000 for failing to provide customer service

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has fined a commercial establishment for failing to provide required services to a consumer.

In a statement, CPA said, "A commercial establishment engaged in the manufacture and supply of windows and doors did not fix the defects in one

of its products after selling to a consumer. It also did not return the money to the customer. The case was transferred to the court, which ordered the establishment to be fined RO 3,000."

The ruling added that the fine would be cancelled if the company corrected the defect. "The court also directed the establishment to pay RO 1,000 to the consumer," CPA stated.

Oman bans import of poultry from 6 countries

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources has banned the import of poultry from six countries.

A statement issued by the ministry on Tuesday said, "It is forbidden to import live birds and their products and derivatives from Hungary, Bolivia, the city of Wels in Austria, the city of Saiki in Oita Prefecture in Japan, the Codington County; South Dakota and Anderson County; South Carolina in USA, and the province of Afyon in Turkiye."

The ban will continue until further notice, with the exception of products that are thermally treated in accordance with the Health Law for Terrestrial Animals issued by the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).

The decision is based on the Veterinary Quarantine Law issued by Royal Decree No 45/2004, the executive regulations of the Veterinary Quarantine Regulation issued by Ministerial Resolution No 107/2008, and the reports issued by OIE, and the recommendation of the veterinary authority concerned with banning the import of live birds, their products and derivatives.

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

إعلان مناقصة Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology
In AL Khuwair invites for the Following Project:

TENDER NUMBER	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
31/2023/MTCIT/HQ-9	SUPPLY OF LAPTOPS & TABLETS FOR MTCIT EMPLOYEES	22-02-2023	01-03-2023	15-03-2023	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES REGISTERED IN SUPPLY CATEGORY, WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (ALL GRADES)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenderer proposals shall be submitted online on given website. The Tenderer shall submit online an original copy of the Bid Bond issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to (Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee).

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry:** All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDERS COMMITTEE

www.mtcit.gov.om



PUTIN DELIVERS WARNING TO WEST OVER BACKING OF UKRAINE

China deepens ties with Russia

WARSAW/MOSCOW: China pledged to deepen cooperation with Russia on Wednesday as US President Joe Biden prepared to meet leaders of Nato's eastern flank - highlighting geopolitical tensions ahead of the first anniversary of Russia's attack of Ukraine.

Russia is due to begin military exercises with China in South Africa on Friday and has sent a flagship frigate equipped with new generation hypersonic cruise missiles. A Russian officer said on Wednesday Russia would fire artillery, but not the missiles, whose speed makes them difficult to shoot down.

Making the highest level visit to Russia by a Chinese official since the countries signed a "no limits" partnership weeks before the attack, China's top diplomat Wang Li told President Vladimir Putin that Beijing was ready to enhance ties.

A time of crisis required Russia and China "to continuously deepen our comprehensive strategic partnership", Wang said.

Putin said he was looking forward to a visit to Moscow by Chinese President Xi Jinping and a deeper partnership.

Xi is expected to make a "peace speech" on Friday.

Putin has responded to the



Russia's President Vladimir Putin shakes hands with China's Director of the Office of the Central Foreign Affairs Commission Wang Yi during a meeting in Moscow on Wednesday. — Reuters

lack of progress in Ukraine with veiled threats to use nuclear weapons. He suspended a nuclear arms control treaty on Tuesday, accusing Washington of turning the war into a global conflict by arming Ukraine.

Russia's foreign and defence ministries said later Moscow would continue abiding by the restrictions outlined in New Start (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) on the number of nuclear warheads it could have deployed and the number of nuclear

missile carriers. Russia's lower house of parliament rubber-stamped the suspension of the treaty on Wednesday.

Tension over Ukraine had already halted inspections under the treaty, which calls for the United States and Russia to let each other check their nuclear arsenals.

Biden, who underlined his support for Kyiv in a surprise visit to war-torn Ukraine on Monday, then rallied Nato allies in Poland, saying the attack had tested the

whole world but Washington and its allies had shown they would defend democracy.

He rejected Russia's assertion that Western allies were seeking to control or destroy Russia, and accused Moscow of crimes against humanity such as targeting civilians and rape. Russia denies committing war crimes or targeting civilians.

Nato allies and other supporters have sent Ukraine tens of billions of dollars worth of arms and ammunition. — Reuters

Schoolteacher stabbed to death by pupil

PARIS: A teacher was stabbed to death by a 16-year-old pupil on Wednesday at a Roman Catholic high school in the town of Saint-Jean-de-Luz in southwestern France, government officials and the local prosecutor's office said.

The victim was a Spanish-language teacher, a woman of around 50, local lawmaker Vincent Bru said.

Police arrested the pupil, who told another teacher he was possessed and had heard voices that instructed him to attack the teacher, a source with knowledge of the investigation told Reuters.

Bru declined to give details on the attack but confirmed that "this does not seem to have any terrorist cause at all."

"It's a shock," he said of the attack, speaking in a phone

interview with Reuters, adding that the school was in a quiet area and had had no security issues so far. Pupils fled in panic after the stabbing, local newspaper Sud Ouest said, citing two students who were in the classroom and witnessed the attack.

The attacker stood up during a lesson and walked to the door, before turning around and stabbing the teacher, they said.

BFM TV gave a similar account, and said the attacker talked to a teacher in the classroom next door, was calm and agreed to hand over his weapon. Officials at the prosecutor's office and the education ministry declined to respond to questions about the details of the attack, saying the prosecutor would do so shortly, at a news conference. — Reuters



Police secure a perimeter around the school where a teacher died after being stabbed by a student, in Saint-Jean-de-Luz, on Wednesday. — AFP



Death toll from Brazil downpours hits 48

SAO PAULO: The death toll from heavy rains that devastated coastal areas of Brazil's southeastern Sao Paulo state reached 48 people, official figures showed on Wednesday, but dozens were still missing as search and rescue efforts continued.

"We are currently working with a tally of at least 38 missing people," Sao Paulo Governor Tarcisio de Freitas told reporters as weather forecasters cautioned more rain was expected later in the day.

Massive downpours have caused landslides and flooding since last weekend in coastal towns of Brazil's richest state, so far hit by more than 600 millimetres (23.6 inches) of rain, the highest cumulative figure ever in the country. The number of casualties rose from 46 reported a day earlier, the Sao Paulo state government said in a statement.

The city of Sao Sebastiao, located some 200 km from Sao Paulo, bore the brunt of the human toll, with 47 of the reported deaths. But nearby towns such as Ilhabela, Caraguatatuba, Bertioga and Ubatuba were also heavily affected. — Reuters

India, Singapore link digital payment

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Close on the heels of enabling all inbound travellers visiting India to make local payments using Unified Payments Interface (UPI), India's digital payment system is now linked to Singapore's PayNow.

With the integration of India's UPI and Singapore's PayNow it becomes easy for the residents of both countries to send cross-border remittances more quickly with cheaper service fee.

It has additional value for the Indian diaspora in Singapore, particularly migrant workers and students, as the new arrangement will facilitate instant and low-cost money transfers from Singapore to India and vice versa, media reports said quoting sources from India's central bank Reserve Bank of India and ministry of external affairs (MEA).

Shaktikanta Das, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor and Ravi



Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) launched the cross-border payment connectivity on Wednesday.

Menon, Managing Director of the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) launched the cross-border payment connectivity on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the facility of local payments using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for inbound travellers began on

payments at the merchant outlets.

Besides ICICI Bank, IDFC First Bank, two non-bank PPI issuers — Pine Labs Private Limited and Transcorp International Limited have been authorised to issue UPI linked wallets. More financial institutions would be added after the review of the system with the current PPI issuers.

In a statement RBI said, "Travellers visiting India can now experience the convenience of UPI payments at over five crore merchant outlets across India, that accept QR Code-based UPI payments."

The G20 or Group of 20 is an intergovernmental forum of the world's major developed and developing economies.

It comprises Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, the UK, the US, and the European Union (EU).

SHORT TAKES

RICHARDS BAY

S.Africa army defends drills with Russia

South Africa's military on Wednesday defended its decision to host controversial naval exercises jointly staged with Russia and China and coinciding with the one-year anniversary of the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine.

Originally slated to start last week, the exercise dubbed Mosi-II kicked off on Wednesday along South Africa's eastern coast.

But coming on the eve of the anniversary of Russia's onslaught on Ukraine, the drills were



described by commentators as politically "dubious" and showing "insensitivity".

The exercises have also been criticised by the United States and the European Union.

LONDON

Woman loses bid to restore UK citizenship

A woman stripped of her British citizenship after travelling to Syria as a teenager to marry an IS group fighter on Wednesday lost her legal battle to reverse the decision.

The ruling from Judge Robert Jay means that Shamima Begum, 23, cannot return to the UK from her current home in a refugee camp in northern Syria.

While the court determined that it was for the minister to make the decision, it also said that some of Begum's arguments had merit.



Begum was aged 15 when she left her east London home for Syria with two school friends in 2015.

While there, she married an IS fighter and had three children, none of whom survived.

MANILA

US 'committed' to joint sea patrols with Philippines

The United States is "committed" to conducting joint maritime patrols with the Philippines in the disputed South China Sea, the US navy chief said on Wednesday, as the countries seek to deter Chinese aggression.

US naval operations chief Admiral Michael Gilday made the remarks during a visit to the Southeast Asian nation, as part of US efforts to strengthen military alliances across the region and beyond.

Beijing's growing assertiveness



on Taiwan and its building of bases in the contested South China Sea have given fresh impetus to Washington and Manila to repair their partnership.



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | FEBURARY 23 | 2023

7

In brief

■ LONDON



SUNAK: TO 'KEEP FIGHTING' WITH EU ON N.IRELAND

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak indicated on Wednesday that no deal is imminent with the European Union to overhaul Northern Ireland's post-Brexit trade, vowing to "keep fighting" for a satisfactory outcome.

Facing strong criticism from pro-UK unionists in Northern Ireland and hardline Brexiters in his own Conservative ranks, Sunak talked tough as he was challenged in parliament over the drawn-out talks with Brussels.

"We are still in intensive discussions with the European Union to ensure we can find agreement to meet the tests that I have set," the prime minister said.

■ BAGHDAD



IRAN, IRAQ FOREIGN MINISTERS HOLD SECURITY TALKS

Iran's top diplomat Hossein Amir-Abdollahian held talks with neighbouring ally Iraq on Wednesday to discuss stalled talks Saudi Arabia to ease regional tensions, as well as on border security.

Iraq has taken a key role as a mediator between Iran and Saudi Arabia since 2021, after Riyadh broke off diplomatic relations in 2016, but efforts have been deadlocked for several months.

Amir-Abdollahian, speaking to reporters in Baghdad alongside his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein, hailed the efforts "to strengthen talks and cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Iran".

■ WINDHOEK



JILL BIDEN ARRIVES IN NAMIBIA ON AFRICA TOUR

US first lady Jill Biden has arrived in Namibia on the first stop on a five-day Africa tour, part of a push by the United States to strengthen its ties on the continent.

Biden landed at the airport in Namibia's capital Windhoek on Wednesday afternoon before heading to Heroes' Acre, a war memorial, with the first lady of Namibia.

Her trip will focus on education, health and empowering youth and women, she said in a statement on social media. After Namibia she will go to Kenya where she will hear from those affected by drought and food insecurity, she said.

82 PEOPLE WERE ADMITTED TO MULTIPLE HOSPITALS WITH GUNSHOT WOUNDS

10 Palestinians killed in Israel raid



A Palestinian man flashes the victory sign as he faces an Israeli military vehicle, during a raid on Nablus on Wednesday. – AFP

NABLUS: Israeli troops killed 10 Palestinians on Wednesday in a raid on the occupied West Bank city of Nablus, while more than 80 suffered gunshot wounds, the Palestinian health ministry said.

The Israeli army said the raid targeted militant suspects "in a hideout apartment" accused of shootings in the West Bank, and that its troops came under live fire but suffered no casualties.

Top Palestinian official Hussein Al Sheikh decried the incursion as a "massacre" and called for "international protection for our people".

The death toll is equal to that of an Israeli army raid last month in Jenin, further north, which was the deadliest West Bank operation since at least 2005.

The Israeli military said that all three targeted suspects in the Nablus operation were "neutralised", either while fleeing the building or in an "exchange of fire".

"Armed suspects shot heavily

The latest deadly Israeli incursion follows an appeal by the United Nations Middle East peace envoy, Tor Wennesland, for the violence to be halted as an "urgent priority"

toward the forces, who responded with live fire," said the military, adding that rocks, explosive devices and Molotov cocktails were thrown at the troops.

The Palestinian health ministry said those killed "as a result of the occupation's aggression on Nablus" were aged between 16 and 72.

A further 82 people were admitted to multiple hospitals with gunshot wounds, Palestinian

health officials said.

Huge crowds gathered outside Nablus's Rafidia hospital, waiting for news of dozens of casualties being treated at the facility.

The wounded include Palestine TV journalist Mohammed Al Khatib, who was shot in the hand, his colleague said.

The IJ militant group said one of its commanders was killed "in a heroic battle against the Israeli occupation army and its special forces".

The Lions' Den, a local band of fighters, said six of those killed were militants from various factions.

Troops withdrew from the city after three hours, an AFP journalist said.

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said its medics had treated 250 cases of tear gas inhalation and dozens of gunshot wounds.

The Arab League said the raid amounted to a "heinous crime".

"The occupation authorities

and the far-right Israeli government are responsible for this horrible massacre," said Saeed Abu Ali, the Arab League's assistant secretary-general for Palestinian affairs.

The latest deadly Israeli incursion follows an appeal by the United Nations Middle East peace envoy, Tor Wennesland, for the violence to be halted as an "urgent priority".

"We have seen ominous signs of what awaits if we fail to address the current instability," he told the UN Security Council on Monday.

Since the start of this year, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has claimed the lives of 59 Palestinian adults and children, including militants and civilians.

Nine Israeli civilians, including three children, one Ukrainian civilian and a police officer have been killed over the same period, according to an AFP tally based on official sources from both sides. — AFP

Pope urges Ukraine ceasefire ahead of invasion anniversary

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis, speaking two days before the first anniversary of Russia's attack of Ukraine, on Wednesday called for a ceasefire and peace negotiations, saying no victory could be "built on ruins".

Francis, who has appealed for an end to violence in Ukraine at nearly every public appearance since Russia's attack of the country on Feb. 24, 2022, spoke at his weekly general audience at the Vatican. "It has been a year since the start of this absurd and cruel war, a sad anniversary," he said.

"The number of dead, wounded, refugees and displaced people, the (amount of) destruction and economic and social damage speak for themselves," Francis said.

Ukraine's ambassador to the Vatican, Andrii Yurash, attended the audience along with a delegation of Ukrainian officials. "May the Lord forgive so many crimes and so much violence. He is the God of peace. Let us remain close to the martyred Ukrainian people who continue to suffer," Francis said. Francis has rejected Russia's assertion that its military presence in Ukraine was part of a "special operation".

He added: "That which is built on ruins can never be a real victory". — Reuters



France eyes water curbs after driest winter since 1959

PARIS: France is preparing to introduce restrictions on water use in parts of the country from March, in an unprecedented move for the time of year following the driest winter in 64 years, environment minister Christophe Bechu said on Wednesday.

France has recorded 32 days without rain, weather forecaster Météo-France said.

Watering and irrigation is already restricted in 87 municipalities in the south, which usually happens in summer, not winter, and meetings with officials on Friday and Monday will look at extending this, Bechu said.

"It's unprecedented" at this time of year, the minister told broadcaster Franceinfo. "France is in a state of alert."

Bechu did not spell out the possible measures but said they would be "soft" ones, and would be taken on a case by case basis when needed in a specific area to avoid having to take tougher, emergency measures closer to

the summer. As an example, filling swimming pools could be restricted in some territories, he said.

Hydro stocks are low in France compared to last year, the second lowest over ten years, and the quantity of snow in the Alps is also low in comparison with 2022, which was a particularly dry year.

"Overall, we expect low hydro power production and river levels lower for the spring and summer," Jean-Paul Harreman, director of EnAppSys BV consultancy said.

Météo-France said the rainfall for the next three months would be crucial for groundwater and rivers returning to their usual levels ahead of the summer.

Since August 2021, all months but three have had a rain deficit.

Farmers in the European Union's biggest agricultural sector are watching to see if scone showers forecast from Wednesday will ease dryness ahead of the spring growing season.

While cereal crops sown before winter remain in good



A dried-up artificial lake in Le Broc near Nice. – Reuters file photo

condition, according to farm office FranceAgriMer, there are concerns spring-planted crops such as maize and sugar beet may suffer from water stress, like

during last year's drought. That drought led growers to increase sowing of winter crops such as wheat and leave less room for spring varieties this year, the

FNSEA farming union said. "Farmers have already adapted their sowing," FNSEA President Christiane Lambert told reporters on Tuesday. — Reuters

Reflections on my reading experiences



Amani al Jalbubi
The writer is with SQU

Reading is an important part of life and it has the power to open up new worlds. It can help us learn new things, explore ideas and gain knowledge that can be used in our everyday lives. Reading also helps us develop our language skills, as well as build our vocabulary and understanding of different topics.

Reading is not just a great way to pass the time, but also an invaluable tool for growth and development. Books are able to provide us with a sense of wonder and delight as well as give us a new perspective on life. Books are also able to work wonders for our mood and can help improve our relationships.

Reading also helps us to acquire knowledge, develop critical thinking skills and gain a better understanding of the world around us. Reading also has numerous benefits for our mental and

physical health, such as improving concentration and reducing stress levels.

Reading can help us better understand ourselves, our environment and the people around us. It can also provide us with valuable insights into different cultures, beliefs, values and perspectives. With the right books in hand, we can gain new perspectives on life that may not have been available to us before.

My experience in reading

Reading has always been an integral part of my life. From an early age, I've found comfort in the pages of books and it has become one of my favourite pastimes. From getting lost in the pages of a fantasy novel to learning something new from a non-fiction book, reading has always been a source of joy and knowledge for me. Reading

READING HAS ALSO PROVIDED ME WITH INVALUABLE INSIGHTS INTO DIFFERENT CULTURES AND SOCIETIES, ALLOWING ME TO GAIN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD AROUND ME

not only helps me relax, but also helps me to gain knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. It is a great way to escape reality and explore new possibilities. I have learned so much from my

reading experiences, whether it be knowledge about a particular subject or simply gaining insight into different perspectives.

My experience in reading has been both enriching and enlightening. I have come across stories that have made me think deeply about the world around me, characters that have inspired me to be a better person, and lessons that have taught me important life lessons. Reading has helped expand my worldview by introducing me to new perspectives on life and different cultures from around the world. It has also improved my writing skills by providing examples of effective narrative techniques that can be applied in my own writing.

As a result of reading, I have developed a strong desire to learn more about different cultures and

traditions.

It has shaped me in a number of ways, from expanding my knowledge and vocabulary to developing my imagination and creativity. Through reading, I have gained an appreciation for literature and the beauty of language, which has helped me to become a better writer. Reading has also provided me with invaluable insights into different cultures and societies, allowing me to gain a deeper understanding of the world around me.

Most importantly, reading has given me the opportunity to explore new ideas and perspectives that I may not have encountered otherwise. Reading has become a part of my life as who I am today, and I am grateful for all the wonderful experiences that it has brought me.

Nigeria’s surprise presidential challenger

JOEL OLATUNDE AGOI

At 61, former governor Peter Obi is the youngest of the three frontrunners for Nigeria’s top job in this weekend’s presidential election.

With a message that he is the only candidate offering real change, Obi, a wealthy businessman from southeast Nigeria’s Anambra state, has emerged as an unexpectedly powerful force in the race.

He challenges ex-Lagos governor Bola Ahmed Tinubu, 70, of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and 76-year-old ex-vice president Atiku Abubakar of the main opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

The two old warhorses — Tinubu and Abubakar — have dominated the Nigerian political landscape since the return of democracy in 1999.

Tinubu, a Muslim from southwest Nigeria, has been a senator, two-term governor of Lagos and long-professed political kingmaker.

Abubakar, a northern Muslim, was vice-president between 1999 and 2007 and is on his sixth attempt at the presidency.

For supporters of Obi, a 61-year-old Christian from the Igbo-speaking region and candidate of the Labour Party, his background is the starting point for what sets him apart.

With a reputation for frugality and integrity, Obi’s tenure as Anambra state governor is a reference point for his accountability in public service.

His supporters see that as a departure from endemic corruption that has marred the nation’s public life, endearing him to younger Nigerians who represent a large portion of registered voters.

Obi’s growing popularity and social media appeal are unprecedented in modern Nigeria where PDP and APC have dominated politics since the end of military rule in 1999.

For the first time, Obi is rallying the younger electorate — mostly in their 30s — into a popular movement nicknamed ‘Obidients’, despite the Labour Party’s lack of a national structure.

He joined the Labour Party last year after failing as vice-presidential candidate for the PDP in 2019.

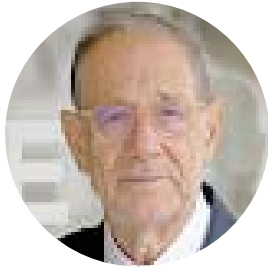
Obi and his supporters believe old-school politicians should step aside and this election is the opportunity for Nigerians to vote them out.

“It’s time to take your country back,” Obi often says at campaign rallies.

Analysts see Saturday’s ballot as a three-horse race among Tinubu, Abubakar and Obi.

“We need a change and with Obi we will get that change,” said food seller Lorita Unegbu, attending an Obi rally at a Lagos stadium last week. — AFP

Interdependence in 21st century



Javier Solana

A former EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, secretary-general of Nato, and foreign minister of Spain

Of all the lessons that can be drawn from the year that has passed since Russia attacked Ukraine, one stands out: global interdependence does not guarantee peace, and must be adapted to the realities exposed by recent events.

According to Harvard’s Joseph S. Nye, Jr., and Princeton’s Robert O. Keohane, interdependence refers to the relationship of mutual dependence that develops between states as a result of their interactions, especially economic and trade ties. Given the intertwined nature of markets and politics (including geopolitics), states end up needing one another to bolster their security (including energy security) and achieve economic growth and development.

In recent decades, interdependence has held a privileged position in Western political thought. While a revision of the concept is inevitable, to ignore the positive contribution that interdependence has made to promoting global stability and security in Europe since the end of World War II would be dishonest and unproductive.

The success of the European project is due in large part to the virtues of interdependence. The development of trade and commercial ties facilitated the establishment of common interests between European countries, bringing decades of peace to a continent previously ravaged by war – an achievement worth celebrating.

Interdependence was also the bedrock on which German Chancellor Willy Brandt built Ostpolitik, launched in 1969. Brandt took a chance on the idea – risky at the time – that deeper diplomatic and economic relations between the Soviet Union and the West would reduce the likelihood that the Cold War would turn hot. It turned out to be a diplomatic masterstroke: the policy helped to ease tensions between the two sides.

By the beginning of this century, globalisation was advancing rapidly. Economic interdependence was widely viewed in the West as synonymous with global stability – a belief that endured even when events like the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States highlighted the risks that globalisation entailed. In fact, China was welcomed into the World

WITH RUSSIA'S WAR OF UKRAINE, WE EUROPEANS HAVE DISCOVERED THAT INTERDEPENDENCE, OR RATHER DEPENDENCIES, CAN MAKE US MORE VULNERABLE THAN WE THOUGHT.

Trade Organization just three months after 9/11, demonstrating the West’s continuing faith in the potential of interdependence for rapprochement.

But Russian President Vladimir Putin has shown how leaders can leverage interdependence to pursue coercive tactics. Ukraine has always been central to Putin’s imperial ambitions. In the last decade, Ukraine has been the subject of debate not only over its place in European security arrangements, but also about its position in a world increasingly defined by trade relations.

Putin spent years boosting trade with the former Soviet countries and the rest of Europe, not to strengthen the foundations of peace on the continent, but to increase Russia’s geopolitical influence. In this regard, the creation of the Eurasian Customs Union in 2010 was a crucial step in Putin’s strategy of replicating the Soviet Union by other means (namely trade).

But Ukraine chose not to join the customs union, instead pursuing an Association Agreement with the European Union. Putin would not tolerate such a prospect, pressuring then-Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych to suspend preparations for the Association Agreement in late 2013.

Arguably, this was the moment when the Russian war against Ukraine started. In February 2014, thousands of Ukrainians gathered in Kyiv’s Independence Square to protest the decision. The so-called Revolution of Dignity ended up driving Yanukovych

from power, raising fears in the Kremlin that Russia was losing Ukraine. Within a month, Russia had annexed Crimea, and Russia-backed separatists had started a war in Ukraine’s eastern Donbas region. Last February’s full-scale war marked the beginning of a tragic new chapter in that war.

Yet even in the days immediately preceding the war – when hundreds of world leaders, but no Russian delegation, gathered for the Munich Security Conference – the idea that Russia would attack was met with some incredulity. This is partly because, despite the horde of Russian troops massed at Ukraine’s border, faith in the deterrent power of interdependence remained strong.

If Russia went to war against Ukraine, observers noted, it would face astronomical economic costs. The rest of the global economy, too, would suffer mightily. Shortly thereafter, that hope in the pacifying logic of interdependence proved unfounded.

A year after the Russian war of Ukraine, it is now clear that interdependence alone cannot serve as a stable foundation for peace, or even rapprochement. Trade and commercial ties may help to align countries’ interests, but they do not create responsible geopolitical actors. On the contrary, for it to be constructive, interdependence presupposes responsible political leaders.

With Russia’s war of Ukraine, we Europeans have discovered that interdependence, or rather dependencies, can make us more vulnerable than we thought. The lesson is clear: we must take greater care in choosing our interdependencies.

The EU, long a champion of interconnectedness, has taken this to heart, especially when it comes to energy. The changes have been rapid, sharp and laudable: in just a year, the EU has decreased the share of piped Russian gas in its total supply from 40 per cent to just 8 per cent.

The EU must also reduce its potentially risky dependencies in other strategic sectors, such as health, defence and technology. At the same time, however, it must sustain – and even continue to deepen – its engagement with the rest of the world.

©Project Syndicate, 2023

To comment and email: opinion@omanobserver.om

Chatbot in journalism and academia...

Technological progress is bringing a breath of fresh approaches to journalism, education and academic integrity. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) is more real than ever bringing both potentials and limitations. As with most technological developments, there are good and bad things. Several academic researchers have already listed the ChatGPT as a co-author on academic studies. According to an article by Brian Lucey and Michael Dowling published in The Conversation, the chatbot can produce academic papers good enough for journals.

However, some of the top scientific journals in the world have forbidden any use of text from the programme in submitted papers. The Paris Institute of Political Studies (Science Po) warned students and faculty that the use of ChatPGT software “may go as far as exclusion from the institution,” according to the article by Karen MacGregor titled ‘Sciences Po bans ChatGPT amid HE quality, integrity fears.’

For teachers and lecturers, the AI tool can let them easily grade essays and provide feedback. Here is the best: if you ask ChatGPT to grade an essay and it assigns a grade of B, it will also tell you why the essay has been graded as B, along with suggestions for improvements. For students, it can write their essays.

Artificial intelligence is on the cutting edge of information delivery. The newest chatbot, ChatGPT, can answer questions, write letters and essays, help with programming and create video scripts. This general-purpose interactive agent, developed by Microsoft, uses deep learning techniques to generate human-like responses to search requests. It is powerful, but it is not the only one.

As interest in generative artificial intelligence gathers steam, Google is set to launch Google’s Bard, a new conversational AI bot aimed at challenging ChatGPT. Another is the Chinese tech giant Baidu, which plans to release its chatbot early this year.



Sonia Ambrosio

The writer is journalist, academic, researcher in media studies

The competition is heating up, though there are many chatbot tools already available. However, these three, ChatGPT, Bard and Baidu, are among multinational tech giants. These are lions fighting for competing interests.

One of the best features of ChatGPT, according to Akshay Gangwar in an article published in Beebom, is to explain concepts in layman’s terms, or just like I’m 5 years old. Another feature mentioned is that it can help with homework and assignments. It claims that essays are smartly written. For years, people and free software have been offering these services.

When it comes to music, perhaps ChatGPT is better than the platforms already available. The reviews say that you can ask the chatbot to write a song on any topic, and it will come up with something in no time, even with the accompanying chords for the music. Another feature mentioned is to extract data from a text – one has only to specify what kinds of data to extract and in what format. There are already several programmes that can extract data from a text in different languages, and for people with varying levels of proficiency in technology.

The Washington DC-based Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) has expressed that the use of innovative practices should not infringe on the academic quality of teaching and learning or the ethics of scholars or students. While websites such as RetractionWatch and Zotero suggest a pressing problem in academia with scientific fraud (fabrication, falsification and plagiarism) or other kinds of misconduct (such as fake peer review).

Universities and accrediting organisations need to engage in artificial intelligence (AI) in ways to support technological development and not as a replacement. Even though these chatbot platforms may pass the Turing test (determining whether or not a computer is capable of thinking like a human being), these bots can obstruct individuals’ abilities to think critically and creatively; the same goes for good journalism.

FOR TEACHERS AND LECTURERS, THE AI TOOL CAN LET THEM EASILY GRADE ESSAYS AND PROVIDE FEEDBACK

A LIGHT IN THE HAND!



A lightning hits the hand of the Christ the Redeemer statue at the Corcovado mountain in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on Tuesday night. – AFP

A year of death, misery yet the war continues

It is one year since Russian forces rolled into Ukraine, the war and its latest phase continue to remain a challenge not only for the people of Ukraine, but also for the world at large.

Since the Russian war on February 24, 2022, both Russia and Ukraine have been hit with material and human losses heavily. Reports indicate while about 200,000 Russian troops have been killed or wounded, Ukraine has seen some 100,000 killed or wounded in action, and 30,000 civilians dead.

Millions of people have been forced to flee their homes, while many still inside the country are unable to access enough food, water, or electricity.

This is in addition to causing material damage to infrastructure, housing and industry amounts to many hundreds of billions of dollars. The exact tolls are hard to confirm, and most estimates are understood to be massively underestimated. The United Nations estimates that over four million children across Ukraine need humanitarian assistance and that two-thirds of them have been forced to flee their homes.

According to the International



Samuel Kutty
@samkuttyvp

The writer is a freelance journalist and author who has worked in India and Gulf countries

AS THE WAR IN UKRAINE HAS NO END IN SIGHT, MILLIONS OF LIVES ARE FACING EVER-INCREASING RISK

Rescue Committee (IRC), the majority of people who have left Ukraine are elderly, or women and girls. Those inside the country also face extraordinary challenges,

“There are situations where we see half of the community has been destroyed, like all of the buildings, all of the villages, unfortunately. A lot of people have fled and they moved with nothing,” says Mykola Lialenko, the IRC’s basic needs manager in Odesa, Ukraine.

Reports indicate that 40 per cent of Ukraine’s physical infrastructure has been destroyed while the gross domestic product fell by 33 per cent. According to Russia’s Finance Ministry, annual revenue fell 35 per cent in 2022 while spending rose 59 per cent.

As the war in Ukraine has no end in sight with the progress at the negotiating table seems just as unlikely, millions of lives are facing ever-increasing risk, with the ripple effects of the conflict manifesting globally through food supply chain disruptions, skyrocketing energy prices and soaring inflation.

Russian leader Vladimir Putin nor Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky shows any signs of backing down and abandoning one of the largest military conflicts since the end of World War II.

Putin has already made it clear that he cannot afford to be seen as backing out of a fight that he started and by his own estimates should have been able to easily win. As a result, Russian forces are trying hard to make headway in the eastern parts of Ukraine.

The Russian artillery, drones and missiles have been pounding Ukrainian-held eastern areas relentlessly for months. The forces are launching attacks on civilian areas, important buildings, etc.

For Zelensky, the stakes are high. He has publicly said that his country’s forces will recapture Crimea. A survey of Ukrainians last September showed they are steadfast in rejecting territorial concessions to Russia.

However, analysts are of the opinion that if Ukraine mounts a serious threat to Crimea, it could harden the resolve of Russians.



People queue for meals from World Central Kitchen food truck on a street in Kherson, Ukraine, on Wednesday. – Reuters

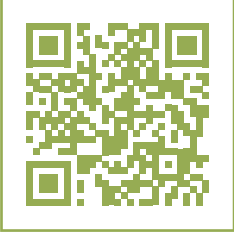
A fight over Crimea would likely be a bitter one, they say, pointing out that Ukraine’s ability to capture it “is highly unlikely.” Still, the entire West, led by the US, has been supplying Ukraine with weapons up to this point.

The West’s ability and willingness to sustain Ukraine’s economy and military are up against Russia’s capacity. So it is very difficult to predict how long

that will last. Since the bloodshed began, there were frequent news reports suggesting peace on the horizon. Instead, what we have witnessed is just an escalation of the war and a collapse of negotiations. Till the time when Russia or Ukraine accepts the realities on the ground and takes tough decisions and honour human life, the David and Goliath conflict will drag on and on.

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports
sport@omanobserver.om



Oman inch a step closer to Cricket World Cup berth

BIGGER THAN BIG MOMENT, SAYS OMAN CRICKET CHIEF PANKAJ KHMJJI

MUSCAT: More than three and half years of hard work and team work, which witnessed thrilling victories and agonising defeats, finally brought joy to the Oman men's cricket team as they became the second team, after Scotland, to advance to the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier from the seven-nation ICC World Cricket League (WCL) Division 2.

ICC, the world cricket body, confirmed that Oman have booked their spot in the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier, the final round for a place in the Cricket World Cup 2023 in India, having collected enough points to finish among the top-three WCL 2 sides.

Oman Cricket (OC) Chairman Pankaj Khimji heaped praise on his players, coaching staff and corporates who supported the Team Red throughout the WCL Division 2 series.

In his remarks after Oman secured a spot in the World Cup Qualifier, which will be played in Zimbabwe from June 18, Pankaj Khimji said: "It is a surreal feeling: Oman making it to the ODI World Cup Qualifier. It is a bigger than big moment.

"The hard work that the boys put in, guided by Duleep Mendis [chief coach] and his coaching staff, ground and administration staff have finally paid off. In this glorious moment, our greatest appreciation goes out to the sports ministry and His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, the Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth. Of course, to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik al Said, patron-in-chief of Oman Cricket and our leader. This is a tribute to them, a tribute to our beloved nation for making this moment happen, not just the cricketers, but also for the cricket fraternity in Oman."

Khimji added: "As far as the preparations for the Qualifier are concerned, there will be no



PANKAJ KHMJJI
Oman Cricket Chairman

full stops. We will pull all our resources together to ensure that this team goes to Zimbabwe as the best prepared team to fight the Qualifier."

The OC boss, who is also the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) vice-president and an ICC director, said: "Oman Cricket deserves its recognition. It has earned it and we have made a mark on the global cricket stage. I am indebted to all my fellow board members, advisors and all those companies and corporates who have supported us over the years for making cricket the most admired sports among the expatriates and now among the locals.

"The last three years have been fantastic and it has been a dream come true for us: from hosting of ICC T20 World Cup to participating in the T20 World Cup as Associate nation. But now this, the ODI World Cup Qualifier is an unprecedented achievement. Hats off to my teammates, to my players, who deserve all the accolades."

Oman finish with 44 points
Oman, skippered by allrounder Zeeshan Maqsood, ended the 36-match ICC T20 WCL Division 2 cycle, played over the past three and half years, with 44 points, six points adrift from table topper Scotland.

Oman won 21, lost 13 and tied one while one match was abandoned to reach 44 points with



a net run-rate of 0.039. Scotland won 24, lost 10 while two of their games were abandoned to end with 50.

Namibia, UAE and Nepal are in fray for the third and final berth from the ICC WCL Division 2. Namibia have 37 points and two matches remaining. UAE have 27 points from 26 matches while Nepal have 26 from 28 games. USA, who ended their campaign with 35 points, and Papua New Guinea (PNG), are out of reckoning with just 5 points from 28 games.

The equation favours the UAE as they can still garner 20 points from their 10 remaining games to reach 47 if they stay unbeaten. Namibia can reach a maximum of 41 points while Nepal have eight more games remaining and can reach a maximum of 42 points if they win all their remaining

fixtures.

World Cup Qualifier in Zimbabwe in June

This is the first time Oman have made it to the ICC World Cup Qualifier through a qualifying process. The team did play in the World Cup Qualifier in 2005 and 2009.

Oman and Scotland will be joined by either the UAE, Namibia or Nepal from the WCL Division 2 at the Qualifier, which begins in Zimbabwe from June 18-July 9.

The Qualifier will be a ten-nation tournament with top two teams from the Qualifier making it to the Cricket World Cup, to be played in India in October-November.

Seven teams have secured World Cup qualification, including India as tournament hosts. The other teams that have qualified are New Zealand,

England, Pakistan, Australia, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

Just one spot for the automatic qualification remains through the ICC Super League pathway with West Indies, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and Ireland in the race. Zimbabwe and Netherlands have been ruled out of a top-eight spot and will play in the Qualifier.

Besides the top eight teams that gain automatic qualification, the remaining five teams will take part in the World Cup Qualifier along with 5 Associate teams. Zimbabwe and the Netherlands are out of race in the Super League and will feature in the Qualifier.

The bottom-four teams in WCL Division 2 will play a Qualifier playoff and will be joined by winner of Challenge League A and B. The top-two teams from this event will play in the Qualifier.

Players are my heroes: Mendis

A delighted Mendis said: "It has been a fantastic journey for Oman Cricket. We started the WCL Division 2 nearly four years back and have finished among the top-three after playing 36 matches against six high-performance teams. I thank the OC board, headed by Pankaj Khimji, and secretary Madhu Jesrani, for all their support during the journey. They backed us solidly and supported us not only when we were doing well but also when we weren't performing.

"All credit to my players, they are my heroes. They made it happen. It is a very happy occasion for Oman and players, who now stand among the best in the world. When we go for Qualifier, we go with lot of hopes and courage and we will give our best like how we did in the League 2."

Oman to take on Lebanon in friendly on March 27



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The runners-up of the Arabian Gulf Cup in Iraq will take on Lebanon in an international friendly match in Muscat on March 27.

It will be the first presence for the Red Warriors after their participation in the last edition of the Gulf Cup in Basra city.

The preparatory fixture will be played during the Fifa days in the holy month of Ramadhan as part of the team's preparation for the forthcoming assignments including the 2023 AFC Asian Cup in Qatar and the AFC Asian qualifiers for World Cup in 2026 and AFC Asian Cup in 2027.

The upcoming gathering for the national team will take place after the conclusion of Omantel League week 18 games and the HM Cup final match.

The national team was supposed to compete in the tenth edition of the West Asian Championship, which was postponed by the host country United Arab Emirates on February 7. The scheduled dates of the tournament were set during March-April. The new dates of the event have not been declared yet by the West Asian Federation.



Oman Trading Establishment LLC

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For Hyundai Santafe



Date of Campaign : 23/2/2023

Recall Type : Recall

Recall Segment : Software

Product Description : Hyundai Santafe TM

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2021	Santafe	TM	FROM KM8S5DA18NU029430 TO KMHS6812SNU031966	28

Description of defect:

Some vehicles might experience the inverted image of the LCD cluster screen due to improper resistor installed.

Procedure:

After backing up the variant code, replace the cluster and input the variant code.

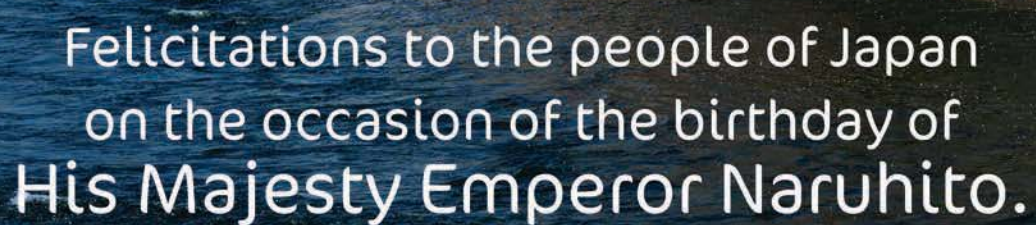
For More information:

Customers of affected vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment for further details/booking Appointment etc from Date - 23/2/2023

Contact details

Toll free No 80050003 on all working days between 8.00 AM to 1.00 PM & 2.00 PM to 5.30 PM with effect from Date 23/2/2023

We are now in the year following the 50th anniversary. Today's bond between Japan and the Sultanate of Oman is evidenced by the past beautiful years of our relationship. Hoping that our relationship lasts long, I would like to renew my wishes for good health and continued prosperity of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. On this special occasion, I celebrate the birthday of His Majesty the Emperor and wish him good health and continued prosperity.



Warm and heartfelt greetings to His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan on the occasion of his 63rd birthday

On the auspicious occasion of the 63rd birthday of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito of Japan, I convey heartfelt greetings on behalf of all the Members of the Board of the Oman Japan Friendship Association (OJFA).

This year, Oman is celebrating the third Anniversary of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik's, Accession day. Under his wise and visionary leadership, Oman will continue to make progress, guided by Oman Vision 2040. All the while, maintaining its impressive position as a nation of peace, progress and stability. We pray to the Almighty to bless His Majesty with good health and long life.

Oman and Japan share a deep-rooted relationship that dates back to hundreds of years. With time, the bonds of this special relationship have grown stronger. Hugely benefiting the people of both nations, economically and culturally. It is also encouraging to note that Oman and Japan have completed more than 50 Years of nurturing the special relationship. Indeed a huge milestone and an inspiring achievement.

Oman and Japan have been long-time partners in trade. The business of imports and exports of speciality products and services between the two countries has positively grown over the years. Japan, a nation reputed for its advancements in engineering and precision manufacturing is among the top suppliers of products that include Machinery, Iron, Steel, Electronics, Automotive and more to Oman.

Apart from this, through joint ventures, Japanese companies have a substantial presence in various sectors in Oman, including the energy sector. Similarly Oman too has remained an active exporter of oil & gas, aluminium and fishery products to Japan. A number of Japanese companies have even invested in Oman in various sectors through joint ventures, including the energy sector.

The Oman Japan Friendship Association on this special occasion today, reiterates its commitment to growing this beautiful bond of friendship between Oman and Japan, while drawing the people of both nations even closer.

The Association in close co-operation with the Embassy of Japan, arranges several events like

book fairs, cultural dance shows and more. Through such initiatives, the Association strives to build lasting bonds by taking several measures to increase the levels of awareness about the rich culture and heritage of the both the nations, among its people.

Motivated by the eagerness among the people of Oman to learn the Japanese language, the Oman Japan Friendship Association in co-operation with the Embassy of Japan, introduced the Japanese language programme in Oman. Since 2014, Japanese language teachers started conducting classes to teach Japanese to people eager to learn the language.

In December last year, H.E. Ambassador Yamamoto hosted a reception to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Sultanate of Oman. Many laureates of Japanese orders, Omani Government officials and those who have contributed to promoting bilateral relations attended the reception. At the ceremony, two visiting Japanese calligraphers, Mr. Kawaguchi Yuho and Ms. Kawaguchi Seiren wrote messages in calligraphy to represent the relationship between Japan and Oman.

In November 2022, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Sultanate of Oman, the Embassy of Japan and GUtech co-hosted the Japanese craft art exhibition "Contemporary Wood-Carved Netsuke" at GUtech.

In March 2022, as part of the cultural programme for the 50th Anniversary of the Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Oman, the Hosho School of NOH presented Japan's Traditional Noh Theater Art "SHAKKYO" at the Royal Opera House of Musical Arts in Muscat.

Every year, through events like these, the Oman Japan Friendship Association offers people of both the nations opportunities to increase their awareness and understanding about each other's rich heritage and culture.

Today on the 63rd Birthday of His Majesty, Emperor Naruhito, on behalf of all the Board members of the Oman Japan Friendship Association, I once again convey sincere greetings.

May God Almighty grant him good health and long life. And may the everlasting bonds of friendship between Oman and Japan, continue to reach even greater heights.



MOHAMMED SAUD BAHWAN,
Chairman of the Board,
Oman Japan Friendship Association



OMAN JAPAN FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION

Congratulations and Warm wishes
to the people of Japan on the occasion of the
Japanese National Day and the
63rd Birthday of His Majesty Emperor Naruhito



Everlasting Bonds Built On Inspiring Values and Traditions

Oman and Japan share a warm and inspiring relationship that dates back to hundreds of years. With time, the bonds of this special relationship have grown stronger.

The Oman Japan Friendship Association strives to build lasting bonds by taking several measures to increase the levels of awareness about the rich culture and heritage of both the nations, among its people by arranging several events like book fairs, cultural dance shows and more.

The Oman Japan Friendship Association on this special occasion today, reiterates its commitment to growing this beautiful bond of friendship between Oman and Japan, while drawing the people of both nations even closer.





Omantel subsidiary secures favourable court verdict



MUSCAT: In a filing to Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) yesterday, integrated telecom services provider Omantel announce that its subsidiary, Zain Group, made a disclosure about a judicial verdict issued in its favour on February 21, 2023.

The disclosure stated that the appeal court in the state of Kuwait issued a verdict upholding the ruling of the Court of First Instance in the case filed by Zain Kuwait claiming a refund of the “amounts paid for the number range”.

The disclosure made by Zain Group highlighted that the total awarded amount is KD 24.680 million. “It is expected that the awarded amount will have positive impact on the financials of Zain Group and such impact will be determined later, Omantel added in its filing.

Oman well-positioned to become GCC hub for semiconductor industry

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The International Semiconductor Executive Summit (ISES) launched yesterday in Muscat under the auspices of the Minister of Labour Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain. The two-day summit, organised by The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology in collaboration with the International Semiconductor Executive Summits, aims to “establish a semiconductor ecosystem in Oman and the GCC to address future digitalisation growth”.

In his keynote speech, Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani (pictured), Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology shared the following, “The Sultanate of Oman’s hosting of this global summit as a first in the Middle East confirms its firm determination to achieving digital transformation and building a knowledge-based economy, based on Oman Vision 2040, which set a strategic path towards the transition to an economy based on technology, knowledge, and innovation.”

“Based on this vision, the Government adopted the National Digital Economy Programme, which aims to digitise service



and productive sectors with advanced technologies, enhance the added economic value of the telecommunications and information technology sector, and raise the digital economy’s contribution to GDP to about 10 per cent by 2040,” he added.

“Throughout the years, Oman has invested billions of dollars in all sorts of infrastructure in the country and in education, talent development and innovation, and it will invest in the future to make this country a magnet and a hub for technology including semiconductors, therefore this summit is just the beginning of a new chapter of Oman in the semiconductor industry,” said



Dr Al Shidhani. The summit’s organising body, International Semiconductor Executive Summits, described Oman as the ideal semiconductor hub in the GCC, stating, “Oman is the perfect hub for the creation of semiconductor design and infrastructure in the GCC.

It is home to a young, prosperous and highly educated population. In the global and regional hunt for tech talent, Oman will become a primary destination for leading tech companies establishing global development centres, and for local champions expanding internationally.”

The first day of the summit included several working papers, most notably: the importance of the environmental design system for the global semiconductor supply chain, the challenges of semiconductor manufacturing and semiconductors, the power of the future and the leadership of the global economy, and investment opportunities in information and communication technology in the Sultanate of Oman.

Several government bodies participated in the forum including the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones, Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotions, and Oman Investment Authority.

Director General of ICT Stimulation and Future Skills at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, Sultan al Abri, shared some of the possible investment opportunities in the information and communication technology in Oman. According to Al Abri, Oman ranked 21st in the United Nations Global Cybersecurity Index, 44th in the Network Readiness Index and 50th in the United Nations e-Government Index. According to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the economic return of the semiconductor sector amounts to \$500 to 600 billion per year.

Muscat forum concludes with pledge to strengthen global civil aviation



QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, FEB 22

The International Aviation Legal Advisers Forum, hosted for the first time in the Sultanate of Oman, concluded yesterday with the participation of around 63 countries and three international organisations.

The 3-day event was organised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in coordination with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and held under the patronage of Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs.

This forum, in its second edition, came as a platform for legal advisors to exchange expertise, experiences and viewpoints related to legal issues in the field of civil aviation, in addition to discussing the challenges facing the States Parties, possible aspects of cooperation and proposed solutions to address the challenges emanating from technical, social and economic development.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Oman’s accession

to the ICAO, the Civil Aviation Authority also launched a slogan to commemorate this milestone.

In another highlight, the CAA and ICAO signed an agreement for administrative services support, aimed at achieving compliance with the highest standards of safety in the field of civil aviation.

The forum included four discussion sessions related to civil aviation issues, and a special youth session for young people aimed at listening to their opinions and inquiries related to international civil aviation issues, and urging them to pursue careers in this field as the next generation of aviation specialists.

The forum was accompanied by a technical exhibition in which a number of institutions related to the aviation sector participated, and another craft exhibition aimed at supporting small and medium enterprises, and introducing the ancient cultural heritage of the Sultanate of Oman and the most famous handicraft industries.

TURN TO PAGE 15

Japanese corporation to explore role in Oman green ammonia project

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, FEB 22

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed recently by Japanese heavy engineering manufacturer IHI Corporation with Indian green energy developer ACME Group could potentially see the former participating in a green ammonia project backed by the latter and currently under development in the Sultanate of Oman.

Green Hydrogen and Chemicals Company (GHC), a joint venture between the UK unit of ACME Group and Norway-based Scatec ASA, a leading renewable energy solutions provider, is presently setting up the first phase of a green ammonia venture at the Special Economic Zone in Duqm.

Phase 1, powered by around 500 MW or renewables, targets the production of 100,000 metric tonnes per annum of green ammonia. In the second phase, green ammonia output is anticipated to grow 12-fold to around 1.2 million metric tonnes annually.

In a statement, Tokyo-headquartered IHI Corporation said it will “study and investigate the feasibility of producing and utilising green ammonia derived from renewable energy” as part of the MoU.

“In this MoU, IHI will consider participation in green ammonia production projects, led by ACME, based in Oman, India, the USA and Egypt, as well as the use of ammonia for decarbonised power generation for in Asian islands and other regions,” IHI Corporation stated.

The 170-year-old Japanese company, which



MOU SIGNED WITH INDIA’S ACME GROUP OPENS UP OPPORTUNITY FOR IHI CORPORATION’S PARTICIPATION IN FORMER’S DUQM GREEN AMMONIA VENTURE

began operations as a shipbuilder, has since expanded its heavy engineering portfolio to include the manufacture of aircraft engines, turbochargers for automobiles, industrial machines, power station boilers and other facilities, suspension bridges and other transport-related machinery.

Significantly, the potential for cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and Japan, stemming from this latest MoU, will build on a broader pledge by the two

countries to cooperate across the green energy value chain.

Last December, Oman’s Ministry of Energy and Minerals signed a MoU with the Japanese Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry to explore cooperation in the field of hydrogen, fuel ammonia and carbon recycling that includes methanation.

Separately, the two sides also signed the third extension of an MoU signed between Oman and Japan Organization for Metals and Energy Security in the field of crude energy, natural gas and clean energy.

In recent months, a number of Japanese energy corporations have also signed agreements to offtake liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Oman LNG on long-term supply contracts.

Enjoy endless entertainment with Ooredoo’s ‘Stream On’ and ‘Al7ani’ services



MUSCAT: Enjoy endless hours of entertainment and huge savings with Ooredoo’s ‘Stream On’ and ‘Al7ani’ services! Customers can now stream and listen to all their favourite music and watch online videos without having to use their existing data plans.

Ooredoo’s ‘Al7ani’ service gives unlimited access to playlists through Ooredoo’s streaming partners, which include Apple Music, Gaana, and Saavn. As for Ooredoo’s ‘Stream On’ service, Hala and Shahry customers can visit YouTube and VIU content providers without having to worry about their data consumption.

Both Ooredoo services offer the perfect mix of flexibility, great value, simplicity, and, most of all, convenience. ‘Al7ani’ is the ideal way to listen to the latest tunes available in many languages anywhere and anytime, costing only RO 3 per month with postpaid plans and only 200 Baisas a day for Hala Prepaid.

While ‘Stream On’ costs only 500 Baisas for 24 hours (prepaid) and RO 10 for 30 days (postpaid). To subscribe to ‘Al7ani’ or ‘Stream On’, download the award-winning Ooredoo App or dial *555*700# for Stream On and *555*80# for Al7ani.

Customers will be given a separate unlimited data allocation for all ‘Al7ani’ music streaming. This also applies to ‘Stream On’, where users can plan or choose add-ons, track usage, recharge balances, and lots more, anytime, anywhere.

Panasonic reinforces ties with Omasco as it seeks to broaden market reach in Oman

MUSCAT: Panasonic Marketing Middle East & Africa (PMMAF) is all geared up for its next phase of growth as it bolsters deeper relations with its local partner Oman Marketing and Services Company LLC (Omasco).

The Japanese manufacturer has a long-standing relationship with Omasco and with this development, Panasonic seeks to further grow its business and reach in the Sultanate of Oman mainly by expanding its product portfolio with its latest innovations in response to evolving consumer demands.

Omasco is one of the most prominent business groups in Oman and represents world-renowned and best-in-class brands across the Sultanate of Oman.

With the strengthening of Panasonic’s ties with Omasco, the global electronics giant also moves to restate its commitment to create useful products and deliver innovative technologies designed to enrich the lives and wellbeing of its Omani customers.

In addition, and in line with its new brand action slogan “Create Today. Enrich Tomorrow.”, the company aims to advance further its efforts on building a greener planet for a more sustainable future.



John Hardy, Director – Sales, Panasonic Marketing Middle East and Africa (PMMAF), said: “Oman has always been a key market for Panasonic and we are proud to say that we have been enjoying the trust and confidence of our Omani customers which helps us maintain market leadership status especially in the home appliances category as well as the air conditioning segment.

Today, as we emphasise anew our commitment to the Omani market, we are again honoured to have the support of Omasco as we strive harder to further Panasonic’s mission of providing innovative solutions with industry-leading features and more importantly, with the requirements of our local customers in mind.”

For his part, Navin Batta, Asst General Manager, Consumer

Electronics, Oman Marketing and Services Company LLC (Omasco), commented: “Omasco continuously endeavours to improve our products and services in order to maintain a high level of excellence our customers expect from us. This partnership with Panasonic has been a natural fit – offering the most innovative technologies that meet the local market’s needs.

Leveraging the expertise and best-in-class solutions of Panasonic, we at Omasco are able to engage with our growing customer base in unique ways. We are delighted to deepen our strategic alliance with Panasonic and we look forward to the next chapter of this powerful partnership which is central to our growth strategy over the coming years.”

The renewed collaboration between Panasonic and Omasco was announced during a convention held in Muscat, Oman.

At the event, Panasonic also displayed some of its newest launches, with a key focus on highlighting its strong mission to contribute to the overall wellbeing of people, society, and the planet.

At Panasonic, wellbeing is divided into three categories: Inner Wellbeing, Outer Wellbeing, and Spatial Wellbeing. The company offers products and services to support all three areas of wellbeing.

For Inner Wellbeing, main focus is promoting healthy eating lifestyle through products designed for convenient and nutritious cooking.

Under Inner Wellbeing,

Panasonic also offers solutions that optimises the storage and freshness of food. Products displayed at the event that highlight Inner Wellbeing included kitchen appliances – such as slow cooker and blenders, as well as microwave ovens and refrigerators.

For Outer Wellbeing, Panasonic featured its beauty and grooming products from the Personal Care range, including hair dryers and straighteners as well shavers and body trimmers.

Outer Wellbeing is all about innovations that ensure cleanliness and hygiene and that people’s physical appearance and health management are in the best possible condition.

Meanwhile, Spatial Wellbeing showcase had an extensive display which included Living products – such as Iron, Garment Steamer and Water Dispenser, as well as Residential and Commercial Air Conditioners, Washing Machines, and TVs.

Spatial Wellbeing aims to create hygienic and comfortable homes ideal for health and relaxation with Panasonic’s unique Nanoë™ X and eco-friendly R32 refrigerant. It is also focused on delivering quality indoor environment by utilising the power of air to create positive changes.

Ominvest celebrates 40 years of achievements today

MUSCAT: Oman International Development & Investment Company SAOG (Ominvest) is celebrating its 40th anniversary today, marking four decades of its achievements.

The high-profile gala event will take place later today and promises to be a momentous occasion attended by government and international dignitaries, prominent business leaders, and guest from Oman and overseas.

Since its inception in 1983, Ominvest has grown to become



Oman’s largest publicly listed investment company and one of the largest publicly listed investment companies in the MENA region.

It has built a reputation for its portfolio of high-quality, durable assets in diversified sectors that have produced healthy cash flows for four decades. Ominvest’s enviable track record of consistent profitability and uninterrupted dividend payments to shareholders has further reaffirmed its position as

a leading player in the industry.

Ominvest’s 40th anniversary is a significant milestone for the company and is a testament to its visionary board, capable management team, and talented employees.

The celebration of this achievement will be a night to remember, showcasing Ominvest’s success story, its continued commitment to enhancing value for all stakeholders, and its vision for the future.

Vodafone launches experience-led initiative ‘Inspired by You’

MUSCAT: Committed to fostering youth potential, Vodafone Oman has launched an experience-led initiative called ‘Inspired by You’, inviting talented people of all backgrounds and expertise to share their talents and experiences and be the change within our communities.

Hosted at the Vodafone Hub at Mall of Oman, the initiative is a platform bringing together Oman’s creative community to support one another, harnessing and celebrating inclusion.

Usama al Saifi, Brand and Communications Manager, Vodafone Oman, said: “We are very excited to be throwing open the doors of our Hub to content creators, SMEs, freelancers, entrepreneurs and



all other talented individuals to use our facilities and share their expertise.

These are workshops by the community, for the community and we can’t wait to see what these talents have to offer and how they can inspire us and each other.”

He went on to explain that the initiative is part of

an ongoing, multi-faceted programme from Vodafone that aims to create value beyond connectivity, focused on developing the Sultanate of Oman’s most precious resource: its people.

Vodafone debuted ‘Inspired by You’ with a line-up of 5 speakers including Hanin al Lawati, Mohammed al

Gharibi, Muawiya al Rawahi, Anas al Balushi and Mahmood al Zadjali all of whom shared their inspiring personal journeys.

The second chapter of ‘Inspired by You’ is scheduled to take place next month and talented individuals are invited to apply now through www.vodafone.om/vodafone-hub.

Speakers are selected based on thoroughness of the proposal, feasibility, and relevance to the brand.

Complete with a differentiated retail experience, expansive theatre space, a broadcast booth, and the latest technology, Vodafone Hub is the perfect place for the ideas of tomorrow to come to life today.



TMTEC celebrates opening of Al Misfah workshop

MUSCAT: TMTEC, a specialist in the provision of technical and maintenance services, celebrated recently the opening of its workshop in Al Misfah Industrial Estate dedicated to electric motor rewinding, repairs and refurbishment.

The grand opening was attended by Talal al Maskri, Chairman and Founder of TMTEC, along with guests representing key clients and management executives. TMTEC Workshop uses state-of-the-art equipment such as a computerised automatic winding machine and many

other hardware, operated by trained and certified technical staff to cater to rewinding, repair and testing services to clients in the Sultanate of Oman.

Repair services provided by the workshop cover: motors, generators, transformers, pumps and blowers. The facility also provides machining, dynamic balancing and testing services.

TMTEC’s goal is to serve a larger segment of clients within the Sultanate of Oman and reach out to international markets as well.

Prudency in wealth creation & expenditure



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

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

In today's world every person aspires to save their earnings so their families can live content lives. The needs of the world are many, and it is difficult to achieve all that we aim for.

Money is as important for sustaining life as water and oxygen. Without it, one cannot achieve his ambitions.

He must earn money through legitimate sources based on lawful means without having to indulge in fraud, corruption, manipulation of laws and legislation, and other crooked means.

There is a lot of literature on money affairs published in the past centuries. But here I refer to an old book published in the ancient Iraqi city of Babylon which enjoyed a strategic geographical location and rich natural resources including gold mines.

The book includes some advice offered by 'Arkad', one of the richest men of that period, who was known for his high social status, knowledge, wisdom and compassion for people. His business helped him amass a great fortune.

These details of his life are captured in the book, titled "The Richest Man of Babylon" published in 1926, in which the author deals with the

most important principles of wealth creation with his perspectives on economic principles governing the role of money in our lives.

Everyone who has the capabilities and competencies can earn money through a combination of work, determination and ambition, but should do so in clean and ethical ways.

"Arkad" adhered to a number of principles when making money, including paying attention to the need to set aside part of his money and income every week and month as an investment and saving. In a sense, it amounted to earning a second salary itself.

Thus, if a person set aside 5 per cent to 15 per cent of his salary, it will help him meet emergency expenses and other costs when needed.

Today, there are many countries and peoples that follow the method of saving, and established banks that offer loans, aid and grants to other countries from those saved funds, such as Japan, China, South Korea, Taiwan and other countries.

The people of those countries follow the method of use their monthly budget for basic expenses, and shun waste and extravagance that God forbade in the Holy Quran.

Likewise, we should spend only on necessities and not on luxuries, and to know the difference.

While some people work to make money, they also work to invest those amounts in investment fields in order to develop their savings in certain business sectors.

They have to preserve wealth from potential loss by investment in the right projects that can achieve more wealth and money, which comes back as a fixed income to the savers at a later date.

Mideast CEOs expect resilient economic outlook over 2023-2028

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

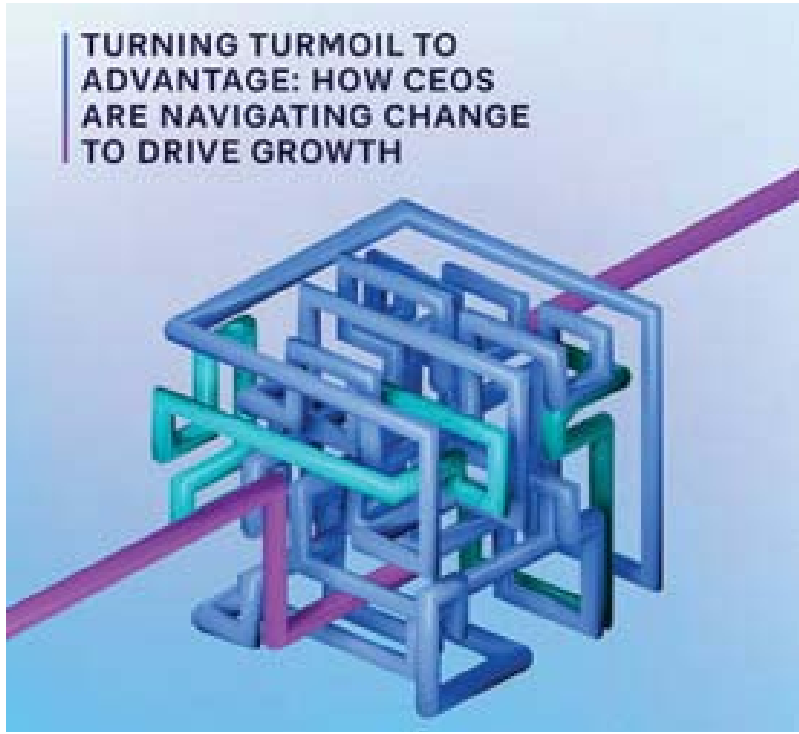
Despite current challenges, CEOs of the world's largest companies are embracing the positive and seeing the opportunities in turmoil. Over half (61 per cent) of CEOs in the Middle East expect a stable or positive worldwide economic outlook over the next three to five years.

Arthur D Little (ADL), the leading management consultancy firm, elaborates on this and many other findings in their new 2023 CEO Insights study, which englobes insights from nearly 250 CEOs from companies worldwide with turnover of more than \$1 billion.

Thomas Kuruvilla, Managing Partner, Arthur D Little Middle East, said: "In the Middle East, we see good examples of an industry's moves to improve both efficiency and innovation in the travel and transportation industry.

The Covid crisis pushed airlines and airports into large-scale efficiency programs to achieve major cost reductions, impacting thousands of jobs. However, at the same time, these companies are forming new partnerships to offer new services to passengers, such as combined Intermodal mobility offerings (e.g., bringing together aircraft, rail, and mobility on-demand services).

The next eight years will showcase tremendous advances in new client segments in the region



as more investment is poured into reskilling initiatives for employees in the manufacturing and energy and utilities sector, ultimately contributing to competitive sustainability projects in the run-up to COP."

What are the drivers of future growth? Despite the current energy crisis, all CEOs are focusing on innovation when it comes to drivers of future growth.

Following the global trend of new geographies, Gulf executives will put less emphasis on diversification and disruptive offering to focus more on new client segments.

Globally, over a quarter (26 per cent) listed technology

innovation as the most critical factor to growth, well ahead of raw material/energy prices (11 per cent). Factors such as supply chain, and cyber risks both outranked raw material prices globally.

However, there are clear regional differences:

Environmental and climate change issues are a key focus in Europe, North America, and Asia, but receive less attention in other regions. Though more and more CEOs in the Middle East (7 per cent) are prioritising environmental and climate change as a factor in future growth, they remain closely aligned to their global (10 per cent) counterparts. Cyber risk is viewed as a key,

urgent factor by 15 per cent of CEOs in Africa, 14 per cent in Asia, and 13 per cent in Middle East and Africa (MEA)/South America, ahead of their peers in Europe and North America.

Additionally C-suite in the Middle East believe the most critical factor in economic growth is technology innovation at 29 per cent as compared with the global average of 26 per cent.

Francesco Marsella, Managing Partner, and Global Practice Leader, Strategy & Organization at Arthur D Little, comments: "In a downturn, conventional business wisdom is to cut costs and focus on survival. Despite current challenges and many dark macroeconomic previsions for 2023, most CEOs we spoke to are optimistic for the future working with passion, entrepreneurship, and creativity to manage performance today while building the future.

They see opportunity in adversity, looking beyond the current crisis to embrace a more positive future for their companies and wider society."

Overall, there will be a moderate need employee reskilling in the GCC for the telecommunications industry, travel and transportation and financial services. By comparison, healthcare (25 per cent), manufacturing (33 per cent) and energy & utilities (33 per cent) see the highest volume of reskilling endeavours in the workplace.

Muscat forum concludes with pledge to strengthen global civil aviation

FROM PAGE 13

In concluding comments, Eng Abdel Nabi Manar, Director General of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization, said: "The global aviation industry is in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and studies show that the global air transport industry plays an important role in supporting the goals of sustainable

development, especially the goals related to the eradication of poverty, by providing support to airlines to keep their workers and prevent the diversion of labour from the civil aviation sector, and to eradicate hunger by preserving the continuation of air carriers in air cargo flights to provide humanitarian aid to areas affected by natural disasters."

He stressed that the Sultanate of Oman's

hosting of this event confirms its keenness to support the efforts of the international community by contributing to the implementation of the decisions of the General Assembly of the International Civil Aviation Organization, and enhancing continuous focus and exchanging experiences, experiences and viewpoints, in line with the directives of the organisation's governance organs.

Abraj IPO boosts investor confidence in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, FEB 22

Underscoring confidence in the IPO of Abraj Energy Services, a total of 40 per cent of the shares were purchased by the founders of the company including, the Saudi Omani Investment Company (SOIC).

These entities collectively constitute the 'Main Investors' and have contributed a total of RO 37,588,840 towards the IPO, representing 40 per cent of the public subscription.

Eng Ahmed bin Said al Azkawi, Chief Executive of OQ Upstream, said, "The subscription of the founders in 40 per cent of Abraj Energy Services' shares enhances the confidence in the success of



the IPO.

The signing of the anchor investment agreement with the Saudi Omani Investment Company for the purchase of 20 per cent of Abraj's shares put for sale in the IPO reflects the regional growth strategy adopted by our company and its commitment to supporting the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 by attracting direct foreign investments."

Ayad bin Ali al Balushi, Board Chairman of Abraj Energy Services, said, "The subscription of founding investors in 40 per cent of the shares is the source of

confidence for all investors.

This move demonstrates SOIC's trust in Abraj's future as a financially resilient and high-growth business with enormous potential for regional growth. We look forward to welcoming SOIC as a main investor in our company to leverage long-term relationships and enhance the varied base of its customers to provide the finest drilling technology and wells services at the sector's level.

Through this agreement, we pledge to accelerate and enhance our business scope as

the leading provider of oilfield services that contributes to promoting the In-Country Value and offers support towards developing capital markets in the Sultanate of Oman."

Muteb bin Mohammed al Shathri, Deputy CEO of the SOIC, added, "Abraj is a fast-growing company with solid operational foundations and sounds financial resources.

Therefore, our participation as a main investor in its IPO will enhance the diversity of its portfolio. It will also provide a new opportunity through which our company will contribute towards achieving the long-term objectives of the Saudi Vision 2030 and the development of the capital markets in the region."

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For Hyundai Kona & Veloster

Date of Campaign : 23/2/2023
Recall Type : Recall
Recall Segment : Mechanical
Product Description : Hyundai Kona & Veloster

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2018- 2020	Hyundai	Kona	From RLUK281ABJN002527 To KMHK381ABLU627837	172
2018-2020	Hyundai	Veloster	From KMHTG61FAKU016102 To KMHTG61FMMU032800	25

Description of defect:
Some vehicles might experience abnormal scuffing of the engine's cylinder bore which could create accelerated oil consumption and/or illumination of the oil pressure warning light.

Procedure:
Inspect engine vibration by using the GDS Scanning computer, if it is needed, replace the engine.

For More information:
Customers of affected vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment for further details/booking Appointment etc from Date - 23/2/2023

Contact details
Toll free No 80050003 on all working days between 8.00 AM to 1.00 PM & 2.00 PM to 5.30 PM with effect from Date 23/2/2023

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp
 <your name> to
96473232

THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 23, 2023 SHAABAN 2, 1444 AH

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

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

FOR RENT

ROOM for rent in Darsait with a bathroom and a kitchen, electricity and water is free. RO 100 monthly. 99315986.

FLAT for rent, in Darsait, 4 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, kitchen, with small sea view, near the Indian School, RO 240 monthly. 99315986.

SERVICES

FLATS 2BHK AND 1 BHK IN MUMTAZ. CONTACT 99341138 AND 90991079.

SPACIOUS 3 bedrooms flat, behind Honda Showroom, Al Wattayah, Muscat. Contact: 92269972, only WhatsApp. RO 200, negotiable.

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

Noor Muscat
*Cleaning Services
*Pest control
*Supplying office boys. 99333463, 92223227, 96614595

SIT. WANTED

SENIOR accountant, Indian male, 39 years, 15 years experience in accounts & finance at Oman. With Oman D/L. Seeking a senior position in accounts. Experience in oil & gas, construction, FMCG, F & B companies etc. Available to join immediately. Contact No: -968 97921596.

INDIAN male, diploma in civil site engineer around 14 years experience in construction projects. Having Oman driving licence. Contact: 78900287. Email: sankar.g7987@gmail.com

EXPERIENCED NEBOSH certified Indian male, currently in Oman in visit visa. Fluent in English & Hindi. Looking for a suitable placement as HSE officer/ Trainer. Contact: 92062096.

CISCO and microsoft certified IT professional with 8 years of experience as IT administrator, Indian male, having Oman driving licence is looking for a suitable placement in the field of IT infrastructure/ network/ cloud/ server administrator/ IT sales in Muscat. Contact: 97212332.

JOB VACANCY

HSE Officer Omani Male Graduate with Min 2 years electrical exp For Duqm Area

Contact Email: grandmuscat@yahoo.com

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

SIT. WANTED

MEP Engineer, Indian Male Electrical Eng around 20 years experience in MEP Construction projects. Having Oman driving license. Ready to join, Call: 98894682.

ELECTRONIC Engineer, Seeking Job. Experienced Electronic and Instrumentation Engineer (Male) with BE and Diploma seeking job. Skills: plant engineering, electronics maintenance, SMT operation, control systems, software (C++, C, PLC). Contact: 92929736. Email: farookjalal5@gmail.com

STORE manager/In Charge, Indian, above 18 years experience in Supermarket and leading retail chain in Oman and India, on visit visa, seeks immediate placement. 99697179 E-mail: mailshaijuvarghese@gmail.com

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

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: **97239696 95355638**

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

SIT. WANTED

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

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

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

LOST

MOUSTAFA Mohamed Khedr Elsayed has lost Egyptian Passport No A23773698. Finder please handover to ROP.

Now get news on the go



To receive news updates from Oman Observer, WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car
AMAZING OFFERS
○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.
All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. ☎972494490.

LUXURIOUS

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

SERVICES

Autocad/revit arch MEP part/ full- time. Contact WhatsApp: 97103168.

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



OMAN عمان DAILY
Observer

For Advertisements
Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suham Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020 DHUL, GAADA 18, 1441 AH

OMAN عمان DAILY
Observer

ESTABLISHED IN 1981 EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: ABDULLAH BIN SALIM AL SHIBLI VOL. 39 NO. 239 PAGES 16

HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER

MUSCAT: Before the Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries Dr. Said bin Haisoon bin Ahmad al Haili, Chairman of the Supreme Court, and Sayid Khalifa bin Said bin Khalifa al Rasmali, Chairman of Administrative Judicature Court, Thursday, SEE ALSO P2

bin Abdulrahman bin bin al-Harith took the oath of office at Al-Barkah Palace on Thursday. SEE ALSO P2

STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN

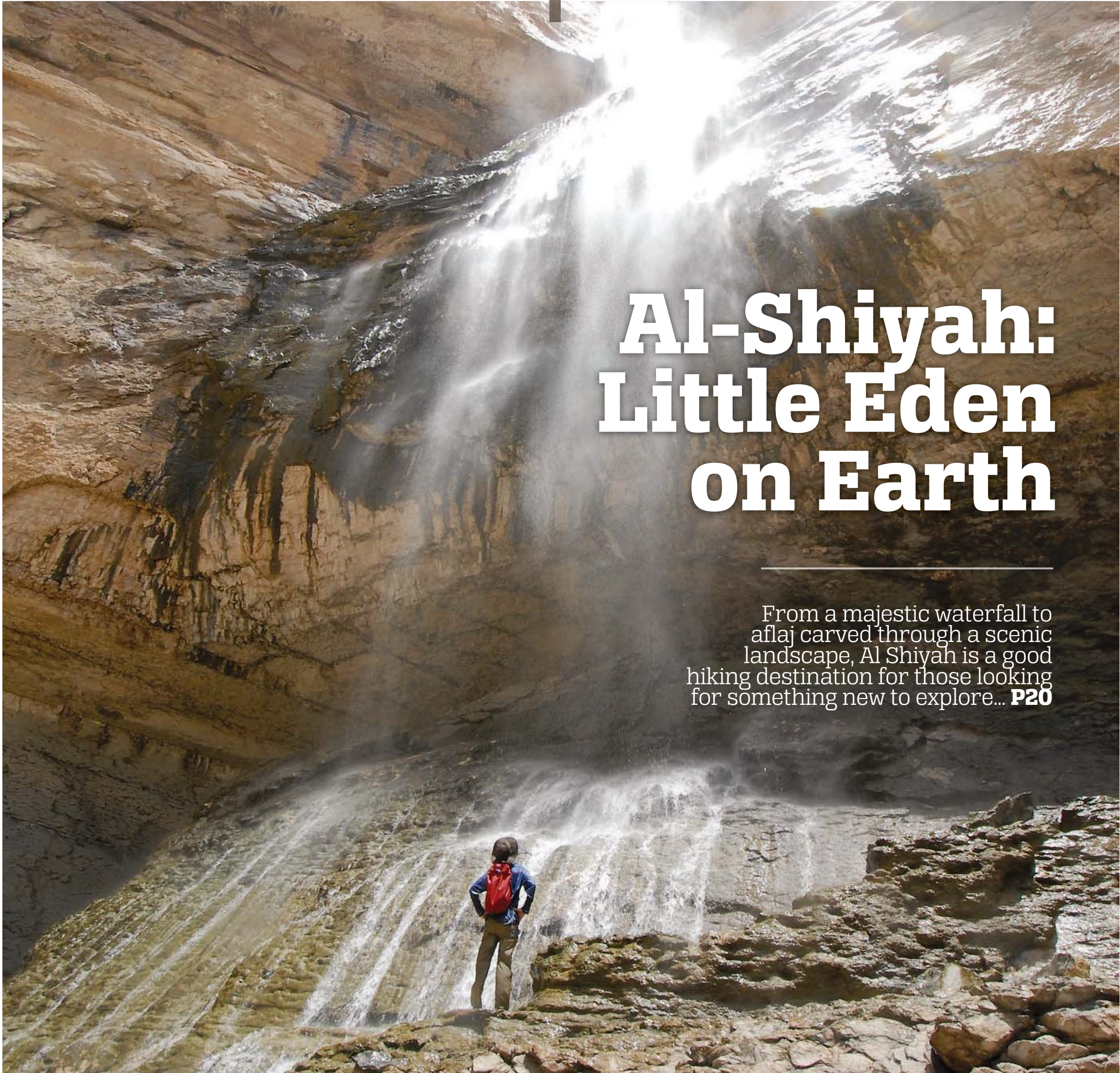
SAMUEL BUTTS
MUSCAT: The frequent appeals by the authorities to follow social distancing guidelines are failing, on that note. A drive around the downtown area and its adjoining areas reveals how recklessly people crowd at different corners and walk shoulder-to-shoulder. While most people across the country are following the guidelines that health authorities say are necessary to keep the coronavirus from spreading, many are not. "In these critical moments of uncertainty with both physical and mental stress, we should discipline ourselves. SOME PEOPLE ARE NOT FOLLOWING SOCIAL DISTANCING NORMS" While expressing his concerns, he said that the attitude of some people is not acceptable that they pass the way for the spread of the infection. Even if we do not have the authority to lay charges on the offenders, at least we can scare them away," he said the Observer. TURN TO P4

NEW RO 50 BANKNOTE FROM THIS MONTH
MUSCAT: To mark the 50th anniversary of the Omani Renaissance and in commemoration of the memory of its founder late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) issued a sixth series of new RO 50 banknotes, which will begin circulation this month. CBO will also issue new banknotes for all other denominations during the last quarter of 2020. TURN TO P4

UN HAILS OMAN'S SUPPORT FOR PEACE IN YEMEN
NEW YORK: Antonio Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has commended the role of the Sultanate in supporting international efforts to establish security and peace in Yemen. In a virtual video call to countries backing the global ceasefire initiative, Guterres said that the international community is grateful to the Sultanate of Oman for its crucial role in enhancing efforts aimed to establish peace and security in Yemen. "The United Nations values this vital and positive role," he said. Guterres added that the Sultanate represents a unique model, not only in the Middle East, but also in the world. "He urged other countries to follow the example of the Sultanate in advocating and supporting peace and stability." — OMA



@omanobserver
www.omanobserver.om



Al-Shiyah: Little Eden on Earth

From a majestic waterfall to aflaj carved through a scenic landscape, Al Shiyah is a good hiking destination for those looking for something new to explore... **P20**

Madrid palace to host exhibition on celebrated Spanish artist Sorolla

WITH MASSIVE SCREENS and virtual reality, a new immersive exhibition opens in Madrid last week in honour of Spanish artist Joaquin Sorolla, renowned for his ability to capture the blazing sunlight of the Mediterranean. The exhibition, "Sorolla through light", commemorates the centenary of the impressionist-inspired painter's death in 1923. While alive, Sorolla exhibited in

many of the world's major capitals, from Paris to Buenos Aires, but he is less known today outside of Spain. "The way in which Sorolla expresses the Mediterranean light, the light in gardens, how he approaches his subjects, it is absolutely innovative for his era and is the height of impressionism," said Ana de la Cueva, the head of Spain's National Heritage body.



The show at Madrid's Royal Palace will feature many of his works that have never been publically displayed. The 24 paintings on exhibit range

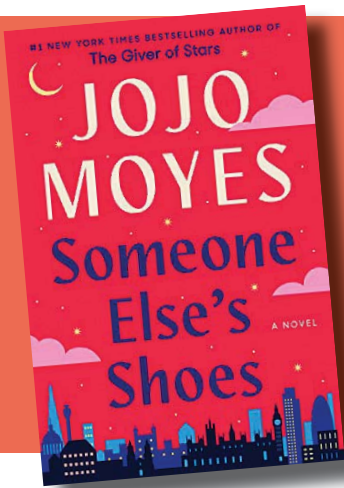
from portraits to landscapes. Two rooms have been fitted out with floor-to-ceiling screens displaying hundreds of moving images, including paintings and

drawings by the artist, as well as photographs and press articles about his works, set to music. In the final room of the exhibition, visitors can don a virtual reality headset and be immersed in a Sorolla painting depicting the Malvarrosa beach in his eastern home region of Valencia on the Mediterranean coast. Blanca Pons-Sorolla, the painter's great-granddaughter and one of the show's two curators, said it was "three exhibitions in one" which aim to help people "understand what Sorolla felt when he was painting". Sorolla started out producing works of social realism before turning to local customs and then portraits and nudes, strongly influenced by 17th century Spanish master Diego Velazquez. He returned to landscapes in the last years of his life. The show runs until June 30. — AFP

READ

SOMEONE ELSE'S SHOES
BY JOJO MOYES

Drastic changes and a pair of six-inch high Christian Louboutin red crocodile shoes shake up the lives of two women.



LIFESTYLE

A member of staff inspects a mummy mask in the Golden Mummies of Egypt exhibition in Manchester Museum prior to the museum's reopening after a long refurbishment, in Manchester, north-west England. Golden Mummies of Egypt exhibition explores expectations of a life after death during the Graeco-Roman Period of Egyptian history between 300 BCE and 300 CE. — AFP



ENTERTAINMENT

Manga master Leiji Matsumoto, whose epic sci-fi stories were highly influential in Japan's comic book and anime worlds, has died aged 85, production company Toei said. — AFP





LAST PART

**Nasser bin
Abdulla Al Riyami**
Translated by:
Dr Ali bin Rashid Al Abri

I HAD THE HONOUR to meet HM Sultan Jamshid – who had not abdicated – in England, and explained to me how the critical situation, on the 12.01.1964, had forced him to leave his beloved country. He said: at about 6 a.m., a person that he knew, Haj Hussain, came to the Palace and asked him to leave the Palace for his safety. The Sultan bravely refused, saying that he would not leave the country and allow his subjects to be devoured by the mob; and that if there was no choice but to die, then he would prefer to fight to the death amongst his people. This statement was confirmed by Mervyn Smithyman, the Permanent Secretary to late Prime Minister of Zanzibar, in his statement, dated 16th Jan. 1964. HM the Sultan maintains that: Ambassador Hilal Al Barwani, came after Haj Hussain had left the Palace and succeeded in convincing him to leave the Palace too. Barwani explained to the Sultan that it was not only in his own interest to do so but in the interest of the regime, the country, the throne and the people, all at the same time.

It is also a documented fact that the Sultan did not leave the Palace at once but was in a quandary whether to leave or not, until he received a call from the British High Commissioner just before 11 a.m. who told him that the mobs were approaching the Palace and that it was essential for him to leave the Palace, and to leave the country. The High Commissioner also told HM. that he would coordinate with the Police Commissioner to ensure his safe exit.

At 11 a.m. the Sultan had another call, this time from the Commissioner of Police, Jack Sullivan, who asked him to leave the Palace within 10 minutes. In his report, the Commissioner maintains the following:

"At about 11 o'clock, following one very heavy and determined attack, it looked as if the position was hopeless. I telephoned His Majesty the Sultan and asked him to leave. He wished time to leave but as the encircling movement by the enemy was growing in strength and had scout reports that they had penetrated to a street at the rear of the Palace, so I asked him to be at the Wharf within 10 minutes. Part of my force was sent there to ensure that he got on the Salama. They were unable to get back, so they boarded the Salama also.

The police force escorted and ensured the safe passage of the Sultan and his family from the Palace to the harbour. Sultan Jamshid recalls the event stating that he was prepared for the worst. He appeared in public carrying a rifle in his right hand and had hidden a pistol in his clothes. He refused to be transported in a police vehicle, preferring to drive his own car, with his wife and his children, keeping his head held high. The rest of his family and entourage

Remembering a dawn that changed the fate of Zanzibar



HM Sultan
Jamshid in
Dorchester Hotel,
London,
attending the 2nd
Lancaster House
Conference,
September, 1963.



HM Sultan Jamshid on his
Arrival in London on 20
January 1964. On the left is the
Duke of Devonshire,
representing the
Commonwealth Relations
Office.

The Palace, known as
'Beit Al Serkal.



'Sayyid Khalifa', the Ship that
sailed HM Sultan Jamshid to
Mombasa then to Dar es
Salaam.

left in police vehicles that flanked the Sultan's car. However, this police force was unable to return to Malindi Police Station to reinforce the resistance as the mobs were hard on their heels, prompting them to board the ship with the Sultan.

The time to leave had come, ushering in dramatic moments for the end of an era: a Sultan is forced to leave his Palace, defeated and helpless. Confusion and consternation reign in the mind of the Sultan. Treason has taken him by surprise, his eyes are full of anger at the thought of the grim future that awaits his people and he is gripped by his own sorrow at losing his time-honoured throne. The Sultan boarded the Salama heartbroken, forlorn and devastated. He paid his last respects to the Palace built by his great grandfather, Sayyid Said bin Sultan, and to the town where he and his father were born and grew up. He acknowledges that this is probably the last time he will see both.

After a long discussion between the Sultan and some wise people on board, the Sultan decided that they head to Mombasa rather than Pemba or Egypt, as some suggested.

Officials in Kenya thought that Sultan's entry into Mombasa could lead to a volatile security situation and disturbances by the Arabs living in Mombasa; thus, it was decided not to grant him refuge, nor to his entourage; instead, it was decided they head to Dar es Salaam.

In Dar es Salaam, the Sultan and his entourage were put under house arrest in two government houses protected by the police and located in the prestigious area of Oyster Bay. One house was allocated to HM the Sultan and his family while the second one accommodated his entourage. They stayed in Dar es Salaam from the 13th to the 18th of January, the day they flew to England.

The pilot could not land at London Heathrow airport due to severe weather conditions, and was rerouted to Manchester.

A press conference was arranged on his arrival at Manchester Airport where He spoke about the plot that had overthrown the Government.

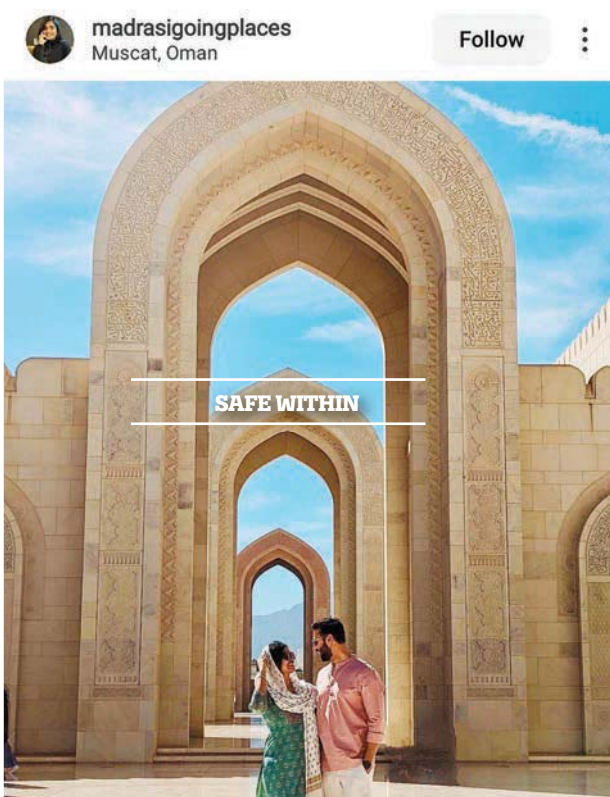
Along with some British officials, the Sultan, his family and entourage were met by officers of the Red Cross who supplied them with warm clothes and coats to protect them from the bad January weather. They spent the night in Manchester and the following day they were taken by train to London where the Sultan and his family stayed in St. James hotel in Mayfair; while his entourage and the young men who accompanied him were accommodated at the Salvation Army Barracks.

The Sultan was expected to settle down in London. However, Shaikh Salim bin Masoud al Riyami, who was studying in Portsmouth at the time appealed to the Sultan and invited him to live there with him. The Sultan, who had a close friendship with Shaikh Salim's elder brothers, agreed, and he moved to Portsmouth. He bought a humble house at Victoria Grove, Southsea, where he lived until the moment he was granted welcome.



find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Spielberg channels inner child at Berlin film festival



THREE-TIME ACADEMY Award winner Steven Spielberg on Tuesday said childhood trauma had shaped almost all of his work as he prepared to accept a lifetime achievement award at the Berlinale film festival.

Spielberg, 76, said he was "obviously... very traumatised" by the experience of conflict in his family home and his parents' divorce.

That was why "I'd be attracted to subjects like 'Empire of the Sun'," in which a young boy is torn away from his family in China and sent to a Japanese war camp, he said.

"I'm sure had my parents not gotten a divorce, I would not have chosen 'Empire of the Sun' as a film to direct," he said.

The Hollywood A-listers also spoke of still feeling the same inspiration he did "as a little kid" when he makes films today.

"All those decades later, I feel... the same level of excitement when I find a book or a script or come up with an original idea that I think could make a good movie," he said.

- 'HEART OF A CHILD' -

French director Francois Truffaut had ultimately persuaded him to make "E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial" by telling him he had "the heart of a child", Spielberg said.

"Truffaut was the one that said, you gotta make a picture with kids," he said.

Spielberg is to collect an honorary Golden Bear for his life's work on Tuesday evening at the Berlinale, Europe's first major cinema showcase of the year.

The festival is also screening a retrospective of his work, including classics such as "Raiders of the Lost Ark", "Jaws" and "Schindler's List", as well as his latest project, the semi-autobiographical film "The Fabelmans".

"The Fabelmans" tells the mostly true story of Spielberg's own childhood and introduction to film-making in post-war America.

The film, starring Paul Dano and Michelle Williams, has already received wide critical acclaim, picking up top nods at both the 2023 Golden Globes and Critics Choice Awards.

It has also been nominated for five Oscars.

Talking about the film, Spielberg said it was the "most emotional" project he had ever worked on.

"I was telling a story with a lot of funny parts but with a lot of parts that were very traumatising," he said.

The star director also revealed that he is pressing ahead with a television mini-series about Napoleon, based on a screenplay by Stanley Kubrick.

The project, first floated in 2013, is being planned as "a seven-part limited series", he said. — AFP

CULTURE

Iraq dig uncovers 5,000 year old restaurant



ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN southern Iraq have uncovered the remains of a tavern dating back nearly 5,000 years they hope will illuminate the lives of ordinary people in the world's first cities.

The US-Italian team made the find in the ruins of ancient Lagash, northeast of the modern city of Nasiriyah, which was already known to have been one of the first urban centres of the Sumerian civilisation of ancient Iraq.

The joint team from the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pisa discovered the remains of a primitive refrigeration system, a large oven,

"What we understand this thing to be is a place where people — regular people — could come to eat and that is not domestic," she said.

"We call it a tavern because drinks from wheat is by far the most common drink, even more than water, for the Sumerians", she said, noting that in one of the temples excavated in the area "there was a recipe that was found on a cuneiform tablet".

- 'REGULAR PEOPLE' -

The world's first cities developed in what is now southern Iraq, after agricultural surpluses

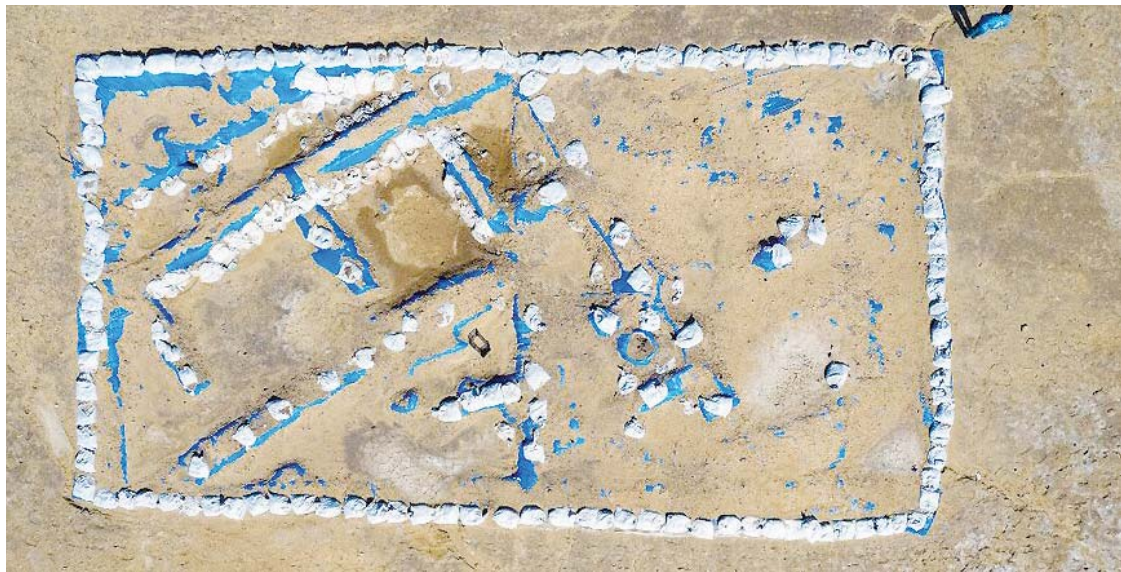
archaeologist Baker Azab Wali said, after working with the US-Italian team on the site.

"Its inhabitants depended on agriculture, livestock, fishing, but also on the exchange of goods," he said.

Pittman said the team was eager to learn more about the occupations of the people who used the tavern in its heyday in around 2700 BC to throw new light on the social structure of the first cities.

Detailed analysis would need to be carried out on the samples taken during the excavations the team completed in November.

"There is so much that we do



benches for diners and around 150 serving bowls.

Fish and animal bones were found in the bowls, alongside evidence of drinking, which was widespread among the Sumerians.

"So we've got the refrigerator, we've got the hundreds of vessels ready to be served, benches where people would sit... and behind the refrigerator is an oven that would have been used... for cooking food," project director Holly Pittman said.

from the domestication of the first crops allowed the emergence of new social classes not engaged directly in food production.

The Lagash area, close to the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was dubbed the "garden of the gods" by the ancients for its fertility and gave rise to a string of Sumerian cities dating back to the early dynastic period.

"Lagash was one of the important cities of southern Iraq," Iraqi

not know about this early period of the emergence of cities and that is what we are investigating," she said.

"We hope to be able to characterise the neighbourhoods and the kinds of occupation... of the people that lived in this big city who were not the elite," she added.

"Most of the work done at the other sites focuses on kings and priests. And that is all very important but the regular people are also important." — AFP

A LOOK AT THE ACADEME



By Dr Zainab al Ajmi
zeinbf@moe.om

Omani Teacher's Day: How to Support Teachers in the School Environment?

TEACHERS ARE AN invaluable portion of the educational structure, as well as the backbone of societies. Through teachers, communities develop and prepare for the future. Moreover, if the nation's education is adequate and successful, particularly credit goes to the teacher. Today, as the Ministry of Education celebrates Omani Teacher's Day, everyone reminisces about the value of those teachers that contributed to their life in a positive and efficacious way. It's acknowledged that teachers work harder than others from their first day at school, they give their best methods to prepare their students for life. Nevertheless, curriculum and teaching cause stress as teachers find it difficult to keep up with the ever-changing curriculum standards, as well as their ability to successfully meet the new requirements. On the other hand, the school adds workload and tension to develop its activities and attain its objectives effectively. Therefore, it's critical to support teachers to get a balance between their responsibility and mental health, and well-being.

Although teachers know that stress in the school environment is inevitable, However, there are several ways to alleviate teachers' pressure, and burnout averted. These strategies include supplying supportive resources and adequate sources such as entertainment and social activities that provide an inclusive and supportive environment that values the emotional and psychological needs of teachers and prioritises their mental health and professional development, creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, and embracing a stress management system. To this end, Jensen (2019) stated that "Many schools doing what they can to fill gaps, starting with acknowledging that the work that we do is downright hard. Another school in Lincoln, School Middle School, has what they call "Wellness Wednesdays. "They invite community yoga teachers, sponsor walks around the neighbourhood during lunch, and organise social events that are all meant to bring people together. Zachary Elementary School in Zachary, Louisiana, has something they call a "Midweek Meetup," where they invite teachers to share lunch and to talk about the stuff that goes well and the things that are weighing heavy on their hearts". (Talk Title." TED", www.ted.com).

As such, providing teachers with tools and resources is beneficial to manage their workload and teaching responsibilities. For instance: collaborative planning sessions with other teachers, counselling services, life coaching, educational programmes, support groups, and other forms of assistance. Adopting such techniques, schools create a supportive, organised and efficient work environment for their teachers and staff.

Succinctly, teachers have the most important career in the world, since teachers inspire students to strive for their best which is in turn, improving community life. Consequently, it's imperative for teachers to work in a healthy environment that supports them to maintain their well-being as well as increases their job satisfaction and performance.



art & life

Local Scene

f t i s y @omanobserver

THURSDAY | FEBRUARY 23 | 2023

Al Shiyah: Little Eden on Earth



By Khaled Abdul Malak

When I first reached the abandoned village of Al Shiyah, I wondered what it looked like when it was still bustling with people and its terraces planted with palm, banana, and lime trees. I could picture the beautiful sight of the water flowing through its amazing falaj system that runs over a few kilometres from the two main waterfalls to irrigate the gardens and provide the village with its lifeline. August 2007 was our first attempt to reach Al Shiyah village. The temperature was over 40 degrees in the shade and the wadi was totally dry. There were three of us: Marta, my wife, Tufan, my partner, and myself. We suffered from the heat and reached our "Promised Land" after three and a half hours of bouldering, climbing, and hiking.

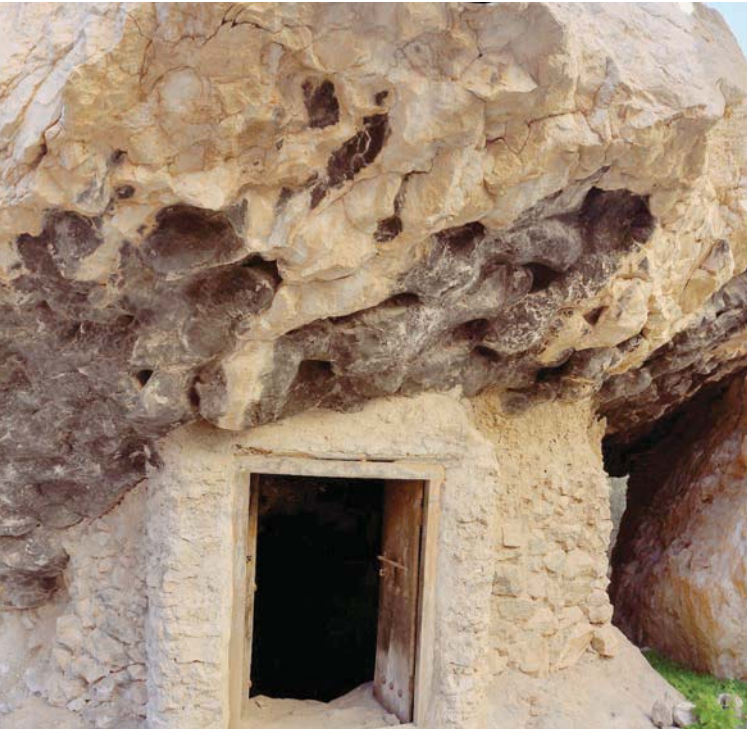
At this time of the year, hiking in

ered with green grass. We could hardly believe that we were in Oman. That day I decided to go further to reach the end of the canyon where I had spotted a high waterfall on Google Earth.

On our way, we passed through lush green terraces and came across some old houses. Our first stop was at a big pool with a diameter of around 30 metres fed by several waterfalls pouring from a height of 40 metres.

After a short break, we moved on and reached the spotted gigantic 150-metre-high waterfall that we abseiled a few months later with my wife Marta and daughter Mona.

After this second visit, I returned several times to Al Shiyah with my family and friends, each time trying to visit the area after heavy rains. One of our visits was a week after the cyclone "Phet" hit the country in June 2010 and again we found a totally different landscape. A friend of mine, Kester, who accompanied me on that trip, thought that the 150 m waterfall was



Oman is very difficult; besides the fact that the weather is extremely hot, you are required to carry a lot of water as you cannot be sure to find any during your journey.

In the middle of the dead village, we found a big natural pool, totally dried out, and I thought, "When this big basin was filled with fresh water the place must have looked like a little Eden on Earth".

Our journey was very tough. So we decided to return to Al Shiyah in wintertime. Our second visit took place on February 12th, 2010, a few days after the place was inundated by heavy rain. I was accompanied by my "adopted son" Mihai Catrinar. What we discovered was totally different from what I saw on my previous trip. The natural pools were filled with crystal clear water, the waterfalls were flowing and the terraces were totally cov-

the most beautiful sight he had seen in his entire life.

My last trip to Al Shiyah was with my Omani partner Ahmed al Jabri, also following 10 days of heavy rains. The outflow of water in the waterfalls was impressive. We spent a great time swimming in "natural private pools and Jacuzzis".

I wish we could travel back in time to see how these abandoned villages looked when they were still lively.

To reach Al Shiyah you have to take the road to Qurayat and then continue to Sur. Take the exit to Wadi Al Arbiyeen. When you reach the village of Swayh, you can park your car and start your hike in the wadi behind the village "Wadi Al Naqmah". It will take around three and a half hours to reach Al Shiyah and another hour to get to the last waterfall.

