

HM condolences to Egypt President

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to President Abdel Fattah el Sisi of the Arab Republic of Egypt, on victims of a bus crash in the Governorate of Minya, south of Egypt. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sympathies to President Sisi, families of the victims and the people of Egypt. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty to rest the departed souls in peace in paradise and to grant their families fortitude to bear the loss, wishing the injured a speedy recovery. — ONA



P10

MARTIAL SCORES AGAIN AS UNITED BEAT PALACE



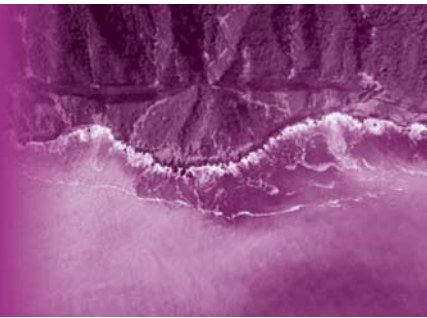
P13

OMANI TOURISM SECTOR CONTINUES TO MAKE STRONG RECOVERY



P20

DON'T MISS THESE 5 ATTRACTIONS WHEN VISITING DHOFAR



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO COLOMBIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Ivan Duque Marquez of the Republic of Colombia on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes to President Marquez and the people of Colombia further progress and prosperity. — ONA

HM CONDOLENCES TO KING OF BAHRAIN

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of condolences to King Hamad bin Issa al Khalifa of the Kingdom of Bahrain on the death of Shaikha Mathayel bint Ali bin Issa bin Salman al Khalifa. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his heartfelt sympathies to King Hamad, the family of the departed and the people of Bahrain, praying to Allah the Almighty to rest the departed's soul in peace in paradise and to grant her family fortitude to bear the loss. — ONA



HM GREETINGS CONVEYED TO LITHUANIA PRESIDENT

President Gitanas Nausėda of the Republic of Lithuania received at the Presidential Palace in Vilnius on Tuesday Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister. During the meeting, Sayyid Badr conveyed greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to President Nausėda and the people of Lithuania. On his turn, President Nausėda expressed his sincere sentiments to His Majesty the Sultan, wishing His Majesty good health and happiness. The Lithuanian President also wished the relations between the two countries further development and growth. **DETAILS ON P2**

RECEIVED 23,956 AND OFFERED CONSULTANCY

Cancer centre treats 4,000 patients in a year

MUSCAT: The Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre received and treated as many as 4,000 patients during the first year since its inception.

The centre received 23,956 patients and offered integrated medical consultancy to patients in its outpatient clinics at the hands of nationals who master international expertise in treating cancer tumours.

Since its opening in July 2021 to June 2022, the centre has provided 3,619 radio sessions, provided 4,757 chemical treatment doses and conducted 262 surgical operations.

The units of the centres were operated in a gradual manner to ensure the safety of patients, harmonise the medical, laboratory, pharmaceutical and radiological electronic systems and synchronise them with the



central scheme of services.

Since the start of operations at the centre till the end of June 2022, the visits to centre's departments were as follows: 37.8 per cent visits to the breast cancer programme, 26 per cent to the alimentary system programme, 16 per cent to the head, neck and chest programme, 7 per cent to the urinary tract programme, 6.8 per cent as rare tumour cases, 3.7 per cent as gynaecological tumour cases and 37 as instances of services at palliative care programme.

On the preventive side, the centre's genome section offered genetic counselling services to 468 patients (September 2021 to June 2022). The counsellor briefs the patients about the results of diagnosis, which is conducted through the use of modern devices that register genome count and nuclear serialisation to determine hereditary modifications that cause cancer.

In radiotherapy, the centre has launched a number of advanced services for the treatment of cancer patients, including treatment with the Cyberknife S7 radiosurgery device, the first of its kind in the region, which was used to treat a number of patients with small cancers in brain and thoracic cage, and fifth nerve pain. Partial Breast Irradiation and Hypo-SIB services, which contribute to shortening the treatment period... **TURN TO P2**

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EUROPE TOLD TO 'ACT NOW' AS CASES RISE

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THE WORLD NEEDS A DIGITAL LIFELINE

P9

Putin arrives in Iran for Syria summit

TEHRAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Tehran for talks on Tuesday on the Syrian war at a three-way summit overshadowed by fallout from his country's war on Ukraine.

Putin travelled abroad for only the second time since ordering the war on Ukraine in order to attend the gathering that also involves Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The summit comes days after US President Joe Biden visited the Middle East for the first time in his presidency.

It is the first hosted by Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi since he took office last year and is ostensibly aimed at ending more than 11 years of conflict in Syria.



All three are involved in the conflict, with Iran and Russia supporting Syria's President Bashar al Assad and Turkey backing rebel forces.

Ahead of the trilateral meeting, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei met Erdogan, who has repeatedly threatened to launch a new military offensive against Kurdish militants in northern Syria.

Khamenei told the Turkish leader that such a move would be "detrimental" for the region.

Erdogan, speaking later at a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart, said Kurdish militias caused "great trouble" for both Iran and Turkey.

SEE ALSO P5

METEORITES GALLERY IN DHOFAR



The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has opened a gallery for exhibiting meteorites at the Museum of the Frankincense Land in the Governorate of Dhofar. The exhibition, which runs until September 18, 2022, is the first one of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. It is organised by the ministry as a means to highlight the importance of meteorites as a sustainable, diversified and renewable asset that can be invested to enhance heritage and tourism resources in various governorates of Oman. **DETAILS ON P3**

EU issues ozone health warning due to severe heatwave

LONDON: Ozone values are rising to levels hazardous to health across north-western Europe as a result of the current heatwave, the European Union's Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) warned on Tuesday.

"In mid-July, daily maximum values of surface ozone, which peak during the middle of the day, reached unhealthy levels in Portugal, Spain and Italy with some locations measuring in excess of 200 micrograms per

cubic metre", CAMS said.

While this situation was likely to ease, levels are expected to rise above 120 micrograms per cubic metre across northern and western parts of Europe from July 18, as the heatwave brings record temperatures, peaking by July 20 before easing, it said.

"Ozone at the earth's surface is a key air pollutant that can affect human health, agriculture and even ecosystems, people and the environment in general", CAMS



A thermometer at the headquarters of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change shows a temperature of 40 degrees Celsius, in Bonn, Germany, on Tuesday. — Reuters

said. Mark Parrington, a CAMS senior scientist, added: "The potential impacts of very high ozone pollution on human health can be considerable both in terms of respiratory and cardiovascular illness. Higher values can lead to symptoms such as sore throat, coughing, headache and an increased risk of asthma attacks."

The Clean Air Alliance estimates that ozone pollution causes around a million extra deaths per year, CAMS said.

CAMS also noted that the European heatwave was exacerbating the scale and intensity of wildfires currently raging across southern Europe, especially in southwestern France, Spain and Portugal.

Meanwhile, the World Meteorological Organization said Europe's heatwave peaked on Tuesday, as temperatures may remain above normal into the middle of next week.

SEE ALSO P7



■ RAINS LASH SOME PARTS OF OMAN



MUSCAT: Rainy clouds poured into some parts of Oman on Tuesday bringing rain of varying intensity to the governorates of South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, South Al Batinah, Al Buraimi and Al Dhahirah. Some parts of Al Wusta desert and Dhofar plains and coastal strip witnessed active cloud movement bringing heavy rains and continual drizzle. Light rains were reported in the Wilayat of Al Seeb and Al Maabala and Al Mawaleh areas in Muscat Governorate. Scattered rains were reported in the wilayats of Al Musannah and Barka in South Al Batinah Governorate. — **ONA**

Cancer centre received 4,000 patients in a year

FROM PAGE 1

... and reducing treatment costs, and is looking forward to introduce a number of advanced technologies to treat cancer patients, including treatment by planting radioactive seeds, at the hands of national and international expertise. In the treatment of oncology, the centre has attracted staff from well-known international hospitals.

The surgical department and the advanced endoscopy unit were also equipped with the latest equipment, to enable the surgical team to perform complex, high-precision operations, including endoscopic operations. The surgical team performed a complete esophageal resection using endoscopic surgery for the

first time in Oman. The advanced endoscopy unit launched the double balloon endoscopy of small intestine, which is one of the most important ones for examining and performing non-surgical interventions for small intestine, and helps diagnose and treat intestinal bleeding, small intestine tumors, ulcers of the small intestine and sclerosis of the lining of the small intestine.

In the diagnostic field, the Radiology and Nuclear Medicine Department conducted 8,571 diagnostic examinations during the year. The Radiology and Nuclear Medicine Department was equipped with the latest advanced diagnostic imaging devices, including the Siemens Biograph Vision 600 PET CT

digital imaging device, the latest of its kind in the region.

Regarding early diagnosis programmes, the one-stop clinic for diagnosing prostate cancer began receiving patients, to contribute to the accurate and early diagnosis of suspected cases and to ensure the speedy start of the treatment programme for the injured, in addition to activating the one-stop clinic for early detection of breast cancer.

The centre also attached great importance to medical research, as it provides innovative solutions for cancer treatment and a more accurate understanding of the disease and its causes. Finding qualitative research and employing the results of this research in preventive, diagnostic

and therapeutic applications. In addition to the presence of the Clinical Research Unit, which is the first of its kind in the country and is concerned with conducting clinical trials of various treatments for cancer patients, which aims to improve the medical care provided to patients.

Since October 2021, the research laboratory has started for the first time in the country conducting a comprehensive genetic analysis of tumour tissue, which is based on identifying the patient's genetic mutations that cause the growth of cancer cells and determining the most appropriate treatment for the case in a record period of time, and at a lower financial cost instead of sending samples abroad. — **ONA**

Emergency preparedness committee deactivated as depression recedes



AFRAH AL BALUSHI

MUSCAT, JULY 19

The National Committee for Emergency Management announced today the deactivation of sub-committees in the Governorates of Muscat, South Al Sharqiyah and North Al Sharqiyah as the tropical depression in the Arabian Sea weakened and receded.

The committee increased the level of alert and preparedness last Sunday in some of the governorates,

which were expected to be affected by the tropical depression.

The National Committee for Emergency Management assumed its full responsibility of crisis and emergency management, mobilising all national human and material resources and capabilities necessary to deal with emergency events that require this level of response. The role that this committee plays is very important in order to issue several alerts for people and to keep in update on the effects of the tropical situation.

Two days ago, the analyses of weather maps and numerical forecast maps of the Civil Aviation Authority indicated that the course of the tropical situation in the Arabian Sea has changed and is heading to the northwest of the coast of the Sea of Oman, and the chances of it fading will be near the Pakistani-Iranian coasts. Furthermore, The Sultanate of Oman will be affected by rain clouds of varying intensity. The amount of rain will be between light and medium.



Seminar held on income tax, VAT in Musandam

KHASAB: The Tax Authority organised a seminar in the Governorate of Musandam to familiarise members of the public about the Corporate Income Tax (CIT) and the Value Added Tax (VAT).

Held in cooperation with Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) branch in Musandam, the seminar outlines the legal framework of the VAT and explains conceptions and provisions related to its application, as well as the CIS rates and subsidies.

The seminar is a link in a series of workshops held by the Tax Authority in different governorates to raise awareness and inculcate tax culture in society. — **ONA**

HM's greetings conveyed to Lithuanian president

VILNIUS: President Gitanas Nausėda of the Republic of Lithuania received at the Presidential Palace here on Tuesday Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister.

During the meeting, Sayyid Badr conveyed greetings and best wishes of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to President Nausėda and the people of Lithuania.

On his turn, President Nausėda expressed his sincere sentiments to His Majesty the Sultan, wishing His Majesty good health and happiness. The Lithuanian President also wished the relations between the two countries further development and growth.

The meeting underscored ties of friendship and cooperation

between Oman and Lithuania and stressed the joint keenness to promote them in various diplomatic, economic, cultural and scientific fields.

Meanwhile, the Lithuania government granted Sayyid Badr the Commander's Cross of the Order for Merits to Lithuania, in appreciation for his efforts in boosting cooperation relations between the two countries.

The order was handed over to Sayyid Badr by President Nausėda.

Sayyid Badr expressed his thanks for being honoured with the high-ranking Lithuanian order, looking forward to work with his Lithuania counterpart in advancing the cooperation relations and partnership in many fields. — **ONA**



Oman, Lithuania hold political consultations

VILNIUS: As part of his official visit to Lithuania, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, held talks and political consultations with Gabrielius Landsbergis, Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Republic of Lithuania.

The session affirmed the two countries keenness to enhance various aspects of cooperation, notably in economic, commercial, investment and cultural fields.

The talks, which also dealt with areas of transport, energy, science and technology, covered ways of achieving shared benefits and serving the peoples of the two countries by exploring new promising opportunities.

The two sides also exchanged views on current regional and international issues of common concern and they asserted their identical, permanent stands that advocate the establishment of global peace, security, respect

for the sovereignty of countries and their territorial integrity. They also laid emphasis on the principles of non-interference in the internal affairs of others and means of encouraging dialogue through peaceful means to accomplish peaceful solutions of disputes and realise stability in the world.

Sayyid Badr held meetings with top representatives of Lithuanian business firms operating in the fields of real estate, tourism, air services and logistic and information technology. The meetings showcased the investment opportunities available in the Sultanate of Oman and potential areas of cooperation.

The meetings were attended by Khalid bin Hashil al Muselhi, Head of the Minister's Office Department, Honorary Consul of Oman in Lithuania Boleta Senkienė, and other officials.

— **ONA**

International media team tours Dhofar industrial facilities

SALALAH: The media delegation comprising reporters from international news agencies, currently touring the Sultanate of Oman, visited Raysut Industrial Estate (Madayn) and OQ Group sites in the Governorate of Dhofar.

The delegation listened to a briefing by Salim bin Ali Zaabanut, Acting Director General of Raysut Industrial Estate, about Madayn and the services that the industrial hub offers to investors.

Zaabanut said that any investor from any part of the world can finalise business procedures online without being physically present at the premises of the industrial city. He added that all electronic services are made available via Masar centres operating from different industrial cities.

Then, the media delegation also visited Dhofar Fisheries Industries where they were briefed by the company's General Manager



Hamid bin Ali al Nahdi, who explained that the unit provides the local market with high quality canned tuna and sardines. He added that the company exports to 17 countries, amid rising demand for Omani products which, he explained, abide by international standards and enjoy credibility, locally and abroad.

Later, the press agencies team visited OQ Group's unit for liquefied petroleum gas and

methanol, Governorate of Dhofar. Eng Ihsan al Jandal, CEO of OQ operations in Salalah, briefed the reporters about the activities of the group.

OQ unit serves as a new hub in Dhofar Governorate, said Eng Ihsan, noting that the liquefied petroleum gas project assumes special significance and enhances the Sultanate of Oman's status as a sustainable source of energy in the global market. — **ONA**



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Meteorite exhibition opens at Frankincense Museum

SALALAH: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has opened a gallery for exhibiting meteorites at the Museum of the Frankincense Land in the Governorate of Dhofar.

The exhibition, which runs until September 18, is the first one of its kind in the Sultanate of Oman. It is organised by the ministry as a means to highlight the importance of meteorites as a sustainable, diversified and renewable asset that can be invested to enhance heritage and tourism resources in various governorates of Oman.

The exhibition showcases a number of unique meteorites of special scholarly value, including the lunar meteorite (a rare meteorite found in 2002), the Martian meteorite and the Iron Meteorite.

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Meteorite.

The gallery also exhibits devices for the detection of meteorites in the Sultanate of Oman. With these, the ministry has been able to spot meteorites, the moment they enter



Oman's atmosphere and determine their geographical location.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Azzan bin Qasim al Busaidy, Tourism Under-Secretary, and attended by Khalid bin Salim al Ghassani, Adviser at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Khalid bin Abdullah al Abri, Director General of Heritage and Tourism in the Governorate of Dhofar, among other officials.

The chief guest launched a booklet titled "Meteorites in Oman", which is a manual aimed to familiarise readers about meteorites found in Oman and efforts undertaken by the authorities concerned to protect them by applying standard practices in the domain. — ONA



GCC economies continue to grow on oil prices

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies, including the Sultanate of Oman, are predicted to grow due to increasing energy prices (oil and gas) and the impact of the ongoing geopolitical uncertainties.

According to the KPMG's Global Economic Outlook H1'2022, the oil and gas prices are expected to continue soaring in 2022 and 2023, driven by their increased production and hike in prices.

Moreover, the economic activity in the GCC is expected to pick up

further pace owing to the private sector activity and easing of Covid-19 related restrictions.

"These trends are likely to support the growth in oil and non-oil sectors and point towards the dip in unemployment rates. Although the average annual inflation is forecast to be restricted in the 2022-23 period, upward price pressures are likely to be propelled by Covid-19 related supply chain disruptions. The GCC governments' supply chain management strategies, together with the extensive use of foreign labour, exchange rate peg with

the US dollar and the GCC fiscal positions emerging from towering international energy prices, are likely to dampen the impact of any potential negative economic shock", the report said.

For two straight days, the official price of Oman crude for September delivery rose to over \$104 on Tuesday from Monday's \$102.

The monthly average price of Omani crude oil for July delivery amounted to \$107.22 per barrel, an increase of \$4.82 compared to the price for delivery last June.

The Central Bank of Oman's Financial Stability Report (FSR)

recently stated that "the risks to financial stability have subsided in Oman. Nevertheless, new vulnerabilities have appeared that may test the resilience of our financial system". However, the banking sector "retains the capacity to absorb a variety of shocks without adverse spillover effects on credit supply and the real economy".

While highlighting the fiscal and financial relief provided by the government and CBO, the report acknowledges the role of the financial sector in the provision of credit and financial services

throughout the pandemic that helped craft a swift post-pandemic recovery plan duly supported by favourable oil prices.

The FSR states that the ongoing geopolitical tensions in Europe fuel inflationary pressures that are mounting across the globe. The ensuing monetary tightening may weigh on growth, especially for the sectors that are still in the recovery phase.

Nevertheless, the inflation outlook in Oman remains moderate, and "as an oil exporter, rising commodity prices are so far a net positive for Oman as the higher

proceeds from hydrocarbons have provided ample fiscal space to the government to counterbalance any inflationary pressures with targeted interventions to complement the impact of monetary policy actions".

The report concludes that "overall short-term risks to financial stability have significantly declined compared to the previous year", and that "an amicable resolution of the ongoing European conflict will help restore confidence and relieve some pressures, while any further escalation or a delay in the peace process will elevate downside risks for recovery and financial stability."



The trends are likely to support the growth in oil and non-oil sectors and point towards the dip in unemployment rates. Although the average annual inflation is forecast to be restricted in the 2022-23 period, upward price pressures are likely to be propelled by Covid-19 related supply chain disruptions



شركة الأسماك العمالية - عمان
Oman Fisheries SAOG

An invitation to attend an ordinary general meeting to fill two vacant seats on the board of directors

The Board of Directors of the Oman Fisheries Company SAOG is pleased to invite the shareholders to attend an ordinary general meeting to fill two vacant seats on the Board of Directors, held on Tuesday, corresponding to 2/8/2022 at 3 pm through Muscat Clearing & Depository's electronic platform (www.mcd.gov.om) or by attendance in **Hormouz Grand Hotel** – Airport Heights – Al Seeb. In the event that a quorum is not achieved, the planned will take place on Wednesday 3rd August at 3 pm through Muscat Clearing & Depository's electronic platform (www.mcd.gov.om) or by attendance in **Hormouz Grand Hotel** – Airport Heights – Al Seeb.

The Agenda:

1. Electing the board of directors to fill the vacant seats.

Those who wish to run for membership in the Board of Directors must fill out the nomination form prepared for this and submit it to the company at least five (5) days before the date of the general assembly meeting, no later than the end of work on Monday 25/07/2022.

In accordance with the company's articles of association and regulations for Annual General Meetings using electronic platforms, we would like to bring to your attentions the following:-

- A. Each shareholder is entitled to give a written proxy to another person, who need not be a shareholder, to attend the meetings and vote on his/her behalf at the Annual General Meeting provided they have an investor number issued from Muscat Clearing & Depository.
- B. Voting will commence on any of the items in the agenda before the General Meeting by three days and will continue until the process is completed on the day of the meeting. In the event that there is a change in the investors shareholdings, the vote shall be cancelled and they are responsible for voting again on the day of the meeting.

Kindly ensure attendance 30 minutes prior to the scheduled meeting.

For further information on the above, you may contact **Khalil Ali Al Amri** on 99317115 or via email on khalil@omanfisheries.net

Chairman of the Board of Directors	Auditor	Legal Counsel
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OMAN FISHERIES



Things you need to know when buying SUNGLASSES

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
[@zainabalnasseri](#)

In the Middle East countries, including the Sultanate of Oman, it is common to be exposed to the sun all year round. The sun is the main source of ultraviolet rays, as it emits long ultraviolet waves and medium waves, both of which are considered harmful. Long UVs can cause the skin to age, while exposure to medium UVs can cause sunburn.

Ultraviolet rays are a form of energy similar to visible light or X-rays that can cause damage to the skin and eyes. They peak in the middle of the day and during the peak summer months. They get stronger near the equator, and may cause the development of small, irritating vessels in the white part of the eye, such as pterygium and septum, especially in people who spend a long time in the midday sun, such as surfers, fishermen and farmers. These cases may require surgical intervention to remove the growing vessels.

Therefore, it is important for those living in sunny areas to protect the eyes while being in the sun to help prevent pterygium

and sebaceous infections and also reduce the risk of developing more serious health conditions, such as lens and eyelid cancer. Experts advise wearing UV-blocking sunglasses and making sure that the label on the glasses indicates 100 per cent UVA protection, or protection from all UV400 rays.

In a thread of tweets, Hisham al Abri, an ophthalmologist, said that sunglasses are necessary to protect eyes from the sun, and he gave some tricks that are useful when buying glasses.

“It is important to look for a sign or a phrase that says that it blocks 100 per cent of sunlight. The quality of the lenses in glasses without a prescription can be confirmed by looking at a surface with squares such as floor tiles. Put the glasses at an appropriate distance from your face and cover one of your eyes. Move the glasses in the directions and observe the lines through the lens. If you notice the lines are straight, the glasses are good. If not, it is better to change it”.

Al Abri pointed out that most of the glasses in the market are made of plastic, so they are easy to scratch. It is best to take into account that the glasses are scratch

resistant coatings. He advised, “use polarised glasses, which block the rays reflected from surfaces, such as mirages on the street and the rays reflected from the surface of the water,” explaining that this feature is now found in most cars in their windshield, in addition to being available in the material that is used to block ultraviolet rays.

The ophthalmologist said that the opacity of the lens has nothing to do with blocking ultraviolet rays, as the medium opacity in the glasses is usually sufficient unless the person works in a high brightness area. “The opacity of the lens is equal or gradual, so that it is darker at the top and lighter at the bottom. This is suitable for driving because it reduces the brightness of the sun while allowing a clearer view of the street.”

There is, however, another opposite type (lighter at the top and darker at the bottom) which is suitable in snowy areas. The third type, in which the opacity is more at the top and bottom but less in the middle, is not recommended for driving and is more suitable for athletes.

Al Abri said that some lenses are coated with some metals to be

reflective, so do not assume that this type protects against ultraviolet rays if it is not written on it. “In general, this type reduces the amount of light that reaches the eye because it reflects some of it.” He explained.

Also, some glasses block blue rays, but it has not been scientifically proven whether these blue rays are harmful to the eyes or not. “Anyhow, this type of glasses is useful for looking at distant things in the time of snow and fog, so they are used by hunters and skiers”.

He recommended glasses that cover the largest area of the eye because they block ultraviolet rays more, pointing out that “there are companies that promote their glasses as blockers for infrared rays, knowing that this type of rays does not harm the eyes”.

“The price does not mean the quality. Cheap glasses, which have 100 per cent protection from UV rays, are better than world-class designer glasses without UV400 protection. With all these features, the glasses do not protect you from the rays emitted by arc welding, tanning devices and snowy areas. These types need special filters that are not available in ordinary glasses”, he concluded.

IT IS IMPORTANT
FOR THOSE
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SUCH AS LENS
AND EYELID
CANCER



MAKE SURE THAT THE LABEL ON
THE GLASSES INDICATES

100
PER CENT PROTECTION

MOST SUNGLASSES
HAVE FULL UV

400
PROTECTION

EVEN CHEAP GLASSES ARE BETTER
THAN DESIGNER ONES WITHOUT

100
PER CENT PROTECTION



Putin in Iran for Syria summit overshadowed by Ukraine war

TEHRAN: Russian President Vladimir Putin arrived in Tehran for talks on Tuesday on the Syrian war at a three-way summit overshadowed by fallout from his country's war on Ukraine.

Putin travelled abroad for only the second time since ordering the attack on Ukraine in order to attend the gathering that also involves Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The summit comes days after US President Joe Biden visited the Middle East for the first time in his presidency, with stops in Israel and Saudi Arabia.

It is the first hosted by Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi since he took office last year and is ostensibly aimed at ending more than 11 years of conflict in Syria.

Ahead of the trilateral meeting, Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei met Erdogan, who has repeatedly threatened to launch a new military offensive against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria.

Khamenei warned the Turkish leader that such a move would be "detrimental" for the region and called for the issue to be resolved through dialogue between Ankara, Damascus, Moscow and Tehran.

Erdogan, speaking later at a joint news conference with his Iranian counterpart, said Kurdish militias caused "great trouble" for both Iran and Turkey.

"We should fight against these terrorist organisations in solidarity and alliance," he added.

The presidents also oversaw the signing of a number of agreements in different fields, including in trade and economy.

UKRAINE GRAIN

Erdogan has for months been offering to meet Putin in a bid to help resolve heightened global tensions.



Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Tehran, on Tuesday. – Reuters

"The timing of this summit is not a coincidence," Russian analyst Vladimir Sotnikov said.

"Turkey wants to conduct a 'special operation' in Syria just as Russia is implementing a 'special operation' in Ukraine."

Turkey has launched waves of attacks on Syria since 2016, targeting Kurdish militias as well as IS group militants and Assad loyalists.

In their talks, Putin and Erdogan would discuss mechanisms to export grain from Ukraine, a Kremlin source said.

Russia's war on Ukraine has massively hampered shipments from one of the world's biggest exporters of wheat and other grain, sparking fears of global food shortages.

Turkey — a Nato member on

The summit comes days after US President Joe Biden visited the Middle East for the first time in his presidency, with stops in Israel and Saudi Arabia

speaking terms with both Russia and Ukraine — has spearheaded efforts to resume the grain deliveries.

Ultimately, Erdogan is hoping to get "the green light" from Putin and Raisi for Turkey's military operation in Syria, said Sinan Ulgen, a visiting scholar at Carnegie Europe.

EU foreign policy chief Josep

Borrell warned on Monday that Russia's blockade of Ukrainian ports threatens supplies to countless thousands vulnerable to starvation.

Borrell dubbed the issue "one of life and death for many human beings".

On Sunday, a day after Biden ended his tour of the Middle East, Iran accused the United States of provoking crises in the region.

Biden had vowed the US would not "tolerate efforts by any country to dominate another in the region through military buildups, incursions, and/or threats".

In a speech at a Saudi summit of Gulf Arab states as well as Egypt, Jordan and Iraq, Biden assured those gathered that the US would remain fully engaged in the Middle East. — AFP

Race to lead UK heats up, ex-finance minister Sunak's lead narrows

LONDON: British former finance minister Rishi Sunak (pictured) held on to his lead on Tuesday among Conservative lawmakers in the race to replace Boris Johnson as prime minister, but his two remaining rivals were closing the gap, leaving the race wide open.



In a vote among Conservative Party members of parliament, Kemi Badenoch, a former equalities minister, was knocked out, leaving Sunak, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Penny Mordaunt, a junior trade minister, as the remaining candidates.

Lawmakers will eliminate one more before the governing party's 200,000 members choose their new leader, who will automatically become prime minister.

Unlike in 2019, when Johnson was a clear favourite going into the contest, the result is more difficult to forecast, with polls of party members suggesting Sunak would lose to whoever is chosen to face him.

Since Johnson said he would resign earlier this month after his scandal-ridden administration lost the support of many Conservatives, the race to replace him has become increasingly ugly with the contenders trading barbs and challenging records.

Mordaunt just held onto second place and thanked colleagues for their support.

"We are so nearly across the finish line. I am raring to go and excited to put my case to members across the country and win," she said in a statement.

Sunak, Truss and Mordaunt have presented policy offerings to try to add momentum to their campaigns, trying to move the focus away from pledges on tax

cuts, at a time when Britain's flagging economy has left people with the tightest squeeze on their finances for decades.

Sunak, whose resignation as finance minister helped trigger Johnson's downfall, said he would implement harsher sentences for criminals who fail to attend court and would crack down on gangs that groom girls and young women for sex.

"It will be my top priority in government to keep the British public safe — and I will do whatever it takes to make that happen," he said in a statement.

All three remaining contenders will be keen to buttress their right-wing credentials to appeal to a party membership, which, according to 2020 research by Queen Mary University of London and Sussex University Party Members Project, tends to be older, male, southern English and supporters of Brexit.

They will vote in a postal ballot with the result due September 5. A YouGov poll of Conservative members showed Sunak would lose a runoff vote against all the others.

Truss, who has been a vocal supporter of Ukraine after Russia's attack, repeated her commitment to increase defence spending up to 3 per cent of gross domestic product by 2030.

— Reuters

Thousands of Sudan's Hausa protest after deadly clashes over land

KHARTOUM: Thousands of Sudan's Hausa people protested in multiple cities on Tuesday, demanding justice for dozens of comrades killed in a deadly land dispute with a rival ethnic group in the country's south.

The protests sparked by anger at the violence is the latest unrest to hit the northeast African nation, already reeling from months of mass demonstrations demanding the restoration of a transition to civilian rule following a military coup last year.

At least 79 people have been killed and 199 wounded since heavy fighting broke out last week between the Berti and Hausa groups in Blue Nile State, the health ministry says.

According to the United Nations, more than 17,000 people have been displaced by the fighting, with 14,000 "sheltering in three schools in Al Damazin", the state capital.

While the army has been deployed in Blue Nile and the fighting there quashed, protests have since erupted in other states, with marches on the streets of the capital Khartoum, as well as in the key eastern cities of Gedaref, Kassala and Port Sudan.

On Tuesday, Hausa protesters in Khartoum held up signs demanding "justice for the Blue Nile martyrs" and "no to the murder of Hausas".

The Forces for Freedom and Change, the country's key civilian bloc ousted by last year's coup, called on Tuesday for a "One Nation March" on July 24 "to denounce



Sudan's Hausa people protest in El Obeid, capital of North Kordofan State, on Tuesday demanding justice for comrades killed in a deadly land dispute with a rival ethnic group in the country's south. — AFP

tribal clashes and stand in solidarity with the victims".

Fighting reportedly broke out on July 11 after Bertis rejected a Hausa request to create a "civil authority to supervise access to land", a prominent Hausa member said on condition of anonymity.

But a senior Berti leader said the group was responding to a "violation" of their land by the Hausas.

In Sudan, deadly clashes regularly erupt over land, livestock, access to water and grazing, especially in areas awash with weapons still struggling from the impact of decades of civil war.

Experts however say an October coup led by army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan

has stroked a resurgence in ethnic violence.

In Gedaref, some 4,000 people marched chanting "Hausa are citizens too" and "revenge for the martyrs of the Blue Nile".

Some 500 people also blocked the highway in the town of Al-Showak in Gedaref State, eyewitness Saleh Abbas said.

In El Obeid, capital of North Kordofan State, some 3,000 marched on the streets chanting "the Hausa will win", while in Port Sudan, on the Red Sea, thousands of Hausa gathered outside local government offices.

In Kassala, authorities have banned public gatherings after thousands of Hausa demonstrators "set government buildings and shops on fire", said Hussein Saleh, another witness. — AFP



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Ministry of Social Development

Tender Announcement

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

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non- refundable)
98/2022	General Maintenance Work for Al-Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the Wilayat of Nizwa	Companies specialized in building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the Second Degree	Monday 8-8-2022 02:00 PM	Sunday 28-8-2022 10:00 AM	R.O. 25/=

❖

Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On Wednesday 20/7/2022.

❖

Tender shall be submitted in compliance with the technical specifications and terms along with a local bank warranty at (1%) of the tender value, valid ninety (90) days from the date of e-submission.

❖

For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

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

www.mosd.gov.om

Protesters’ target is favourite for Sri Lanka presidency

COLOMBO: A veteran politician backed by the party of ousted Sri Lankan president Gotabaya Rajapaksa has emerged as the favourite to replace him, analysts said after nominations closed on Tuesday.

Ranil Wickremesinghe is a six-time former prime minister who became acting president after Rajapaksa resigned, but is despised by the protesters who forced his predecessor from office.

Wickremesinghe, 73, has the formal backing of the Rajapaksas’ SLPP, the largest bloc in the 225-member parliament that will elect the president on Wednesday.

His main opponent will be SLPP dissident and former education minister Dullas Alahapperuma, who is being supported by the opposition.

The winner of the three-way contest will take charge of a bankrupt nation that is in talks with the IMF for a bailout, with its 22 million people enduring severe shortages of food, fuel and medicine.

Sri Lanka ran out of foreign exchange to finance even the most vital imports in a crisis triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic but exacerbated by mismanagement,



Demonstrators carrying an effigy of interim President Ranil Wickremesinghe, walk towards the Presidential Secretariat during a protest in Colombo on Tuesday. — AFP

critics say. Months of protests culminated in Rajapaksa fleeing his palace before flying to the Maldives and then Singapore, from where he submitted his resignation.

As acting president, Wickremesinghe has extended a state of emergency that gives police and security forces sweeping powers, and last week he ordered troops to evict protesters

from state buildings they had occupied.

An opposition MP said Wickremesinghe’s hardline stance against demonstrators was going down well with MPs who

Sri Lanka presidential candidates

lined up for the July 20 ballot

 Age 73 Ranil Wickremesinghe - Sworn in as acting president July 15 - Has the formal backing of the leadership of the SLPP, the largest party in the 255-member parliament	 Age 63 Dullas Alahapperuma - Former education minister - Dissident member of the SLPP, with the backing of the main opposition	 Age 53 Anura Dissanayake Leader of the leftist People’s Liberation Front, which has three parliamentary seats
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AFP

had been at the receiving end of mob violence, and most SLPP legislators would side with him.

“Ranil is emerging as the law-and-order candidate”, Tamil MP Dharmalingam Sithadthan said.

Political analyst Kusal Perera agreed that Wickremesinghe had a “slight advantage” despite his own party securing just one seat at the August 2020 elections.

“Ranil has regained the acceptance of the urban middle classes by restoring some of the supplies like gas and he has already cleared government buildings showing his firmness”, Perera said.

Former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, the deposed Gotabaya’s elder brother and head of the clan that has dominated Sri Lankan politics for years, remains in the country and party sources said he was pressing SLPP legislators to support Wickremesinghe.

Observers believe that Wickremesinghe will crack down hard if he wins and the demonstrators — who have also been demanding his resignation, accusing him of protecting the Rajapaksas’ interests — take to the streets.

— AFP

Myanmar marks 75th death anniversary of independence hero

YANGON: The 75th anniversary of the assassination of Myanmar’s independence hero and father of ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi was a muted affair on Tuesday, with soldiers patrolling Yangon’s streets and anti-junta demonstrators staging small protests in other parts of the country. Known affectionately as “Bogyoke” (General), Aung San led Myanmar’s battle for independence from Britain but was gunned down in July 1947, just months before his dream was finally realised. His daughter Aung San Suu Kyi — who was

two at the time of his death — became a democracy figurehead, Nobel laureate, and nemesis of the military. Detained since the military’s latest power grab in February last year, she is now battling a raft of charges in a junta court. Martyrs’ Day — commemorating Aung San’s killing — normally sees hundreds queueing to pay their respects at the Secretariat, a sprawling colonial-era complex in downtown Yangon where local rivals shot dead the general and eight other prominent leaders.

— AFP



A member of the Myanmar security forces stands by a checkpoint in Yangon on Tuesday, on the 75th Martyrs’ Day. — AFP

Indian rupee hits new record low

MUMBAI: The Indian rupee fell to more than 80 per US dollar for the first time on record on Tuesday, as the greenback extended its rally and foreign capital outflows intensified.

The rupee hit 80.0600 against the US dollar in early trade, Bloomberg data showed, before paring losses on suspected central bank intervention to close at 79.9487.

High inflation and rising interest rates in the United States coupled with fears of an impending recession in the world’s biggest economy have fuelled a broad dollar rally in recent weeks as investors become increasingly risk-averse.

Tighter US monetary policy has exacerbated outflows from emerging markets such as India, where foreign investors have withdrawn a net \$31 billion in debt and equity this year.

Data released last week showed that US consumer price inflation hit a fresh four-decade high in June, exceeding market forecasts and stoking expectations of another large Federal Reserve rate hike next week.

In a written statement to the Indian parliament on Monday, Finance



The rupee hit 80.0600 against the US dollar in early trade, Bloomberg data showed.

Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attributed the rupee’s sharp fall to external reasons.

“Global factors such as the Russia-Ukraine conflict, soaring crude oil prices and tightening of global financial conditions are the major reasons for the weakening of the Indian Rupee against the US dollar”, she said.

At the same time, the Indian currency has strengthened against the British pound, the Japanese yen and the euro in 2022 so far, Sitharaman added.

But higher crude prices have resulted in a deteriorating trade balance in a country that imports 80 percent of its oil.

India’s merchandise trade deficit widened to a record \$26.18 billion in June, official data showed last week, largely because of higher crude and coal import prices.

In its monthly economic review, the finance ministry said costlier imports could widen the current account deficit and cause the rupee to depreciate further.

Consumer price inflation in India,

the world’s sixth-largest economy, cooled slightly to 7.01 per cent in June after hitting an eight-year high of 7.79 per cent in April. But price rises have persisted well above the central bank’s two-to-six per cent target range despite consecutive interest rate hikes in May and June.

The central bank has also sold more than \$34 billion of its foreign currency reserves in an effort to stabilise the rupee.

“The near-term outlook for the rupee will continue to be weak as it tracks developments on the oil and gas front in international markets”, forex market expert K Harihar told AFP.

“The weakness will persist until trade deficit numbers come down or capital inflows counter it”, he said, adding that the rupee could fall to 81 per US dollar without an agreement between Europe and Russia on gas supply.

The rupee’s move followed Russia’s Gazprom telling Europe late Monday that it cannot guarantee gas supplies following maintenance work on its Nord Stream pipeline. India’s benchmark Sensex index closed 0.45 per cent higher on Tuesday.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

DHAKA

Bangladesh jails 8 over fake Covid test reports

A Bangladesh court on Tuesday jailed eight people for 11 years each for issuing thousands of false negative coronavirus test reports, a prosecutor said.

Private medical firm JKG Healthcare collected samples and issued fake results to about 16,000 people, a court in the capital Dhaka said. The firm’s high-profile owners Ariful Haque Chowdhury and his wife Sabrina, along with six of their staff, were each jailed for 11 years for fraud and forgery, said public



prosecutor Azad Rahman. “They have betrayed the nation”, he told reporters. “This is a well-deserved punishment for them.” Nearly two million people have tested Covid positive in the country.

JAKARTA

Scores rescued, 13 missing after ferry sinks

Scores of people were rescued after a ferry sank due to bad weather off the coast of an Indonesian island but 13 others remain missing, a search and rescue official said on Tuesday.

The KM Cahaya Arafah, which carried 77 passengers and crew on board, capsized in waters off Indonesia’s Ternate island on Monday evening, as it was sailing to nearby Halmahera island. Local villagers sailed out in their longboats to help authorities in a vessel with the search-and-rescue



operation. “Sixty-four survivors were evacuated to Tokaka village after villagers found them swimming to the shore”, said Fathur Rahman, head of the local search and rescue agency.

BEIJING

China warns of ‘measures’ if Pelosi visits Taiwan

China’s government warned on Tuesday it would take “forceful measures” if US House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, after the ‘Financial Times’ said she would go to the island next month.

Pelosi and her delegation will also visit Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia and Singapore and spend time in Hawaii at the headquarters of US Indo-Pacific command, the London paper added, citing people familiar with the matter.



The US State Department did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment. Taiwan’s Foreign Ministry said it has “not received relevant information” about any visit.



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In brief

WASHINGTON



BIDEN SETS UP SANCTIONS IN RAMPED-UP EFFORT ON US DETAINEES

President Joe Biden on Tuesday opened the way for sanctions against governments that unjustly imprison Americans and ordered more detailed travel warnings after a series of high-profile detentions. Biden signed an executive order billed as expanding the set of tools for the US government in what Secretary of State Antony Blinken said was a “relentless” effort to free citizens overseas. “When Americans are taken captive abroad, we must do everything in our power to secure their release”, Blinken said. The move comes after wide media coverage of the detention in Russia on drug charges of basketball star Brittney Griner.

ROME



ITALY’S RIGHT RULES OUT RETURNING TO GOVT WITH 5-STAR

Conservative parties in Italy’s fractured coalition ruled out on Tuesday continuing to govern alongside the 5-Star Movement, complicating already difficult efforts to keep Prime Minister Mario Draghi’s administration afloat. Draghi tendered his resignation last week after the populist 5-Star Movement refused to back the 18-month-old national unity government in a parliamentary trust vote. President Sergio Mattarella rejected his resignation and asked him to address parliament on Wednesday, hoping he would find a consensus to stave off early elections at a time of international tumult and economic problems.

KAMPALA



OVER 200 PEOPLE DIE AS DROUGHT RAVAGES NORTHEAST UGANDA

More than 200 people have died from hunger this month in northeastern Uganda, where a prolonged drought and rampant insecurity have left more than half a million facing starvation, a local official and a charity worker said. Inhabited by nomadic pastoralists, the semi-arid and remote Karamoja region on the border with Kenya has long lagged behind the rest of Uganda in terms of development. A surge of cattle raids by armed groups this year has worsened the situation. “People like the elderly, lactating mothers and children, they are dying silently in their homes.

UK breaches 40°C for first time as heatwave batters Europe

LONDON: A fierce heatwave left western Europe sweltering on Tuesday, fuelling ferocious wildfires and stretching emergency services, as it swept north and pushed temperatures in Britain over 40 degrees Celsius for the first time.

After the UK’s warmest night on record, the Met Office said 40.2°C had been provisionally recorded by lunchtime at Heathrow Airport, in west London, taking the country into uncharted territory.

Britain’s previous all-time temperature record of 38.7°C, set in Cambridge in eastern England in 1919, had already been smashed earlier on Tuesday.

“For the first time ever, 40° Celsius has provisionally been exceeded in the UK”, the Met Office meteorological agency said, warning “temperatures are still climbing in many places”.

Experts blame climate change for the latest heatwave and note the more frequent extreme weather will only worsen in years to come.

The high temperatures have triggered an unprecedented red alert for extreme heat in much of England, where some rail lines were closed as a precaution and schools shuttered in some areas.

All trains were cancelled from London’s usually busy Kings Cross station, leaving many travellers stranded.

“It’s a little frustrating”, said American tourist Deborah Byrne, trying to reach Scotland.

But with road surfaces and runways melting and rails



A firefighter works to extinguish a forest fire in Louchats, western France, on Tuesday. — AFP

buckling, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps conceded much of Britain’s infrastructure “is just not built for this temperature”.

Tim Wainwright, Chief Executive of the charity WaterAid, said the situation should be “the wake-up call the world needs to stop climate change from claiming any more lives”.

WILDFIRES

In France, towns and cities in the country’s west registered their highest-ever temperatures on Monday, the national weather office said.

The western region of Brittany — normally cool and often wet in summer — set new record highs Monday above 40°C.

Despite cooler air from the Atlantic offering some respite there Tuesday, dozens of departments remained on orange alert, with temperatures still expected to top 40°C in the east and south and violent thunderstorms forecast locally.

The heatwave — the second to engulf parts of Europe in recent weeks — has contributed to deadly wildfires in France, Greece, Portugal and Spain, destroying

vast tracts of land.

Firefighters in France’s southwest were still struggling to contain two massive fires that have caused widespread destruction and forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes.

Nearly 1,700 firefighters from all over the country, supported by significant air resources, are battling the two blazes that have so far burned more than 19,000 hectares (42,000 acres) of forest. “It’s heartbreaking”, said Patrick Davet, mayor of La Teste-de-Buch, the site of one inferno which has prompted mass evacuations. — AFP

Man who tried to save town fighting for his life

TABARA: A Spanish man who fled a wildfire with his clothes in flames after trying to dig a trench to protect his town was in serious condition in hospital but managed to communicate with his wife, a family friend told Reuters on Tuesday.

Angel Martin Arjona ran out of towering flames after the wind changed direction and fire and smoke engulfed the digger he was operating in the northwestern town of Tabara in Zamora province, a scene caught on video by Reuters.

Arjona, 50, the owner of a construction equipment firm, suffered severe burns and was given emergency first aid on the spot before being airlifted to a specialist burns unit in the nearby city of Valladolid, local emergency services said.

Family friend Jose Manuel Taba said he was in serious condition but had communicated with his wife in the early hours of Tuesday.

“He is in a very serious condition but he is conscious. He has spoken to his wife or made gestures to her”, Taba said. — Reuters

WHO Europe warns of ‘challenging’ Covid-19 autumn and winter

COPENHAGEN: The World Health Organization’s European office on Tuesday warned of a “challenging” autumn and winter amid a summer surge of Covid-19 cases and reduced surveillance among member states.

The warning was accompanied by a call from the health body for countries to “urgently address gaps in pandemic monitoring and response to avoid preventable deaths and severe disruptions.”

“At this time last year, I spoke to you about a new wave of Covid-19 sweeping across the region, driven by the Delta variant amid the lifting of restrictions and increased social mixing”, WHO regional director for Europe Hans Kluge said in a statement.

“It’s now abundantly clear we’re in a similar situation to last

summer — only this time the ongoing Covid-19 wave is being propelled by sub-lineages of the Omicron variant”, he added.

The rapid increase in cases coupled with “reduced virus surveillance” prompted the organisation to “forecast a challenging autumn and winter in the European Region.”

It also prompted the release of a Covid-19 strategy for autumn and winter, “to help prepare for the coming waves of infection.”

“Waiting for the autumn to act will be too late”, Kluge said.

The strategy pushes increased vaccine uptake in the general population, a second booster dose for immuno-compromised people, a possible second booster to specific at-risk groups, and the use of face masks indoors and on public transportation.

— AFP



A picture shows a damaged building by fire after an air strike hit the courtyard of civilian residences in the centre of Kramatorsk, eastern Ukraine, on Tuesday. — AFP

designed to grab territory and erase Ukrainian identity.

Britain’s ministry of defence, which supports Kyiv, said on Thursday it believed Russian forces were unable to advance swiftly due to personnel shortages.

Russia is facing a resources dilemma, it said, as it must decide how much military hardware and personnel to commit to achieving its stated objective of seizing full control of Ukraine’s Donetsk region and how much to deploy to southern Ukraine to contend with a Ukrainian counter-attack.

“While Russia may still make further territorial gains, their

operational tempo and rate of advance is likely to be very slow without a significant operational pause for reorganisation and refit”, the British ministry said.

In a now familiar pattern, Russian missiles on Tuesday slammed into targets across Ukraine. At least one person was killed in a missile strike on the centre of the eastern Ukrainian city of Kramatorsk, the regional governor said.

Buildings in a town in the Kharkiv region were also hit with footage showing piles of rubble being cleared by excavators.

— Reuters



A medical worker administers a nasal swab to a patient at a Covid-19 testing centre in Les Sorinieres, near Nantes, France. — Reuters

A lesson that leads closer to your dreams



Dr Anchan C K

The writer is an international advisor

Using positive self-talk isn't easy, especially when things aren't going your way. Remember, the route to your destination is never a straight line.

You will take questionable turns and get lost sometimes.

But it doesn't always matter which road you embark on; what matters is that you embark with the right mind-set.

You will realise that it's not too late to be what you might have been.

No matter who you are, no matter what you did, no matter where you've come from, you can always change and become an

improved version of yourself.

Peace, strength and understanding will come to you when you manage to tune out the noisy judgments of others, in an effort to better hear the soft and steady hum of your own inner strength.Choices, chances and changes – start making them.

You must make a choice to take a chance, or your life will never change.

In the end, more so than the mistakes we make along the way, we regret the chances we didn't take, relationships we were afraid to have, and the decisions we waited too long to make silence makes

GREAT THINGS RARELY COME FROM COMFORT ZONES. YOU WILL ONLY REALISE THE FULL POTENTIAL OF YOUR LIFE WHEN YOU ALLOW THE UNEXPECTED TO HAPPEN

the inner battle much harder and longer.

Speak your truth. Let it out... before it kills you! Honestly, this

is one of the saddest things about so many people – their most important thoughts and feelings often go unspoken and barely understood.

You will never improve yourself if you cling to what used to be, simply because it's familiar and comfortable. Great things rarely come from comfort zones. You have to take risks.

You will only realise the full potential of your life when you allow the unexpected to happen.

If you sit around for too long blaming others for the things they did or didn't do, or know or didn't know, you'll remain sitting in one

spot until you pass. Placing blame is easy, because it means you don't have to do anything.

Don't wish your life away. Experience it. Work at it.

Everything you go through grows you. Sometimes you think doing something is a total waste of time, and then it ends up being one of the best things you ever did.

Amazing things can and do happen when you least expect them. Let each day be great day in life, you must find at least one of these things: a sincere laugh, an act of kindness, a realisation, or a lesson that leads you closer to your dreams.

Venice pushes tourists to drink from fountains and shun plastic

GILDAS LE ROUX

A few steps from Venice's St Mark's Square, a little girl fills her water bottle at a courtyard fountain, a haven of peace far from the hordes of tourists. "Plastic bottles are super annoying to me," said 11-year-old Keira from Tucson, Arizona. "There is so much plastic in the ocean and everywhere."

Her father, Charlie Michieli, also believes in swapping plastic for refillable bottles: "You can go through quite a lot, especially on a long trip... litres and litres and litres of plastic bottles."

In Venice, which welcomes millions of visitors each year, tourism contributes to between 28 and 40 per cent of garbage production depending on the season, according to local government data -- including piles and piles of plastic water bottles.

To combat the waste, local authorities now promote the use of refillable water bottles by calling tourists' attention to the vast network of drinking water fountains dotting the squares and alleys of the watery city.

"In the historic centre, there are 126 fountains spread over the area, they're easy to find, there's one nearly every 100 metres," said architect Alberto Chinellato in his city hall office overlooking the Rialto Bridge.

To make things even easier, water distribution company Veritas has launched an app showing a map with all the nearest fountains.

"Encouraging the use of free drinking water certainly produces less waste... but also brings fewer bottles in the historic centre, which means less pollution and less transport", said Chinellato.

Leaving Chinellato's office, reporters observed an empty plastic water bottle bobbing between two gondolas on the Grand Canal -- underscoring that the battle against plastic is far from being won.

At the centrally located Hotel Flora, owner Gioele Romanelli has also decided to contribute to the crusade against plastic by educating his guests.

"We simply had a card printed on which we pointed out the fountains of Venice with a little blue drop," said Romanelli, proudly displaying a copy on a small bistro table.

"Not only with a refillable bottle, but also by recycling a small (plastic) water bottle you can keep all day," said the 49-year-old hotelier.

At check-in, guests are briefed about Venice's "good water". "They are sometimes surprised to learn that the water in Venice is drinkable," he said.

"With this small gesture, our customers can actively participate in the battle against plastic," he said, seeing it as a way, in a city with "an insane number of tourists", to give them a certain sense of responsibility.

In addition to the card marking the city's fountains, the hotel has done away with single-dose shampoo and shower gel bottles in the rooms in favour of refillable dispensers. —AFP

Why Europe is becoming a heatwave hot spot



Henry Fountain

The writer covers climate change with a focus on the innovations

Two months ago, France experienced its hottest May on record, with record highs in some cities. Last month, France was blistered again, by a spring heat wave that also affected Spain, Italy and other countries.

Then, this month, Poland and other parts of Eastern Europe suffered during a spell of extreme heat.

Now temperatures across Europe are soaring yet again, at or near triple digits from Spain to the British Isles and spreading east.

Wildfires stoked by the heat are burning in many countries, and much of the continent is in the throes of a lengthy drought.

And there are still two months of summer left.

Scientists say the persistent extreme heat already this year is in keeping with a trend.

Heatwaves in Europe, they say, are increasing in frequency and intensity at a faster rate than almost any other part of the planet, including the Western United States.

Global warming plays a role, as it does in heatwaves around the world, because temperatures are on average about 2 degrees Fahrenheit higher than they were in the late 19th century, before emissions of carbon dioxide and other heat-trapping gases became widespread. So extreme heat takes off from a higher starting point.

But beyond that, there are other factors, some involving the circulation of the atmosphere and the ocean that may make Europe a heatwave hot spot.

No two heatwaves are precisely the same.

The current scorching temperatures that reached into England and Wales on Monday were caused in part by a region of upper level low-pressure air that has been stalled off the coast of Portugal for days.

It is known as a "cut-off low" in the parlance of atmospheric scientists, because it was cut off from a river of westerly winds, the mid-latitude jet stream, which circles the planet at high altitudes.

Low-pressure zones tend to draw air toward them. In this case, the low-pressure zone has been steadily drawing air from North Africa toward it and into Europe.

"It's pumping hot air northward," said Kai Kornhuber, a researcher at



Siblings Naima, 4, and David, 8, play in mud puddles at Prospect Park on a warm Saturday morning in Brooklyn.

HEATWAVES IN EUROPE, THEY SAY, ARE INCREASING IN FREQUENCY AND INTENSITY AT A FASTER RATE THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER PART OF THE PLANET, INCLUDING THE WESTERN UNITED STATES

Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, part of Columbia University.

Kornhuber contributed to a study published this month that found that heatwaves in Europe had increased in frequency and intensity over the past four decades, and linked the increase at least in part to changes in the jet stream.

The researchers found that many European heatwaves occurred when the jet stream had temporarily split in two, leaving an area of weak winds and high pressure air between the two branches that is conducive to the

build-up of extreme heat.

Efi Rousi, a senior scientist at Potsdam Institute for Climate Research in Germany and the lead author of the study, said the current heatwave appeared to be linked to such a "double jet," which she said has been in place over Europe for the past two weeks. This could have led to the creation of the cut-off low, Rousi said, as well as to an area of weak winds over Europe that allowed the heat to persist.

"It seems this is really favouring the build-up of this heatwave," she said.

There may be other reasons Europe is seeing more, and more persistent, heatwaves, although some of these are the subject of debate among scientists. Natural climate variability can make it difficult to tease out specific influences, Rousi said.

Kornhuber said warming in the Arctic, which is occurring much faster than other parts of the world, may play a role.

As the Arctic warms at a faster rate, the temperature differential between it and the equator decreases. This leads to a decrease in summertime winds, which has the effect of making weather systems linger for longer. "We do see an increase in persistence," he said.

As in other parts of the world, a heatwave in Europe can make it more likely for others to occur in the same area, because a period of extreme heat dries out the soil. — *New York Times*

Wasted water saps battle against Italy’s drought

CRISPIAN BALMER &ANGELO AMANTE

Vast swathes of land south of Rome were boggy swamps for thousands of years until a monumental drainage programme in the 1930s turned malaria-infested marshes into prime agricultural fields.

Fast forward 90 years and, where water was once abundant, now it is growing scarce as one of the worst droughts in living memory fuelled by weeks of scorching temperatures has drastically reduced the flow of local springs.

But ageing infrastructure and leaky pipes are exacerbating an already disastrous situation, with much precious water vanishing down the drain before it even reaches the taps.

“The management of water infrastructure in Italy has been appalling,” Roberto Cingolani, minister for ecological transition, said. “Our pipes lose on average 42 per cent of the water they carry. In Israel that figure is closer to 3 per cent. Our losses cannot be justified.”

In the province of Latina, 60-km down the coast from Rome, 70 per cent of drinking water gets lost in transit, the second worst ratio in the country, according to a report released this month by business lobby Confartigianato.

Latina’s local water company, Acqualatina, says some of the missing water is illegally siphoned off, or else is consumed by households that refuse to let their meters be checked. But an estimated 50-60 per cent dissipates from brittle, cracked pipes.

“The leaks are not caused by carelessness, but because the network is really old. Almost half of it was laid down more than 50 years ago,” said Marco Lombardi, the CEO of the firm, which is part-owned by French utility Veolia Environnement. The company, created in 2002, carries out more than 10,000 repairs a year on its 3,500-km network, plugging myriad holes to lift low water pressure that can blight homes and businesses. But doing so often causes decrepit pipes elsewhere on the network to burst, turning repairs into a game of whack-a-mole.

FAST FORWARD 90 YEARS AND, WHERE WATER WAS ONCE ABUNDANT, NOW IT IS GROWING SCARCE AS ONE OF THE WORST DROUGHTS IN LIVING MEMORY ARE FUELLED BY WEEKS OF SCORCHING TEMPERATURES

In an effort to counter what is a nationwide crisis, the government has earmarked 4.4 billion euros (\$4.5 billion) from a European Union pandemic recovery fund to use over the next four years on improving water management.

Some 900 million euros will go towards fixing water leakages and 880 million will help upgrade irrigation systems for agriculture.

The money cannot come soon enough for Stefano Boschetto, who runs a family farm on the fertile Latina plains.

He has invested millions of euros in greenhouses, where he grows Kiwi fruit, salads, cucumbers and melons. But his crops are suffering from the drought and subsequent water rationing, which halts irrigation for two days a week.

“It seems strange that we are talking about a lack of water in an area like this. But in reality, things change, and they change quickly,” he said.

The main problem was a reduction in water coming from the region’s springs, but faulty pipes were also taking a toll. In addition, Boschetto said the sector was missing out by failing to capture rain, which is often torrential in spring and autumn, and then recycling it during the parched summer months.

The government estimates that capturing a quarter of Italy’s annual rainfall would cover the needs of the nation’s farmers and is planning to use some of the EU cash to construct dozens of reservoirs to store rainwater run-off.

The local Acqualatina potable water company has also turned to the EU fund for help, applying for 40 million euros to finance some of its own upgrade projects. But it acknowledges that this is a drop in the ocean compared with what is needed.

“To completely redo all our network would cost 1 billion euros,” said CEO Lombardi, adding that his company had plunged almost 300 million euros into infrastructure projects over the past 20 years.

— Reuters



The world needs a digital lifeline



Riccardo Puliti

The writer is Vice-President for Infrastructure at the World Bank

In periods of crisis, digital technologies provide a lifeline that keeps people, communities, and businesses functioning. From the Covid-19 pandemic to violent conflicts and natural disasters, being connected has allowed us to continue working, learning, and communicating.

How policymakers have responded to these emergencies has played a large part. In particular, as new paper by the World Bank Group’s Development Committee shows, more agile regulation has accelerated digitalisation and unleashed innovation.

In today’s global context of several overlapping crises, this needs to become the norm.

Secure and resilient internet infrastructure is a fundamental necessity.

During the pandemic, as more and more of our lives went online, internet usage spiked worldwide.

In 2020, 800 million people went online for the first time, and 58 low- and middle-income countries used digital payments to deliver Covid-19 relief.

To manage that surge, governments and regulators in more than 80 countries moved quickly to change rules, including those governing the allocation of radio spectrum – the electromagnetic waves used for wireless communications.

In Ghana, regulators assigned temporary radio spectrum to networks in high demand, and all mobile-service providers were granted permission to expand coverage.

This resulted in better-quality service for more than 30 million mobile subscribers, letting them “go” to work, learn online, and access essential services.

Agile regulations have also helped digital technologies offer critical support to people in fragile and conflict situations.

In Ukraine, the presence of a strong internet connection through satellite links, even while terrestrial infrastructure is under attack, has enabled the government to communicate with its citizens in real time. At the beginning of the war, shelling

WITH THE WORLD FACING MULTIPLE CRISES, POLICYMAKERS NEED TO MOBILISE DIGITAL CONNECTIVITY TO IMPROVE THE DAILY WELFARE OF THE MOST VULNERABLE PEOPLE. BUT INNOVATION IS MOVING SO FAST THAT MANY OFFICIALS, ESPECIALLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, ARE FINDING IT HARD TO KEEP UP

and cyberattacks were predicted to take down the Internet, but innovations such as the satellite hookups have kept the country online.

Here, too, the Ukrainian government moved quickly to speed up permissions and adapt rules.

But a digital lifeline is effective only if it is safeguarded from cyberattack, something that Ukraine knows well. For many years, the country has been a testing ground for strikes on infrastructure.

Hackers carried out waves of attacks that hit Ukraine’s distribution centres, call centres, and power grid.

And it’s not just Ukraine. All countries are vulnerable to these incursions.

The United States fell victim to cyberattacks last year that took down its largest fuel pipeline, leaving many Americans in long lines to fill their gas tanks.

And in Africa, Kenyan internet users endured more than 14 million malware incidents in 2020.

Like cyberattacks, nature can cause damage to communications infrastructure that demands an agile reaction. A volcanic eruption in January this year sent the island nation of Tonga into digital darkness. The eruption cut Tonga’s single undersea telecom cable and threw the country into 38 days of isolation from the internet and

much of the outside world. This crisis has prompted discussions about how to strengthen the network and emergency-response systems, so Tongans are not at risk of digital darkness again.

To mitigate such vulnerabilities, unleashing digitalisation needs to be a high priority even in periods of relative calm.

Potentially transformative yet fast-evolving technologies require policymakers to promote financing, regulations, and institutions that make it easier to test out new ideas in real life. Some countries are starting to make progress. Kazakhstan is using agile regulation to digitalise, decentralise, and decarbonise its vitally important energy operations.

Unlocking the potential of digitalisation for the masses through well-targeted regulation can also help close the digital divide and improve welfare. Recent research has shown that the availability of cheaper Internet access increases employment among low-income households.

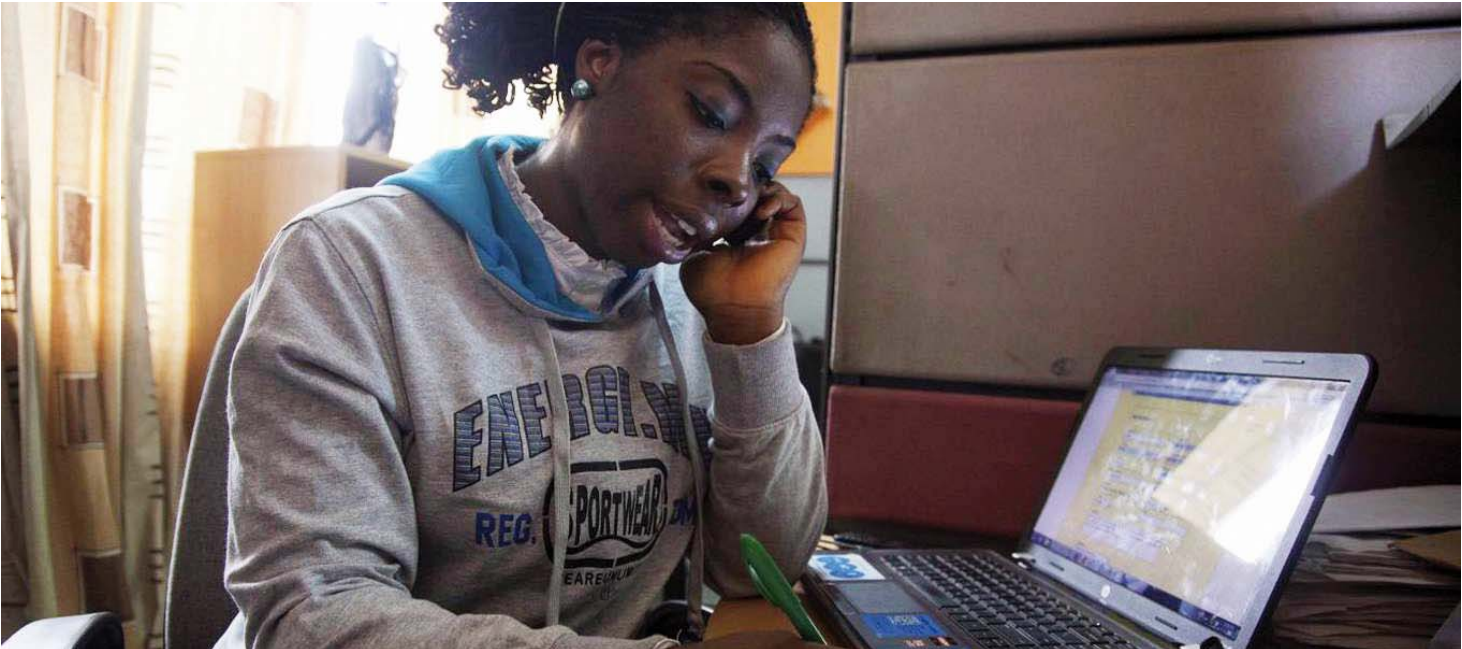
Countries such as Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and Malaysia provide low-cost plans for poorer users. Digital access is essential for people all over the world, especially residents of under-connected rural areas, the poor, women, and the displaced. In Nigeria and Tanzania, poverty rates fell by seven percentage points in areas with internet connections.

With the world facing multiple emergencies, policymakers need to mobilise digital connectivity to improve the daily welfare of the most vulnerable populations. Right now, innovation is moving so fast that many officials, especially in developing countries, are finding it hard to keep up and ensure that the benefits of digitalisation reach the people who need them most.

But we should not need a crisis to accelerate the transformation.

Now is the time to build a digital lifeline – before the next disaster hits.

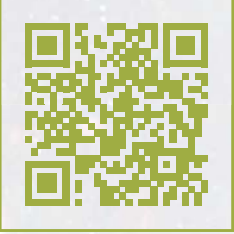
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In Ghana, regulators assigned temporary radio spectrum to networks in high demand.

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“We are happy with the improvement we are seeing, but there is also a lot of work to do. We did score some wonderful goals, that’s true”

ERIK TEN HAG,
Manchester United Manager

MARTIAL

SCORES AGAIN AS UNITED BEAT PALACE

MELBOURNE: New coach Erik ten Hag said his players’ belief was improving after Anthony Martial scored his third goal in three games as a slick Manchester United beat Crystal Palace 3-1 on Tuesday.

In front of 76,500 fans at Melbourne Cricket Ground, French forward Martial struck in the first half while Marcus Rashford and Jadon Sancho both collected their second goals of the pre-season tour after the restart.

Joel Ward pulled one back for Palace, but they were always chasing a game that saw United reduced to 10 men in the dying minutes after Will Fish was sent off for a deliberate foul.

The friendly victory was Ten Hag’s third since taking over after their 4-0 thumping of Liverpool in Bangkok and a 4-1 win over Melbourne Victory.

In contrast, it was a second straight defeat for Patrick Vieira’s young Palace side, who crashed 2-0 to Liverpool in Singapore on Friday.

“We are happy with the improvement we are seeing, but there is also a lot of work to do”, said Ten Hag. “We did score some wonderful goals, that’s true.

“We played well and I think



the belief is increasing”, he added while praising his forwards in particular.

“They did a lot of running, a lot of work. They have a lot of energy and were rewarded by scoring goals.”

The Dutchman is beginning to stamp his mark on the Old

Trafford side, with his team — who finished a disappointing sixth last season in the Premier League — producing some fluid, one-touch football. Goalkeeper David de Gea returned after missing the Victory game with a niggles.

New left-back Tyrell Malacia began ahead of Luke Shaw, while

Rashford was back in the starting line-up after scoring as a substitute against Victory, partnering a rejuvenated Martial and Sancho in Cristiano Ronaldo’s absence.

Christian Eriksen and Lisandro Martinez, Ten Hag’s other new signings, are not in Australia.

Vieira has a youthful squad in

Australia, with a number of senior players not making the trip.

HUNGRY FOR GOALS

United made a confident start, dominating early possession, with Palace goalkeeper Jack Butland making a fine stop from Martial after Brazilian Fred’s pass split the

defence.

But the save ended Butland’s game, forcing him to leave the pitch after treatment on his hand.

The 26-year-old Martial — whose career at United looked over after spending the end of last season on loan at Sevilla — got the breakthrough seven minutes later.

He chested down a wonderful floating delivery from Diogo Dalot to fire past Palace’s third-choice keeper Remi Matthews after a well-worked build-up.

United were hungry for goals, creating plenty of opportunities with Harry Maguire and Rashford both going close.

Against Liverpool and Victory, Ten Hag made wholesale changes at half-time, but this time he made just one, with Donny van de Beek on for Scott McTominay.

Van de Beek was involved in the second goal, with a sublime team move finished by Rashford tapping into an empty net.

Sancho got the third soon after on a counter-attack with Martial providing the through ball.

United head to Perth next to play Steven Gerrard’s Aston Villa, who beat Leeds 1-0 to kickstart their pre-season. Palace also travel to Perth, to face Leeds. — AFP

Shafique drives Pakistan's record chase at Galle

GALLE: Opener Abdullah Shafique hit a gritty century to keep Pakistan in the hunt to chase down a victory target of 342 in the opening Test against Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

Pakistan ended day four on 222 for three, still needing 120 runs to take the lead in the two-match series at Galle, where the highest successful fourth-innings chase is 268 by Sri Lanka against New Zealand in 2019.

Sri Lanka need seven wickets to get their second straight win at a venue where they beat Australia last week to end that two-match series level at 1-1.

Shafique, batting on 112, and skipper Babar Azam, who made 55, put together 101 runs for the third wicket but spinner Prabath Jayasuriya broke through just a few overs before the close of play.

"He is one of the best players, so he provided good support while batting and guided me all along on how to play," Shafique, who called his ton a "special one", said of captain Azam.

"So was a not a good thing when he got out but now the responsibility lies on me."

Left-arm spinner Jayasuriya bowled talisman Azam around the batsman's legs with a delivery that spun sharply from outside leg to rattle the stumps of the right-hander, who looked visibly shocked.

Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Rizwan was batting on seven at stumps alongside Shafique, who had so far faced 289 balls and hit five boundaries and



Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique plays a shot during the fourth day of play of the first Test. — AFP

one six.

Pakistan began strongly with a 87-run partnership between Shafique and fellow opener Imam-ul-Haq, who made 35, but an alert stumping from wicketkeeper

Niroshan Dickwella broke the stand.

The left-handed Imam missed a delivery from off-spinner Ramesh Mendis and Dickwella clipped off the bails, with the decision going

up to the third umpire.

Various TV angles established that Imam's foot was just millimetres off the ground when the bails were dislodged.

Azhar Ali was the next to go when he edged a ball from Jayasuriya, who claimed a five-wicket haul in the previous innings, to first slip. He made six off 32 deliveries. — AFP

“He is one of the best players, so he provided good support while batting and guided me all along on how to play. So was a not a good thing when he got out but now the responsibility lies on me

ABDULLAH SHAFIQUE
Pakistan batsman

SCOREBOARD	
Sri Lanka first innings: 222	
Pakistan first innings: 218	
Sri Lanka second innings (O/n: 329-9):	
O Fernando c Azam b Yasir.....	64
D Karunaratne lbw Nawaz.....	16
K Rajitha lbw Nawaz.....	7
K Mendis b Yasir.....	76
A Mathews c Azam b Nawaz.....	9
D Chandimal (not out).....	94
D de Silva b Yasir.....	20
N Dickwella b Nawaz.....	12
R Mendis b Nawaz.....	22
M Theekshana c Rizwan b Hasan.....	11
P Jayasuriya b Naseem.....	4
Extras (LB-1, NB-1).....	2
Total (all out, 100 overs).....	337
Fall of wickets: 1-33, 2-41, 3-132, 4-164, 5-178, 6-218, 7-235, 8-267, 9-308	
Bowling: Shaheen 7-2-21-0, Nawaz 28-2-88-5, Agha 16-1-53-0, Yasir 29-2-122-3, Hasan 12-3-19-1, Azam 1-0-9-0, Naseem 7-0-24-1	
Pakistan second innings	
A Shafique (not out).....	112
Imam st Dickwella b R Mendis.....	35
A Ali c de Silva b Jayasuriya.....	6
B Azam b Jayasuriya.....	55
M Rizwan (not out).....	7
Extras (B-4, LB-3).....	7
Total (For 3 wkts, 85 overs).....	222
Fall of Wickets: 1-87, 2-104, 3-205	
Bowling: Rajitha 9-2-18-0, Jayasuriya 35-6-89-2, R Mendis 26-0-76-1, Theekshana 11-2-29-0, de Silva 4-1-3-0	

■ OHA EXPRESSES DESIRE TO HOST ASIAN YOUTH CUP



The Oman Hockey Federation has expressed its desire to host the Asian Youth Cup, which will be held in October and November. The federation addressed its Asian counterpart to the game of its desire to host, and the Asian Hockey Federation had sent a circular to all federations offering them to host the tournament and it is scheduled to resolve the issue of hosting and announce the host country at its next meeting.

■ BARSHIM WINS THIRD SUCCESSIVE WORLD TITLE IN HIGH JUMP



Qatar's Mutaz Barshim clinched his third world title in a row, when he won the gold in the high jump competition at the 18th edition of the World Athletics Championships in Eugene, USA. Barshim managed his achievement by overcoming five hurdles in a row from the first attempt, the last of which was 2.37m. It was ahead of South Korean Woo Sanghyuk, who with a distance of 2.35m won the silver medal, while the bronze was claimed by Ukrainian Andrey Protsenko, who gave his country the first medal in the tournament.

‘Stokes made selfless decision to retire from ODIs’

LONDON: England managing director of cricket Rob Key has praised Ben Stokes for his “selfless” decision to ignore the “financial implications” of retiring from one-day internationals.

Stokes will make his 105th and final ODI appearance at his Durham home ground against South Africa on Tuesday after taking his shock decision to quit the format 24 hours earlier.

Key's first act after being appointed was to hire Stokes as England's Test captain, but he knows the relentless fixture demands on top international players make it hard to feature in all versions of the game.

While the monetary terms of Stokes' central contract could come under review, Key feels England's Test and Twenty20 teams will stand

to gain enormously from the all-rounder lightening his workload.

"It may well end up having financial implications to Ben Stokes in terms of his contract," Key told Sky Sports News.

"That's why it's a selfless decision, he could easily have said 'no, no, I'm the key' and kept getting picked in the 50-over team.

"But he wants to do the Test job as best as he can, he wants to take England's Test team forward.

"I was probably surprised at the timing but I'm not surprised that he's had to give one format away. I think it's a good decision from Ben that England will benefit from in the long term."

Key, who spoke to Stokes about his decision last Thursday, thinks the 31-year-old was also motivated

by his desire to continue being a presence in both batting and bowling disciplines in the Test side.

England's Test form has been revitalised under Stokes and new red-ball coach Brendon McCullum.

Since the pair took charge, England have swept a three-Test series against New Zealand before defeating India in the final match of a Covid-delayed series.

"Him bowling is actually the thing he wants to be able to do, he doesn't just want to go and be a batter, he wants to be able to contribute as an all-rounder," Key said.

"To do that he feels this is the best way. I'm hoping and I'm betting that this is what gets him up to 120-plus Test matches."

— AFP



England's Ben Stokes in action. — Reuters



Gold medallist Kenya's Faith Kipyegon poses with her national flag after the women's 1,500m final. – AFP

NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCE AS OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS EARN WORLD GOLD

EUGENE: Experience prevailed on day four of the World Championships with Kenyan runner Faith Kipyegon and Venezuelan triple jumper Yulimar Rojas among the Olympic champions standing on top of the podium in Eugene, Oregon on Tuesday.

Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali backed up his Tokyo 3,000 metres steeplechase win by ending Kenya's dominance at the worlds, while Qatar's Mutaz Barshim had high jump gold all to himself this time.

Kipyegon, winner of the last two Olympic 1,500m titles, finished with a remarkable time of three minutes, 52.96 seconds to regain her world crown.

Ethiopia's Gudaf Tsegay took silver while Laura Muir, runner-up at the Tokyo Olympics, won bronze to collect Britain's first medal of the championship.

"I have to say I am thankful for my second gold medal", said Kipyegon, who won the 2017 title and picked up silver in 2019, a year after having a baby.

Rojas dominated the triple

jump from start to finish and cruised to gold after jumping 15.47m to claim her third straight world title.

Jamaican Shanieka Ricketts collected her second consecutive world silver while American Tori Franklin delighted the home crowd by clinching bronze.

In the steeplechase, El Bakkali produced a tactical masterclass to win his first world title and keep a Kenyan off top spot for the first time since 2005.

Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia, silver medallist in Tokyo, finished

runner-up while 2019 world champion Conseslus Kipruto of Kenya won bronze.

Qatar's Barshim, who famously shared Olympic gold with Italy's Gianmarco Tamberi last year, won an unprecedented third straight world high jump title after clearing a world-leading 2.37m with ease.

World indoor champion Woo Sang-Hyeok of South Korea took silver and Ukraine's Andriy Protsenko collected bronze.

Double Olympic champion Nafissatou Thiam of Belgium pulled out a last-gasp victory

over Dutch rival Anouk Vetter to reclaim her world heptathlon title.

Vetter, who finished behind Thiam in Tokyo, had to settle for silver again while American Anna Hall won bronze.

In the morning session, Gotytom Gebreslase won the women's marathon in a world championship-record time of two hours, 18.11 minutes and claim a second marathon title for Ethiopia in Eugene after Tamirat Tola triumphed in the men's event on Sunday.

"Tola's win yesterday

motivated me a lot today", said Gebreslase, who finished ahead of Kenya's Judith Korir while Lonah Salpeter of Israel secured bronze.

Three Japanese athletes and one coach tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday, taking the total number of cases in the delegation up to 15.

Organisers have made it mandatory for all workforce, technical and medical officials and media to wear masks in indoor spaces as a cautionary measure. — Reuters

El Bakkali wins 3,000m steeplechase world gold

EUGENE: Moroccan Soufiane El Bakkali ended Kenya's reign in the 3,000 metres steeplechase at the World Championships after he surged past Lamecha Girma of Ethiopia to win gold on Monday.

The Olympic champion had stayed near the back of the leading pack for much of the race before making the decisive move in the last 200m at Hayward Field.

Girma had to settle for silver once again after finishing second in Tokyo and in Doha three years ago, while Kenya's Conseslus Kipruto, the 2019 champion, finished with bronze.

It was the first time since 2005 that a Kenyan did not finish top of the podium and El Bakkali said his finishing speed had been the key to victory in Eugene, Oregon.

"The course was very tactical, slow. We had very good runners like defending champion Kipruto", said El Bakkali, who beamed as he waved the Moroccan flag over his



Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali celebrates winning the men's 3000m steeplechase final. – AFP

Morocco's Soufiane El Bakkali backed up his Tokyo 3,000 metres steeplechase win by ending Kenya's dominance at the worlds, while Qatar's Mutaz Barshim had high jump gold all to himself this time

head. "I positioned well in the last lap. I am very strong in the 400m and it worked out for me."

Girma said he was pleased but not satisfied with second place and would reassess his training with an eye towards next year's worlds.

"The pace was very slow today, my tactic did not work and that (cost) me the gold", he told reporters. "I was trying to change the tactic but the pace limited me very much. I will go for gold next year and my training is starting from now on."

There was a bizarre moment during the first lap when the field was forced to dodge a camera operator who was standing in the middle of the track with his back to the competitors.

It was not all bad news for Kenya, however, as Faith Kipyegon collected her second world gold in the women's 1,500m.

— Reuters



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Call for setting up new logistics area in Al Najd region

HAMMAM AL BADI
SALALAH, JULY 19

The Al Najd Agriculture Development Department and the Farmers Association in the Governorate of Dhofar held a meeting to deliberate on solutions to challenges being faced by cultivates in the Al Najd Agriculture Zone in the Governorate of Dhofar.

During the meeting, both sides discussed options to boosting revenue from farming activities, creating job opportunities and establishing a logistics area to support farmers.

Both sides also discussed avenues for partnerships between the public and private sectors to support investment projects and to involve agricultural associations in the programmes and policies to maximise development of agricultural lands.

The meeting was held

in the Frankincense Hall of the Directorate General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in the Governorate of Dhofar in the presence of Eng Rashid bin Said al Ghafri, Director General of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

Also present were a number of ministry officials, members of the farmers' association in the governorate and owners of farms in Al Najd Zone.

During the meeting, a visual presentation was presented by Dr Khalid bin Salim al Mashikhi, Assistant Director-General for Dam Affairs at the Ministry, who is also acting Director of the Office for Al Najd Agriculture Development.

Al Mashikhi reviewed the current situation in the Najd region and highlighted the challenges and the Ministry's objectives to reduce the gap in food security.

Omani tourism sector continues to make strong recovery

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, JULY 19

As many as 216,000 tourists and visitors arrived in the Sultanate of Oman in May 2022, representing a 36-fold increase over the corresponding tally of about 6,000 visitors a year earlier, the National Centre for Statistics and Information said in a report.

The upsurge in arrivals, coupled with the strong growth reported in hotel revenues, attests to the recovery trend underway in Oman's tourism and hospitality sector, say experts.

Luxury hotels in the 3 – 5 star category posted revenues of RO 14 million in May 2022 versus earnings of around RO 4 million for the same period in 2021. Around 140,000 guests stayed in this category of hotels in May 2022, up from 68,000 a year early. Occupancy was 42.8 per cent this year, compared to 24 per cent in May 2021.

In all, around 794,000 visitors travelled arrived in the Sultanate of Oman during the first five months of this year, versus nearly 1.5 million departures during the same period.

Travellers from the United Arab Emirates were the dominant number with 301,249 visitors (38 per cent of the total), followed by Indian nationals (111,883), Yemenis (28,495) and Pakistanis (23,603). Of



the 353,000 passengers who departed the country in May 2022, Omani citizens accounted for a 61.5 per cent share.

Revenues earned by luxury hotels in the 3 – 5 star category soared to RO 73.058 million during the January – May 2022 period, representing a 129 per cent increase over the corresponding figure for 2021.

There was a 46.2 per cent increase in the number of guests staying at these hotels during the first five months of this year. Occupancy was 23.3 per cent

Travellers from the UAE were the dominant number with 301,249 visitors (38 per cent of the total), followed by Indian nationals (111,883), Yemenis (28,495) and Pakistanis (23,603)

during the same period this year. Holidaymakers from Europe numbered 176,591 during the January – May 2022 period,

representing a 809 per cent over the tally of 19,419 guests staying at local hotels during the corresponding period of 2021.

Guests from the GCC saw their numbers surge 778 per cent to 50,803 this year, up from 5,783 last year. The numbers of local Omanis as hotel guests dipped 9.2 per cent to 280,306, down from 308,818 last year.

Hotel guests from the United States totalled 23,747 (200 per cent increase), African continent (3,301) and Asia (76,807) by the end of May 2022.

Oman ships LNG to Puerto Rico

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 19

Exports of Omani liquefied natural gas (LNG) during the first half of 2022 increased by 8 per cent to reach 5.9 million tons compared to 5.5 million tons during the first half of 2021.

Oman's exports of LNG during the first quarter of 2022 reached 3 million tons and in the second quarter of 2022 exports reached 2.9 million tons, which is a figure that indicates Oman LNG's plant is working at its full capacity of 11.4 million tons annually. During the first six months of 2022, Oman's exports of LNG reached 0.9 to 1 million tons monthly.

Among the new locations which received Oman's gas is Puerto Rico in North America (67,000 tonnes).



This shipment was delivered in June 2022.

A debottlenecking project undertaken by Oman has enabled an increase in out by 1 to 1.5 million tons annually.

Major Asian markets seized the lion's share of Oman's gas exports. At the forefront of those markets was Korea, which received 2.25 million tons during the first half of 2022, constituting 38 per cent of exports. Japan received 1.51 million tonnes 26 per cent). Other markets included China, India, Taiwan and Thailand.

— With inputs from ONA

New luxury resort to come up in Muscat

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, JULY 19

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, the world's leading luxury hospitality company, and the Oman Tourism Development Company (Omran Group), are joining hands to support the establishment of the Four Seasons Resort and the Private Residences Muscat in the capital city of the Sultanate of Oman.

An announcement to this effect was made by Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

The luxury resort, overlooking the Sea of Oman, will be part of the redevelopment of the yacht club and the former marina near Al Bustan in Muscat Governorate. Envisaged is a splendid seafront complex featuring 200 rooms and suites and 100 private accommodation units.

Guests and residents will also enjoy the benefit of using the private beach, and trying different types of local and international dishes in five restaurants that



will be hosted by the resort, as well as indoor and outdoor swimming pools that come with private cabanas. In addition to the water sports offered on the beach, the resort will provide many additional activities for all travellers through its tennis court, spa centre, and fitness facilities. As for the younger guests, they can spend their time at the Kids for All Seasons Club for children and young adults.

Additionally, the project will include a group of private residential units with stunning panoramic views of the Sea of

Oman, suitable for those wishing to permanently reside within Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts.

Bart Carnahan, Corporate President of Global Business Development and Portfolio Management at Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts, said: "The Middle East region continues to be an essential part of Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts' growth strategy."

"Unrivalled and top-notch services for which Four Seasons is renowned, in uniquely vibrant destinations such as the city of Muscat, we are pleased to be part

of the Omran Group's long-term vision to develop Oman's tourism sector, accelerate the strategic growth of the capital, and continue to attract distinguished guests and hotel residents from around the world, by providing exceptional services and creating unparalleled luxury experiences from Four Seasons."

Dr Hashil bin Obaid al Mahrouqi, CEO of Omran Group, said: "Muscat is a historical destination with natural beauty, and abounding in business, tourism and many other fields. In cooperation with Four Seasons and through this exceptional new project, we seek to showcase all the advantages of this beautiful city. By bringing this iconic brand to Muscat, we are continuing our tireless efforts towards supporting the achievement of the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and the National Tourism Strategy, as well as transforming this beautiful country into an outstanding luxury destination for locals and travellers from all over the world."

Report charts pathway to zero emission auto industry in MENA

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 19

The first of a two-part Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Intelligence report, produced by Oxford Business Group (OBG) in partnership with General Motors (GM), explores the key role that electric vehicle (EV) production could play in cutting carbon emissions and creating viable sustainable mobility solutions across Africa and the Middle East (MENA).

Titled “Gearing up for the green automotive transition”, the first report focuses on the environmental component of ESG. Overseen by OBG’s ESG Intelligence division, the analysis charts the seismic shifts under way in the global automotive industry, and the implications for production and consumption in Africa and the Middle East in an easy-to-navigate and accessible format, supported by data and infographics.

The role of research and development (R&D) activities in developing the technologies and innovations required for low-carbon and zero-emission vehicles



are among the other topics explored.

The ESG Intelligence report also considers the importance of ensuring EVs and automated vehicles (AVs) meet the expectations of consumers, with safety, reliability and affordability among the criteria requiring satisfaction.

It also notes the importance of ensuring that related infrastructure development, such as EV charging facilities, keeps pace with vehicle production in markets across the Middle East and Africa.

In addition, subscribers will find coverage of the potential for EV and AV technologies to be integrated into the region’s smart city developments, thereby helping to reduce both emissions and traffic congestion. Here, the

report includes a case study of how green automated taxis could revolutionise transport in Dubai.

The report contains in-depth coverage of GM’s sustainability journey, tracking the strides that the multinational automotive manufacturing company has made in developing and commercialising EVs and AVs. It also maps out GM’s evolving footprint across the Middle East and Africa, both of which are key destinations for the manufacturer’s green growth plans.

The ESG analysis includes an interview with Luay al Shurafa, GM’s President and Managing Director, Africa & Middle East in which he talks about how the company is prioritising inclusive climate solutions as it targets a zero-emissions, all-electric future.

“Our commitment to this here in the Middle East is evidenced by our target of a 95 per cent reduction in our annual operational carbon footprint in the UAE and our plan to launch 13 EVs in the region by 2025. In the UAE, by 2035, we will have reduced our CO₂ emissions by more than 24,000 metric tonnes, and we are planning to make all our global products and operations carbon neutral by 2040”, Al Shurafa said.

Jana Treeck, OBG’s Managing Director for the Middle East, said the report pointed to a positive outlook for automotive players that were shifting the focus away from internal combustion engine vehicle sales and working towards zero-emission automotive production.

“The green transition in the automotive industry is gaining pace worldwide, bolstered by new regulations and a growing sense of urgency around emission reduction goals”, Treeck said.

“With plenty more still to do, the opportunities for stakeholders to play a key part in curtailing carbon emissions across the Middle East and Africa, and make production processes more sustainable in an era of green growth, are huge.”

Al Mouj invests in new golf website pitching the award-winning club



MUSCAT: A user-friendly new website has been launched by Al Mouj Golf in Muscat showcasing the club’s award-winning attributes, helping to position both it and Oman on the global stage as a world-class golfing, leisure and tourism destination.

The digitally sophisticated site almoujgolf.com incorporates stunning photography of the course, Al Mouj Muscat and the Oman coastline, alongside useful and intuitive interactive features that make playing, dining and visiting the club simple and straightforward.

Al Mouj Golf was the Sultanate’s first PGA course, is consistently placed in the top two courses in the Middle East and is also ranked in the Top 100 courses in the world.

Since opening in 2011, the Greg Norman designed par-72 has hosted the Oman Open on three occasions, earning itself a reputation as an exemplary oceanfront championship course and winning accolades for its positive impact on the natural environment.

The new site has been launched at a time when the club is building on its successes through a number of physical upgrades and developments including a new club house that, over the

next two years, will elevate both the playing experience and its international status further.

For now, in addition to providing a comprehensive overview plus news, up-to-date menus and information on alternative leisure pursuits, the site is enhancing the day-to-day experiences of members and visitors alike. Useful online features include booking a tee time, becoming a member and reserving a table at the restaurant. It is also possible to have real-time conversations with club management on WhatsApp, all of which combine to make connecting with the club easier.

A unique feature is a bird’s eye view style plan which gives golfers who are yet to experience the course a realistic viewpoint as, in addition to images and descriptions alongside each hole, there are pro tips on how best to approach them.

Nasser al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat, said: “The total economic impact per annum of golf travel to Oman has the potential to grow and by investing in world-class digital experiences, not only showcases Al Mouj Golf in all its award-winning glory but also is helping to promote the Sultanate as a golf destination with global appeal.

Nama Holding holds pre-tender roadshow for AMR project

MUSCAT: Nama Holding organised a pre-tendering roadshow for Automated Meter Reading (AMR) project. The roadshow was aimed to present a high-level briefing about NAMA Group and its plan for AMR usage.

It is also intended to provide enough time for interested parties to assess their capability and readiness and to discuss with their potential partners before purchasing tender documents. They also wanted to have feedback from interested parties and ensure all concerns are covered in the tender.

The participants/entities expressed interest in the project and were in line with the objective and size of the project.

The usage of AMR is expected to improve customers’ experience by providing actual billing and other services such as live interaction and



consumption monitoring. It will also enhance the response of companies to outages, provide timely billing and loss reduction and improve network maintenance and planning.

The AMR project is in line with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040 which is focused on keeping

pace with global developments and employing technology in delivering electricity-related services effectively and efficiently.

The project will support the development of smart, sustainable cities with advanced basic services, improve GDP per unit of energy use and increase the contribution of renewable energy.

AMR is an integrated system of equipment, communications and information management systems for utilities to automatically collect consumption, diagnostic the data from electricity meter and transfer that data to a central database for billing, troubleshooting, and analysis.

The implementation of this project will be based on the DBFOT (design, build, finance, own, operate and transfer) model, which includes smart meters installation, communication, and Headend System (HES).

Quality time — the case for quality stocks as recession fears rise



STÉPHANE MONIER

Equity investors are having a painful year. Major markets have fallen 10-25 per cent, with double digit declines in the US, Europe, mainland China and much of the emerging world. Rising recessionary fears are compounding high inflation, a prolonged war in Ukraine and investors reducing risk exposures. This cycle is also unusual, with growth concerns and higher rates weighing on markets simultaneously, leaving few places for investors to hide.

The X Factor

Investors can try to improve performance by tilting their equity exposures towards different regions, sectors, or styles. Dispersion here can be significant and has been high this year.

Energy, for example, is the only sector to have delivered positive performance year-to-date, up 21.4

per cent versus a 28.5 per cent fall for consumer discretionary stocks. Different ‘factors’, investment styles — including value, growth, quality, momentum and size — can help explain investments’ long-term risk and return performance and tend to exhibit different characteristics, e.g. volatility, rate sensitivity and performance across the cycle. In recent years, investment styles have been more important drivers of returns than sectors or regions, according to MSCI data.

A tug of war — value versus growth

For much of equity market history, the value style of investing — buying stocks that look cheap versus their intrinsic value — has been a favoured strategy. Yet between the Global Financial Crisis and 2021, growth stocks outperformed their value peers, and tech stocks rose inexorably, leading many to wonder if the world had fundamentally changed. In 2021, however, value stocks staged a comeback and gradually regained the ascendancy. This year, too, rising rates have dealt a bigger blow to higher growth segments of the market, although the spread in performance between value and growth has narrowed.

Style investors tend to focus



Amid tough times for equities, a tilt towards quality can add a defensive element to portfolio positioning. We examine the case for quality stocks in the current bear market

on the value/growth dichotomy: Is the initial price we pay for an investment, or its subsequent growth, the most important driver of returns? Yet there is another, less researched dimension: the quality factor. It has no single agreed definition. A quality label can be self-serving — no one wants to tell clients they invest in low-quality stocks. We define quality stocks as having high and stable profitability (return on equity, earnings variability) and low leverage.

Academic research shows that stocks sorted on this basis have

generated higher risk-adjusted returns than the broader market over time, with evidence for a profitability premium especially strong, particularly for large-cap firms.

Crucially, quality tends to outperform in challenging market environments, especially during slowdowns and cyclical recessions, as these lead to a contraction in earnings and margins for most companies. US quality stocks have outperformed the broader market in the last three recessions (2001, 2008-2009 and early 2020). Why

is this the case? Quality companies tend to be those with strong business models and competitive advantages that rivals struggle to emulate.

Many are multinationals, providing diversification across many economies. Their predictable earnings chug along, even as growth falls. This also allows them to continue paying dividends, providing investors with reliable income, which can be highly prized if bond yields are low. Quality firms also do better on balance in inflationary environments, since they are better able to defend their margins.

Examining Buffett’s success

Both quality and value investors seek strong earnings; the former with more emphasis on balance sheet health, the latter on valuation multiples. The two styles tend to work at slightly different points in the cycle: Value in expansionary periods, when their multiples re-rate and quality in recession.

Warren Buffett is famous as a value investor, but an analysis of Berkshire Hathaway’s performance from 1977-2016 suggests that quality was actually a more important factor than value in generating the firm’s excess returns, contributing 3.4 percentage

points of performance, versus 1.2 percentage points respectively. A 2008 annual report from the investment firm generated a famous Buffett aphorism, which captures both elements: “Whether we’re talking about socks or stocks, I like buying quality merchandise when it is marked down.”

A defensive tilt

A tilt towards quality is one way to introduce a defensive element to portfolio positioning and reduce risk. Our current allocation favours value over growth, and we have increasingly applied a quality overlay to stock selection this year. While this can be achieved readily via exchange-traded products, it is also an opportunity for active managers to add value via screening and identifying quality firms and picking individual stocks. This could be an increasingly valuable strategy, given highly dispersed stock performance currently versus history. We try to find these companies using an approach that is sector and country agnostic. We have also recently increased our quality bias within our US equity exposure, where the largest pool of quality stocks can be found.

(Stéphane Monier is Chief Investment Officer — Banque Lombard Odier & Cie SA)

UAE pushes for fair energy transition

MOHAMAD ALI HARISSI

The world's transition to clean energy sources must be "just" and financed by the hydrocarbon trade, the Climate Change Minister of United Arab Emirates said. Mariam Almheiri was interviewed in France where a fierce heatwave set record temperatures as western Europe wilted under a scorching sun and wildfires that devoured forests.

Experts are blaming climate change and predict more frequent extreme weather to come.

"It's not a switch. We're not ready yet. And oil and gas will still be part of the energy mix for some time", she said in an interview as UAE President Shaikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited Paris for energy talks.

"We need... a just transition because every country is not at the same level", the minister of climate change and the environment added, stressing the UAE was using its oil and gas wealth to ramp up renewable sources.

"You need to build your equipment from what energy you got to do that", she said. "Clean and renewable energy costs money."

The international community largely agrees that climate change poses an existential threat to the planet and future of mankind.

But action to cut carbon pollution and prepare for the accelerating impact is lagging, as is support for vulnerable countries confronting the ravages of a changing climate.

Adding to the pressure has been Russia's war on Ukraine that has sent food and energy prices spiralling. Western sanctions aimed at crippling major energy producer Russia have resulted in sharply higher fuel costs in Europe and the United States, with inflation soaring as a result.

This has pushed the Unites States and Europe to try to persuade oil-rich countries like the UAE to increase energy supplies to bring prices back under control.

"Look at what we're going through right now. Months ago, people were pointing their fingers at us going: 'Why are you still producing?' Now they're coming to say: 'Please produce, please produce.'"

A top oil producer in Opec, the UAE's rapid growth since the 1970s has been driven by its energy wealth.

But having diversified its economy over the decades, the desert country of one million locals and nine million foreigners relies less and less on petrol, with revenues now making up only 30 per cent of GDP. — AFP



THRIVING MARKET

A foreign currency dealer counts US dollar notes at a currency market in Karachi. — AFP

We need... a just transition because every country is not at the same level

MARIAM ALMHEIRI
Climate Change Minister, UAE

Control on pay leaps for asset managers



ANDY JALIL
andyjalil@aol.com

The writer is our correspondent based in the UK

BIGGER SALARY BUDGETS AT ASSET MANAGERS AND CERTAIN ROLES COMMANDING HIGHER LEVELS OF PAY HAD LED TO SALARY INFLATION OVER THE PAST 12 TO 18 MONTHS

The search for talented fund managers has been intense for several months with top salaries on offer. But now these professionals have been warned that soaring pay and bonuses prompted by an escalating war for talent could soon come to an abrupt end.

"The war for talent is real, but some of the pricing that people have been bandying around for talent is about to change in a meaningful way", said Edwin Conway, global head of BlackRock Alternative Investors. "The industry priced up very quickly, but because of the turmoil you're seeing in the markets, the entire asset management industry is estimating bonus pools to be down quite significantly this year."

He added: "This continuous upward-bounding leap after leap (in pay) is probably game over. They've hit their ceiling because you are seeing firms recognising that their year-end compensation is not at all what they anticipated."

Some asset management professionals have been able to command significant pay increases when moving to new positions. This has particularly been the case for those working in the hottest areas of the market such as environmental, social and governance-focused jobs and roles in private markets.

Last year, headhunters suggested heads of ESG at asset managers could expect base

salaries of at least £150,000. Some firms were offering candidates total compensation packages of up to £500,000 for global positions. Meanwhile, competition for expertise in specialist private markets has intensified to the point those with the right skills and knowledge can command salary increases as high as 40pc, according to recruiters.

A senior client partner within the rewards team at management consultancy, Korn Ferry, Tim Wright said bigger salary budgets at asset managers and certain roles commanding higher levels of pay had led to salary inflation over the past 12 to 18 months.

"Pinch areas continue to include certain technology roles but also ESG and sustainability specialists as well as investment professionals operating across private markets", said Wright. He added: "That said, not all firms have followed this trend and there are a number of companies who feel they are now lagging behind the market in base salary levels."

A report published by Moody's in May said that despite 2021 being a strong year for European asset managers, the operating environment for companies had altered significantly this year. Headwinds include the war in Ukraine, a worsening macroeconomic outlook and central banks tightening interest rates to tackle rising inflation.

"All of these have increased market

volatility and wiped investor confidence, weighing on asset managers' (assets under management), flows and revenue", said Moody's. Wright said the general outlook for the fund management sector is "nowhere near as positive at the moment" as it has been over the past few years. He warned that some asset managers could face pressure from shareholders or remuneration committees.

Wright said: "In times of market downturn, asset management firms quickly turn their focus to cost management and embedding more fixed costs from a higher salary bill will be a tough sell." Bonuses could also be hit. Wright added that anecdotal accounts pointed to an expectation that pools will be lower at the end of this year due to challenging market conditions and compared to a buoyant 2021 for the sector.

"Incentive spend tends to be correlated with market returns and as a result there is an expectation of a downward trend in bonus funding at this point in time", said Wright.

He added that while asset managers that have paid out higher salaries cannot take these back when markets become more challenging, one cost control they can still use is to cut their bonus pools. "Higher salaries and higher fixed costs would suggest that downward adjustments to pools when performance dips is highly likely if not inevitable", he said.

Africans look to crypto as charity funding dwindles



KAGONDUR NJAGI

The writer is a contributor with Thomson Reuters Foundation

A sculpture of a giant tap spewing plastic waste greeted delegates at UN environment talks in Kenya earlier this year — a reminder of the urgent need for them to agree a global pact to curb plastic pollution. The 30-foot tall sculpture was built from rubbish collected in Nairobi's Kibera slum by artist and activist Benjamin Von Wong, who raised funds for the project by selling non-fungible tokens (NFTs), records of digital images bought with cryptocurrency.

Von Wong — with activist Casson Trenor and the Degenerate Trash Pandas, an NFT community that advocates against plastics with

the Solana cryptocurrency — raised about \$110,000 for the installation that also provided work to about 100 Kibera youth.

"Raising funds through cryptocurrency was something new for us", said Byrones Khainga, Director of Technical Services at Human Needs Project, a nonprofit in Kibera that helped on the installation.

"But it is now going to inform how we implement our social welfare activities because we have seen how fast we can move on fundraising", said Khainga, whose nonprofit tackles problems in Kibera such as garbage disposal and access to drinking water.

The project is one of several examples of cryptocurrency and

NFTs being used in African nations to fund welfare and development projects related to education, electricity healthcare, housing and livelihoods. Crypto fundraising has picked up as traditional channels of funding dried up in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and because of economic slowdowns, said Roselyne Wanjiru, a researcher at Blockchain Association of Kenya, an industry body.

"Crypto reduces barriers of entry, and is a fast way of raising funds for social causes because it is easier to navigate than traditional financial systems", said Wanjiru.

Cryptocurrencies were designed to be free of central financial authorities such as governments and central banks. They allow for "peer-

to-peer" transfers between users online without any intermediaries.

Their relative anonymity also offers a haven for criminals, extremist groups and sanctioned governments, but champions say they help support marginalised groups and those caught up in crises even as a sharp downturn in values hurts many users.

Payments and remittances via crypto are rising in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, which have among the highest share of crypto ownership among nations globally, according to the United Nations' trade agency UNCTAD.

About 8.5 per cent of Kenya's 56 million people own crypto, UNCTAD said, while the Central African Republic adopted bitcoin

as an official currency in April.

Virtual coins that use the same underlying blockchain technology as cryptocurrency are also in use in Kenya, like sarafu — meaning currency in Kiswahili — which is issued by the nonprofit Grassroots Economics Foundation.

The community currency helps more than 50,000 poor residents who cannot access bank loans to pay for essentials such as food, healthcare and housing. Also in Kenya, the Celo Foundation and Mercy Corps Ventures this year launched a microwork pilot giving hundreds of youth access to digital jobs, and paying them with Celo dollars, a stablecoin that tracks the value of the US dollar.

— Thomson Reuters Foundation

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Checking out khareef? Don't miss these five attractions

Autumn in Oman is unlike any other. Instead of trees sporting flaming red or orange leaves, they become green transforming a usually brown world into a lush paradise. If you're planning a visit to this year's khareef in Dhofar, don't miss out on these five attractions... **P20**

'Fire of Love' charts romance and death of volcano-chasing scientists

FRENCH SCIENTISTS Maurice and Katia Krafft were brought together, and eventually killed, by their shared love of volcanoes. Now the married couple are the subject of "Fire of Love," a new film constructed from hours of dazzling, terrifying and occasionally quirky footage they shot close to — and even inside — erupting craters. Playing in a limited number of US theatres, the documentary from National Geographic and prestigious indie distributor Neon ("Parasite") is earning rave reviews and generating early awards buzz. Director Sara Dosa first stumbled upon the pair's "spectacular imagery" while researching another documentary about Icelandic volcanoes — but was drawn more to the "love that just radiates behind the lens, unlike anything else."

For 25 years, the Kraffts had travelled the world together in search of active volcanoes, writing some 20 books and making five feature films, plus countless television programmes and lectures. But they are perhaps best remembered today for their deaths side-by-side on Japan's Mount Unzen volcano, which erupted in 1991 after nearly two centuries dormant, sending a fatal cloud of gas and ash surging down its eastern flank. "Fire of Love" begins and ends with this tragic information — yet it spends the bulk of its running time on the "love triangle" between the couple and their lifelong obsession. "Once we really learned about them as people... and the fact that they were married and also seemed to be in love with volcanoes — that's when we thought, 'okay, we want to make a film of these people,'" Dosa told.



"We wanted to tell kind of a mythic love story that was told through the language of volcanoes," she added. "That's what drew them together in the first place, and that was the propulsive material, the fuel of their relationship." **RECKLESS LOVE** While Maurice was the more extroverted and ostensibly thrill-seeking of the pair — he paddles in an acid lake and plots to kayak down an active lava stream — Katia was similarly courageous in the face of peril. Their gung-ho approach drew criticism from some of their scientific peers,

but "I don't think that we ever found them reckless, quite honestly," said Dosa. "They ultimately did lead a deeply meaningful life and die a meaningful death. And so much of that was this pursuit of love," she added. "I'm sure many people will say perhaps it was a reckless love, but for us, it was the way for them to live." After witnessing the staggering 1980 eruption of Mount St Helens in the northwestern United States, and the Nevado del Ruiz disaster that killed up to 25,000 Colombians five years later, the pair reoriented their work to lobby governments for better evacuation planning. "Since they were some of the only people really capturing those images, they were uniquely suited to do that advocacy work," said Dosa. "And that is literally what they were trying to do as they died on mountains in 1991."

SALVE Aside from informing modern audi-

ences about the pair's work, Dosa hopes the film can remind viewers that the planet is not simply "a resource to be capitalised upon." "These kinds of stories about the aliveness, the sentience of the Earth, are all the more important to counteract the exploitation," she said. Making the film during the pandemic and "having these guides, Katia and Maurice, teaching you how to navigate the unknown, and who knew how to reconcile fear — that was such a salve and a refuge for us." And then there is the aesthetic beauty of the footage itself, full of glowing red lava and alien-looking volcanic landscapes, all captured in a distinctive style with "the hallmarks of the French New Wave." "For example, in the cinematography, there was a lot of playful snap zooms, which reminded us of films in France from the 60s and 70s," she said. "And their own writing — they authored nearly 20 books — almost recalled the bombastic and playful spirit of narration in Truffaut films." Dosa herself drew on that style, including the documentary's own, breathy narration. "One of the great narrative devices of the French New Wave was love triangle stories," said Dosa. "And for us, that was something that felt appropriate. Katia and Maurice truly did seem to have a third in their relationship — volcanoes." — **AFP**

READ

BITTER ORANGE TREE BY JOKHA AL HARTHI

Bitter Orange Tree tells the story of Zuhur, an Omani student at a British university who is caught between the past and the present. As she attempts to form friendships and assimilate in Britain, she reflects on the relationships that have been central to her life.



VENICE FILM FESTIVAL

Oscar winning actress Julianne Moore will head the main competition jury at this year's Venice Film Festival, organisers said on Friday. Moore will be joined in deciding this year's winners by French director Audrey Diwan, who scooped the festival's Golden Lion award last year for her film "Happening", Iranian actress Leila Hatami, Italian director Leonardo Di Costanzo and Nobel Prize winning author Kazuo Ishiguro. — Reuters



LOPEZ — AFFLECT WEDDING

Singer Jennifer Lopez and actor Ben Affleck have married in Las Vegas, media reported on Sunday, after the celebrity couple rekindled a romance almost 20 years after they first got together. The couple announced their matrimony in a newsletter from Lopez revealing that they flew to the desert city in Nevada to gain a marriage license and wed at a chapel late on Saturday, according to People magazine. "Love is beautiful. Love is kind. And it turns out love is patient. Twenty years patient. Exactly what we wanted," Lopez said in the newsletter, the outlet reported. — Reuters





In Rome, a New Museum for Recovered Treasures Before They Return Home

LAST MONTH, Italian officials inaugurated a new museum here whose title sets a lofty agenda: the Museo dell'Arte Salvata, or the Museum of Rescued Art.

Rescued art is a broad term, it turns out, and the museum will showcase the myriad ways in which artworks can be salvaged — from thieves, from the rubble of earthquakes and other national disasters, from ancient shipwrecks in the Mediterranean or from the ravages of time by Italy's expert restorers.

Italian Culture Minister Dario Franceschini said at the inauguration of the museum that it would “show the world the excellence of our work” in all these fields.

But it is telling that the museum's first exhibition — which runs through October 15 — focuses on the recovery of looted art and pays tribute to Italy's crack art theft police squad — the Carabinieri Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage. The unit is credited with having returned thousands of art pieces to Italy, effectively thwarting “the black market in archaeological artefacts,” explains a panel on display.

About 100 pieces — Greco-Roman vases and sculptures and even coins dating from the seventh century to the third century BC — are on view at the museum, which has been installed in a cavernous hall that was built as part of the Baths of Diocletian and is now annexed to the National Roman Museum.

Their stay in the exhibition here, though, will be something akin to a pit stop.

For years, Italian culture ministry policy has been to return recovered artefacts to the museums closest to the site they were likely looted from, a process that can, at times, involve arduous deduction given the clandestine nature of the excavations.

So, for example, when the looted



ed second-century AD marble statue of Vibia Sabina, Hadrian's wife, was ceded by the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, in 2006, it was returned to his villa in Tivoli (although it is on temporary display in Rome these days, show-

cased by the Chamber of Commerce).

The task of determining where artefacts in this new museum should return to will fall to a team of archaeologists and experts.

“I think of this as a museum of

wounded art, because the works exhibited here have been deprived of their contexts of discovery and belonging,” said Stéphane Verger, director of the National Roman Museum, under whose oversight the new museum falls.

The Italian focus on recovering art and faithfully returning it to places of origin, no matter how remote, has had its detractors. Some say that in a globalised world where efforts are being made to spread culture, tackle problems internationally and drop economic and social barriers, the repatriation of Western antiquities speaks to a more insular persistence in the importance of national identity. Others argue that antiquities are best seen in institutions that attract millions of visitors rather than in local museums in out-of-the-way towns where they are more likely to draw dust than people.

A case in point is the evolution of an exhibition known as “Nostoi: Recovered Masterpieces,” from the Greek word for homecoming, which was first mounted in 2007 by Italian cultural officials as a triumphal recognition of their success in securing the return of stolen antiquities. Staged in Italy's presidential palace in Rome, the exhibition acknowledged the tremendous success Italy had in persuading several US museums to return dozens of items to Italy, most notably the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the J. Paul Getty Museum in California. But since 2017, a refurbished version of the “Nostoi” exhibition has been installed in a series of small rooms in a low building in a central square in Cerveteri, once an Etruscan stronghold known as Caere, about 25 kilometres northwest of Rome. The exhibition doesn't have regular visiting hours, although a tour guide association that occupies adjacent space will open the rooms on request. — **NYT**

CHANGING WORLD

Don't Toss Those Old Sneakers



THE KINGS OF our casual-attire era, sneakers have long been landfill fodder of cheap fabrication. Golden Goose, a maverick footwear enterprise, would like to propose an alternative: handcraft and repair.

With its flagship in Milan's upmarket Brera neighbourhood newly expanded and redesigned to accommodate workshops for cobblers and embroiderers, the brand best known for introducing \$500 artisan-made sneakers is now offering in-store bespoke repairs that can run over \$100. But despite the high-end pricing, the model may serve as a blueprint for fashion companies looking to extend the lifetime of their products.

“Artisans are able to produce uniqueness with their hands,” Silvio Campara, Golden Goose's CEO, recently offered as an explanation of the sneakers' eye-popping costs as he leaned on a workshop counter at the rear of his brand's revamped boutique. “And artesanship creates affection.”

It also explains the business incentive to give artisans in their 20s and 30s a starring role at the flagship. In a well-outfitted atelier, a team of cobblers cleans, restitches and resoles shoes — especially sneakers — amid polishing wheels, leather-sewing machines and an ozone sanitising closet, surrounded by the heady turpentine scent of glue on rubber. In another corner of the store, lined with drawers of rhinestones and rows of ribbon rolls, embroiderers sew patches on jeans and other clothing and stitch hearts, flowers and other whimsical designs onto sneakers — Golden Goose's first venture into customisation.

“Our goal is to renew the dignity of artisans,” Campara said, holding up a half-repaired sneaker with the nailheads of its hand-hammered insole exposed. “It was a difficult task to find



20 young people who wanted to work as cobblers today,” he added, but they were ultimately convinced that as part of Golden Goose's repair programme, “they're shaping the future of fashion.”

“I'll be thrilled if other brands try to copy us,” he said.

Buoyant and self-assured, Campara sported ripped white jeans spangled all over with pearls and rhinestones while showing off Golden Goose's renovated flagship last month. He has a habit of winking when he's bragging, as when he proclaimed, “We're way ahead.” (Wink.) “Everyone else is outdated.”

The cobblers behind him, in denim jumpsuits with their official title — “Dream Maker” — patched in capitals across their back, removed sneakers from a specialised oven that heats the rubber so the foxing, the strip that wraps some sneaker styles, can be peeled away and replaced along with the outsole.

“Five years ago, sneaker repair didn't exist,” said Alessandro Pastore, a cobbler who formerly led production for factories making shoes for brands including Louis Vuitton, Jimmy Choo and Christian Louboutin. “There isn't a single luxury boutique that offers this kind of repair service.” He began hammering rubber into place on a stake-mounted sneaker. “We are the first, and we are unique, and it makes us feel truly important.” (At that, Campara high-fived him from across the counter.)

The brand, founded in 2000 by Francesca Rinaldo and Alessandro Gallo, applied an old-fashioned approach to manufacturing sneakers: Instead of vulcanising a rubber sole to encase the shoe's top portion — the customary quick fix for sneaker production in Asia — Golden Goose looked to the cordwainers of its home territory of Veneto, a region renowned for formal shoes handcrafted according to tradition, where several luxury fashion houses have established factories to take advantage of local footwear artesanship. Golden Goose devised sneakers with the same individually sewn uppers and hand-hammered soles found in formal shoes, and today it fabricates more than a million pairs of sneakers a year using traditional techniques in eight factories in Veneto and around Italy. “We're the best,” Campara said with another wink, “because we're Italian. We have the craftsmanship in this country that produces the world's luxury goods.”

In the Milan boutique, window shelves display pairs of half-rehabbed sneakers. The before and afters can be difficult to discern without studying the soles, however, as the sneakers themselves — in keeping with Golden Goose's philosophy of “perfect imperfection” — proudly bear deliberate scuffs, tears, frays and inked-on graffiti. At the laundering station in the cobblers' workshop, dozens of jars indicate the range of shades needed in white paint alone, from snow to smoggy, to match the effects of wear. A price board of artisan sneaker services advertises the apparently popular “Lived-In Treatment.” The cost: 70 euros, about the same in dollars. — **NYT**



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Bob Dylan announces first British tour in more than five years



BOB DYLAN HAS announced his first British tour in more than five years. The US folk and rock singer, 81, will play nine dates in October 2022 as part of his Rough and Rowdy Ways Worldwide Tour, which began in December in Milwaukee. He will play four nights at the London Palladium before visiting Cardiff, Hull and Nottingham for arena shows, then closing with two nights in Glasgow. The concerts will take place between Wednesday October 19 and Monday 31, with tickets going on sale on Friday July 15. Dylan, who has won numerous awards including the Nobel Prize for literature during a 60-year career, last toured Britain in April and May 2017 as part of his Never Ending Tour. That run of shows saw him mix classic tracks such as "Blowin' in the Wind", "Highway 61 Revisited" and "Tangled Up In Blue" with newer material. Dylan has already played 74 US dates as part of the "Rough and Rowdy Ways" tour, in support of his British number one 39th studio album. The shows have drawn upon his vast back catalogue as well as songs from the critically-acclaimed new album. All the shows will be non-phone events, with the audience required to lock their phones in a Yondr bag for the duration of the performance. Emerging from New York City's Greenwich Village folk scene in the early 1960s, Dylan became a counter-cultural figure with the release of a series of political anthems. Dylan, born Robert Zimmerman in Duluth, Minnesota, was the first songwriter to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2016, with the Swedish academy crediting him with "having created new poetic expressions within the great American song tradition." His songs have been recorded more than 6,000 times, with artists as varied as The Byrds, Jimi Hendrix and Adele finding both commercial and critical success with covers. Dylan has to date sold more than 125 million records globally and won a best original song Oscar in 2001 for "Things Have Changed", which he penned for the film "Wonder Boys." Tickets go on sale at 10 am (0900 GMT) on Friday July 15. — dpa

TRAVEL TALES

In Portugal, Taking a Dive Into Sardines



PORTO, PORTUGAL'S second-largest city, is the capital of one of the country's major industries, fish canning. Canned sardines are having a moment in the food world. With exquisitely decorated tins, perceived if questionable sustainability and the decadence of being drenched in oil, they've earned a devoted following among youngish people who love them with their whole heart. At Conservas Pinhais e Cia in Matosinhos, a fish-canning factory just a few miles from the center of Porto, visitors are invited to see that their new favourite treat is, in fact, a very old operation. The workforce is almost all female, a tradition set by the fact that, historically, men went to sea while women stayed behind and dealt with the catch. It is not uncommon for generations of women to work in the factory, with mothers, daughters and aunts finding steady jobs canning. Indeed, the tour of the sardine factory begins with a video of a Portuguese daughter, waiting for her father to make it through a storm. (He does.) "That film is dedicated to all the families of our fishermen, for the stress they endure", said the guide Olga Santos, at the start of a recent tour. Thus begins the entry to the wonderful, reverent world of canned sardines. The 90-minute tour, which Pinhais introduced in November 2021, starts in an office originally built in 1926 and complete with rotary phones and a pulley system, on which orders would be attached to a rope and sent down to the factory floor, separating the office from the fish canning itself. After the video of the fishermen's families and one about how the fish's seasonings are sourced, the screen rises to reveal a window on the working factory. You leave the impeccably decorated display area — the original founders shaped the stairwell so that

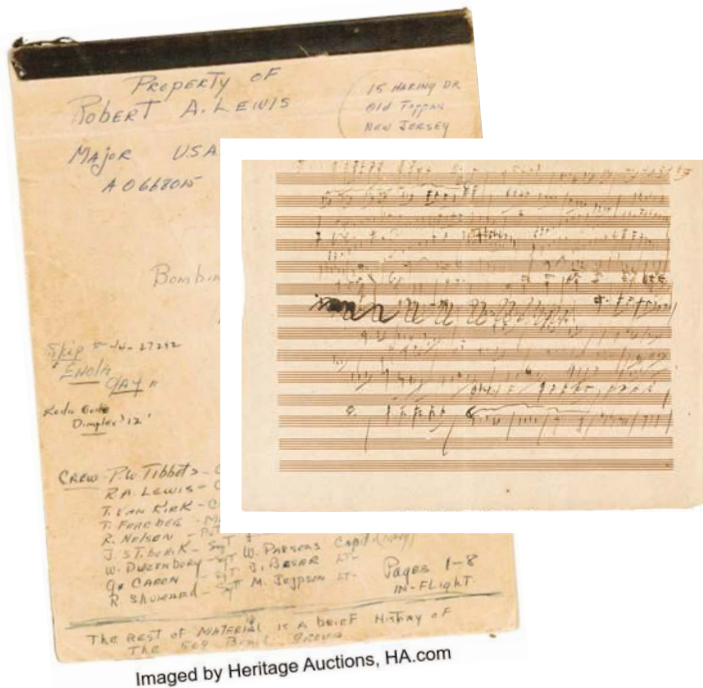
when you look up in the factory foyer you see the outline of a sardine — for the nitty-gritty work area. After donning protective coverings, you enter along a walkway that runs around the edge of a mostly open floor, divided only by arched windows, save for a few offices where workers are typing on laptops. The first thing you see is a table of women cutting chilli peppers, bay leaves and pickles to fill the spicy versions of the company's four varieties of sardines, which are offered either in toma-

are filled with olive oil using machinery, introduced a few years ago. In a promotional book you can purchase in the gift store, a few factory workers lament the new oil machine, remembering fondly getting "really covered" with the olive oil, which comes from the nearby Douro Valley. The tins are sealed by machine, which accounts for some of the loud noise on the floor. Also loud is the constant flow of water, which rings throughout the factory as the sardines are washed several times before they're cooked. Other noises are harder to track: The oil spray, the wheels of pulleys rolling the fish from station to station, and the steam ovens all seem to create enough clamour that guests are given headphones to hear the guide while on the floor. Finally, everything is packaged with lightning speed in what amounts to wrapping paper. You're given a chance to try this yourself in a closed-off room after exiting the tour and unwrapping yourself from the PPE, but it's impossible to match the dexterity of the wrappers on the factory floor who wield the yellow, green and blue papers with astonishing ease. — NYT



AUCTION

Hiroshima bombing flight book, Mozart manuscript offered at varied auction



A HANDWRITTEN Mozart manuscript, a flight book from the bombing of Hiroshima and a fragment from a Gutenberg Bible, as well as a cassock worn by Pope Francis, are among a range of items up for grabs in an online sale by US-based Heritage Auctions. Fifty-two lots are being offered in the Historical Platinum Session Signature Auction, described as spanning "500 years of human innovation" and covering fields such as literature, science and history. "We start with a Gutenberg Bible leaf, so 1452 about, all the way up to material that went to the moon on Apollo 11," Samantha Sisler, manager of speciality collections auctions at Heritage Auctions, told Reuters. The Gutenberg Bible was the world's first substantial printed book, of which only a few dozen volumes still survive. One of the top lots, with of a bid of \$400,000 on Thursday, is a logbook written by US Army Air Forces officer Captain Robert A Lewis, one of the pilots of the Enola Gay, the plane that dropped the first nuclear bomb used in warfare over the Japanese city of Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. "You have eight pages of his thoughts... hour-by-hour, minute-by-minute of exactly what happened... on the plane ride to Hiroshima", Sisler said. "And then they dropped the bomb. And he literally writes:

"There will be a short intermission while we bomb', period... It is incredibly significant... words can't describe what you feel when you hold this thing in your hands. Something that witnessed the dawn of the nuclear age." Other lots relate to American aviation pioneer Amelia Earhart, who vanished while attempting a round-the-world flight in 1937, including photographs and letters, as well as a telescope belonging to the astronomer Clyde Tombaugh who discovered Pluto. There are also draft works from authors such as Sherlock Holmes creator Arthur Conan Doyle and working manuscripts from composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. "They have corrections and annotations... you can see their genius at work as they're writing, as they're correcting, as they're changing their mind and refining", Sisler said. She added it was the first time Heritage Auctions, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, had brought several specialities together in response to the varied interests of collectors. — Reuters





art & life

Local Scene

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Don't miss these five attractions when visiting Dhofar's khareef

By Arwa Al Hashimi
Photos by Haitham Al Farsi

With autumn finally here, it's time to put up a plan and escape to the wonderful arms of Dhofar's astonishing nature for a mini-vacation. And just like that popular song, the hills (mountains in Dhofar's case) are alive.

But it's not just mountains that are worth the visit, from plains to beaches including a series of springs, a part of Dhofar becomes that picture-perfect destination that would want you to captivate hundreds of images. But you're not the only one packing up his bags for that long drive or that quick plane ride towards Oman's beautiful south. So word of caution, there will be hundreds (if not thousands) of other tourists wanting that

Instagram-worthy posts. What this means is that be ready for traffic in some areas. Expect queues in popular food joints and expect other people in your photos doing poses just as you do. We are putting together five of the places you cannot afford to miss when in Dhofar for the khareef season.

WADI DARBAT
Wadi Darbat is a spectacular lush

green valley with a river running in the middle. This river runs for miles and at some point, creates beautiful cascading waterfalls. The surrounding hills have small caves in which people can stroll. It's the perfect place for a small family outing or a friendly get-together. During autumn, the valley is filled with locals and tourists who visit to enjoy the scenery. There are many stalls and small restaurants in the valley that sell street food such as shawarma, popcorn and ice cream.

MUGHSAYL BEACH
Mughsayl is a long stretch of clear blue water with white sand and beautiful cliffs on either side of the water. It's a magnificent and picturesque landscape. People usually come here not just to enjoy the beautiful landscape but also to interact with the blowholes, enjoy the caves as well as hike on the nearby footpaths. It is perfect for a picnic and a quick swim, you can even drive through the beach! There are also many cute traditional huts at the beach where you can have your own barbecue lunch. Word of caution. The waves in Mughsayl beach are powerful so it's best to remain within the safety fences set up by the municipality to protect your stay in the area.

TAWI ATAIR SINKHOLE
Tawi Atair is one of the most famous sinkholes in Dhofar and it is one of the deepest natural sinkholes in the world with 100 metres in width and 211 metres in depth. The sinkhole is very deep that is why caution must be taken while visiting. There is a gallery where you can see the hole perfectly. The gallery has a protective wall as the land is slippery and fog usually obstructs the view. It is also called the 'well of birds' as many migrating birds land around the water of the sinkhole.

THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES
Dhofar is known as the land of frankincense. This reputation has been established hundreds of years ago and continues to resonate today. Therefore, there are a lot of things to uncover on your visit especially when it comes to its frankincense history. Aside from this historical gem, many archaeological sites all over Dhofar would certainly astound history buffs. Al Baleed and Sumahram for example will already make you wonder how complex and regal the ancient ways of living are. Both of these sites have sea ports where frankincense and other goods are traded. A drive out of the city, one will find Wadi Dawkah where a massive frankincense plantation will educate you on how frankincense is extracted. A few kilometres away, the site of Ubar also known as the Atlantis of the Sand will give more meaning to how massive Oman's popularity was as a source of frankincense in the past. You can go archaeological site hunting and this will definitely already occupy a full day.

SAMHAN MOUNTAINS
The highest peak in Dhofar reaching up to 2000 metres, this is the best place to see the sea of clouds covering the massive grandness of the nearby plains. It is a perfect viewpoint for sunset and sunrise pictures. It is home to many plants such as Acacia, Gum trees and even the mesmerising baobab. The narrow mountain passes have little water but there are several streams, which are an important source of water for most animals found in the region. Besides the Arabian leopard (considered a rare animal), these mountains are home to several other mammals such as the Arabian gazelle, foxes and the Nubian ibex.