

P12

RONALDO LEADS PORTUGAL SQUAD SEARCHING FOR FIRST WORLD CUP



P13

OIA TO LAUNCH STRATEGIC PROJECTS WORTH RO 750M AS PART OF 52ND NATIONAL DAY



P20

ASTRONAUTS FLOCK TO MOON LIKE SPANISH ISLE TO TRAIN



MUSCAT

BADR TALKS TO UKRAINIAN MINISTER

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, made a phone call with Dmytro Kuleba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

During the phone call, they discussed the Ukrainian crisis, underscoring the importance of diplomacy, dialogue and negotiations based on the Charter of the United Nations, the international law and the principle of good neighbourhood. The foreign ministers reviewed the existing friendship relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Ukraine and the mutual keenness to strengthen them. — ONA

HUNGARY’S KUFER VISITS OMAN TODAY

Dr Lachlo Kufer, President of the National Assembly of Hungary, will arrive in Muscat on Saturday. The visit is aimed at fostering bilateral relations in various fields. Majlis Ashshura and the National Assembly leaders will hold a discussion session to review ways of supporting the relationship between the two countries, enhancing coordination in the legislations field and coordinating efforts and visions in the international parliamentary forums.

DHOFAR THEATRE FESTIVAL OPENS

The five-day Dhofar Theatre Festival, organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, in the Governorate of Dhofar, was inaugurated on Thursday under the auspices of Dr Ahmed bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality. A large number of dignitaries and theatre representatives attended the opening day event.

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INSIDE



19 DEAD IN EGYPT AFTER BUS FALLS INTO CANAL

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AMERICA JUST DODGED AN ARROW

P8

COLOURS OF PATRIOTISM



With the 52nd National Day just around the corner, the roads in all governorates of the Sultanate of Oman are bedecked with the national flags, and white, green and red lights. The facades of the public and private establishments are decorated with geometric-shaped lanterns reflecting items of the local culture.

Sohar Freezone gets projects worth RO 100m

STAFF REPORTER
Muscat, Nov 12

Oman will mark a major milestone in the mining sector and economic diversification when the foundation stone for RO 40 million titanium dioxide factory will be laid in Sohar Freezone on Sunday. Oman's first petroleum coke calcining facility with a total investment of about RO 60 million will also be inaugurated on the same day.

Omar bin Mahmoud al Mahrazi, CEO of Sohar Freezone, said the volume of investments in the zone amounted to about RO 416 million through the presence of 223 companies.

The CEO of Sohar Freezone said the zone signed nine agreements this year and provided over 3,000 job opportunities with a 45-per cent Omanisation rate.

He said the freezone has become the first destination for foreign investment thanks to its strategic location and the comprehensive list of benefits and incentives it offers to investors like warehouses designed with the highest standards, commercial

offices and an abundance of land. He said the titanium dioxide production plant's initial production capacity is 150 tonnes per year on an area of 160,000 square metres.

Titanium is used in the making of aircraft, ships, vehicles, medical equipment, sports equipment and others. The project will open many doors in the metal products manufacturing sector, which will contribute to increasing the processing of raw minerals in Oman.

The petroleum coke calcining plant is run by Sanvira Carbon, which is a joint venture between Oman National Investments Development Company (TANMIA), Sanvira Industries Ltd and United Business Trading LLC.

The plant is located in the Sohar Freezone on an area of 18 hectares and has a production capacity of 500,000 tonnes per year with the possibility of scaling up to 750,000 metric tonnes per year when fully operational. It is the latest addition to the growing mineral industry complex in the freezone.

RO 40m

titanium dioxide factory

Petroleum coke calcining facility

RO 60m

Sohar Freezone, investments

RO 416m

3,000 job opportunities with a 45% Omanisation rate

Oman to host world’s iconic super car rally

STAFF REPORTER
Muscat, Nov 12

Gumball 3000, one of the biggest celebrity motor rallies in the world, will enter Muscat from the UAE on Sunday on its way to Wilayat of Jabal Al Akhdhar.

The drivers will travel to Mirbat, Duqm, Salalah and Muscat before returning to the UAE. The Gumball 3000 supercar rally is coming to the Middle East for the first time.

During the march, drivers will get to know about the most important cultural, heritage and tourism sites in the Sultanate of Oman.

Hisham bin Juma al Sinani, Director-General of Sports Welfare and Development at the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, said, “Gumball 3000 will help Oman to boost sports tourism. The participants will pass through important



The drivers will travel to Mirbat, Duqm, Salalah and Muscat before returning to the UAE.

tourism landmarks.”

Haitham bin Mohammed al Ghassani, Director-General of Tourism Promotion at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said: “The Sultanate of Oman is rich in attractions across various governorates, including natural landmarks such as the coasts extending from Dhofar in the south to

Musandam in the north. The area is dotted with ancient villages, caves, hot springs and wadis. We are pleased that the organisers of Gumball 3000 chose a route that offers a variety of prominent tourist attractions such as Jabal Al Akhdhar, Salalah and Muscat.”

Al Ghassani said Gumball 3000 is part of a series of

international sporting events and other tourism festivals taking place in the various governorates to boost Oman's profile in the global tourism map.

Founded in 1999 by British entrepreneur Maximillion Cooper, Gumball 3000 is a car rally which has taken thousands of supercars and entrants on an epic journey all across the globe.

OIA to invest RO 750 million in 10 projects

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) will launch 10 projects across governorates, and varying in sectors, through its subsidiaries, and in partnership with local and foreign companies.

The launch of these projects, valued in excess of RO 750 million, comes against the backdrop of celebrations marking Oman's 52nd Glorious National Day.

Hisham bin Ahmed al Sheidi, Director General of Economic Diversification Investments at the Oman Investment Authority, said that these projects aim to contribute to efforts aimed at economic diversification, developing governorates, attracting investments, empowering the private sector, and creating job opportunities for citizens that exceed 860 direct and indirect jobs.

FULL REPORT ON P13



Tender



The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madaayn) announces the following tender:

Bidding Number	Name of Project	Last Date for Purchase of Bidding's Documents	Last Date for Bid Submission	Purchase Payment (RO)
NIZ/2/2022	Residential City at Nizwa Industrial City	20/11/2022	20/12/2022	50

Companies specialized in the aforesaid works and have had a valid registration certificate from the Tender Board may subscribe and collect the bidding in accordance with the following process:

1. Deposit procurement of the bidding' documents in account no. (0378007322810019) Bank Muscat addressed to the PEIE (Madaayn).
2. Email the receipt and contact details to Nizwa-finance@peie.om
3. Date of visit to the location of Nizwa Industrial City falls on 22 Nov 2022.
4. Inquires related to the project is sent by email to Nizwa.Operation@madayn.om no later than 1 Dec 2022.
5. Bids are submitted in the Nizwa Industrial City in red-wax sealed envelopes and addressed to the Head of the Procurement Committee (P.O. Box 998, PC 611 Nizwa) without naming or mentioning the bidder on the envelope's exterior, no later than 12 pm on the deadline. The bid should be accompanied with a banking bond equivalent to 1% of the bid's value and valid for 90 days from the last date for bid submission.

Madaayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other bid.
Madaayn retains the right to cancel the bidding and the bidders are not entitled for any compensation thereto.

madayn.om

@madaynoman

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture?
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Oman wins World Travel Awards in 9 categories

KABEER YOUSUF & VINOD NAIR
MUSCAT, NOV 12

With nine awards of excellence in the travel, tourism and hospitality sectors, Oman marked a clear dominance at the 29th edition of the World Travel Awards 2022, held under the auspices of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, on Friday.

The national airline, Oman Air, won awards for the World's Leading Airline — Business Class, World's Leading Airline — Customer Experience, and World's Leading Airline Lounge — Business Class. The Sultanate was picked as the World's Leading Nature Destination, while Muscat International Airport won the award for the world's leading airport in customer experience. Salalah Airport was named the leading regional airport. The award for the World's Leading Palace Hotel went to the



Al Bustan Palace, a Ritz-Carlton Hotel, while Jumeirah Muscat Bay and The Chedi won awards for the World's Leading New Resort and World's Leading Beach Resort and Spa respectively. The Minister of Heritage and Tourism, said, "The Sultanate offers liberal visa rules for tourists and opportunities and protection of investments for investors in the tourism sector." Shaikh Aimen bin Ahmed al Hosni, CEO, Oman Airports, said,

"The travel and tourism industry is one of the most prominent economic sectors in which countries from around the world compete, with the Middle East being one of its most promising markets today. I would like to congratulate Muscat International Airport for winning the award for the best airport in the world in customer experience, and Salalah Airport as well for being chosen as the best regional airport in the world."



Oman Traditional Music



14 November | 7:00 PM

The concert will present an evening showcasing the richness of Omani traditional music, demonstrating the variety of genres from the different regions of Oman. Performers will represent their regions, displaying the different costumes, the range of drums and drum techniques as well as the contrasting regional styles of dance.



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SEASON 2022-2023

Embassy of Japan to host netsuke expo at GUtech



MUSCAT: To commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Sultanate of Oman, the Embassy of Japan in the Sultanate and GUtech will host a Japanese craft art exhibition, "Contemporary Wood-Carved Netsuke". The exhibition will be held from November 13 to December 3. Netsuke is a toggle developed in the 17th century in Japan and evolved out of kimono (Japanese traditional outfit) culture for practical use. Kimono does not have pockets, so back in those days, items which needed to be carried, such as money pouches and tobacco containers, were suspended by a cord from a belt called obi. Netsuke worked as a stopper to be positioned on the top of the belt to prevent those things from falling. Women kept items inside the sleeves, so they did not use netsuke. As people started to wear western style clothing, netsuke disappeared from daily life. At the same time, however, the highly sophisticated art craft of netsuke has gained international acclaim for the artistic, subtle and detailed carvings. This co-hosted exhibition is being curated by the Japan Foundation as one of their travelling exhibition projects to introduce Japanese art and crafts to the world. 65 netsuke of 42 Japanese craftsmen's works will be exhibited at History of Science Centre, GUtech.





New development and service projects to come up in South Al Batinah

RUSTAQ: The Governorate of South Al Batinah has over the past decades witnessed the implementation of several development and service projects to meet needs of the citizens and provide stability for them.

Like the other governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, the development wheel continues running in South Al Batinah Governorate under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq with the renewed Renaissance and Oman Vision 2040 is well under way in all governorates each of which is envisioned to have autonomy in terms of service provision and development projects.

Speaking to ONA, Shaikh Saif bin Hamyar al Malik al Shehi, Governor of South Al Batinah, said: "The process of development and construction in the Sultanate of Oman is gaining more momentum in response to the aspirations and ambitions of the Omani citizen which made the Sultanate of Oman a shining

example,"

The Governorate of South Al Batinah, like the rest of the governorates, is getting a great attention from His Majesty Sultan Haitham and has seen significant progress in various fields. A great support is accorded to the projects that contribute to improving the services rendered to individuals and establishments, the governor said.

A number of projects were approved and others are under implementation while some projects have been completed in all wilayats of South Al Batinah Governorate in the first phase of the Tenth Five-Year Plan (2021-2025). In all, there are currently 47 development projects that aim at developing tourist sites, heritage landmarks and beaches and providing them with infrastructure and facilities. Other projects are aimed at developing traditional markets and establishing commercial stores and walking tracks in a number of wilayats, he said.

There are currently 47 development projects that aim at developing tourist sites, heritage landmarks and beaches and providing them with infrastructure and facilities



The governor of South Al Batinah noted that the governorate will organise the Recreational Tourism Forum this November in collaboration with public and private agencies. The three-month event will include a number of activities that highlight tourism, economic and cultural aspects in addition to consumer exhibition, entertaining events, handicraft products exhibitions and seasonal product exhibitions. Other activities include sand marathon, trekking between mountains and sand dunes in addition to recreational and tourism activities on the sands of Khubat Al Qaadani.

The forum also includes activities marking the 52nd National Day in all wilayats of the governorate such as folk arts, marine activities in the wilayats of Barka and Musannah such as beach recreational games and equestrian camel games, the governor said, confirming the participation of a number of institutions and authorities

in the governorate with a view of strengthening the national identity, promoting tourism and highlighting its role in supporting the economy, the governor said.

The most eminent projects under implementation in South Al Batinah Governorate include developing Ain Al Kasfa in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq, a vital project that encompasses establishment of a spa, bus parking, castle-shaped circular terraces overlooking the source of the spring, restaurants, cafés, commercial stores, a mosque, and many more, the governor said.

Contracts have been awarded for the development of Tiwi Al Hara site, the development of Souq Abu Thamania in the Wilayat of Al Rustaq to become an integrated system combining the fish market (under construction) and the Tiwi Al Hara area which is considered as an economic tributary in addition to the construction of new markets in the wilayats of Al Awabi and Wadi Al Maawil, the governor said.

— ONA





PORTS OF OMAN

THE NATURAL PARTNER IN ECONOMIC GROWTH

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

THE PORTS of the Sultanate of Oman handled an increase in cargo volume in the first half of this year. The number of containers handled by ports saw an increase of two per cent at 2,58 million TEU compared to 2,53 million TEU during the same period in H1 2021.

According to the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, the growth was attributed to a two-per cent increase in containers handled at Salalah Port.

The ports enjoyed a rise of 5 per cent in general, liquid, and dry bulk cargo, totalling 42,76 million tonnes compared to 40,61 million tonnes over the same period last year.

A look into major highlights of the ports of the Sultanate:

PORT SULTAN QABOOS has been the major commercial sea hub of the country since opening in 1974. In 2014, it rebranded itself as a major cruise destination in the Middle East.

The port is equipped with a modern passenger terminal, a duty-free shop, berthing and ancillary facilities needed for safe cruise operations.

Asyad has been managing the Port Sultan Qaboos since January 1, 2018.

Sohar Port and its adjacent Free Zone are managed by Sohar Industrial Port Company (SIPC). The Port terminals are operated by leading international companies: C. Steinweg Oman for general cargo handling, Oiltanking Terminals for liquid bulk handling, and Hutchison Port Sohar for container handling.

SOHAR PORT AND FREE ZONE have announced the allocation of around 6 million square meters for renewable energy projects, which will benefit from extensive studies on green hydrogen as an alternative fuel source.

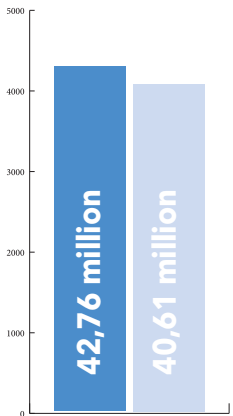
At the end of the third quarter of this year, cargo throughput reached 21 million tonnes, with the port handling a total of about 2,225 ships.

SALALAH PORT users benefit from a container terminal with seven berths, a general cargo terminal with 12 berths, and a liquid jetty with two berths - with up to 18 metres of draft, it regularly accommodates the world's largest container ships.

Salalah hosts more than 2,500 vessel calls each year and is one of the fastest-growing port operations worldwide. Services include stevedoring, container maintenance and repair, tug services, bunkering, warehousing, and other port-related services.

Salalah Port is planning to attract very large container ships and raise its handling capabilities after the company's

The ports enjoyed a rise of 5 per cent in general, liquid, and dry bulk cargo, totalling 42,76 million tonnes compared to 40,61 million tonnes over the same period last year



In 2014, **PORT SULTAN QABOOS** rebranded itself as a major cruise destination in the Middle East

At the end of the third quarter of this year, **SOHAR PORT** cargo throughput reached 21 million tonnes, with the port handling a total of about 2,225 ships

With nearly 300 metres of berthing capacity, **SUWAIQ PORT** can accommodate any ship with a draft of 5 metres or less

Salalah hosts more than 2,500 vessel calls each year and has been one of the fastest-growing port operations worldwide

board of directors approved the conclusion of an agreement to lease 10 cranes that would allow the port to deal with this type of container ships, which can accommodate more than 14,500 containers.

THE PORT OF DUQM offers a wide range of services, such as the availability of MARPOL facilities, freshwater supply, fuel bunkering, ship-to-ship transfers at one of its multiple anchorage areas, and domestic waste collection and treatment.

The Port of Duqm, which has been in operation since 2012, already has extensive built-up expertise in handling break bulk, project cargo and dry bulk cargo.

Being the largest fishing port in the Sultanate of Oman, the port is 10 metres deep, consisting of 2 breakwaters that are 3.3 km long, a 1.3-km fixed berth, and six other floating berths.

PORT OF KHASAB is positioned at the northern end of Oman, in the Musandam Governorate, facing the Strait of Hormuz. The port offers immediate access to the sea route, which is navigated by hundreds of ships a day, and proximity to the markets of Iran, Iraq, Pakistan and India.

The Port of Khasab serves as an essential resource for cruise vessels, ferry operations and Iranian freight and cargo.

THE SHINAS PORT serves local traders who have benefitted from expanding import and export capacity covering raw materials, manufactured goods and building materials. Port Shinas is also increasingly positioning itself as a hub for the Sultanate's extensive ferry network.

SUWAIQ PORT is ideal for global logistics customers seeking rapid access to Oman and the wider region. Asyad has embarked on a major expansion of its berthing capacity. With nearly 300 metres of berthing capacity, Suwaiq Port can accommodate any ship with a draft of -5 metres or less.

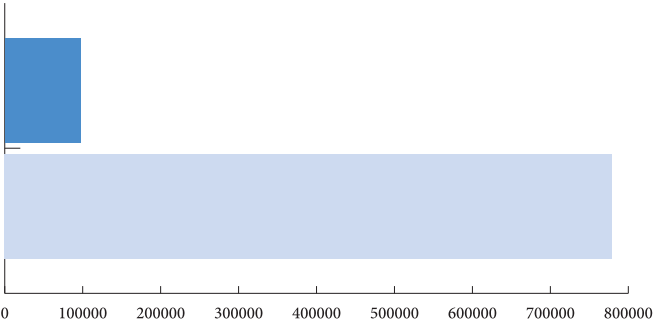
MoTCIT has invited tenders for the development, management, and operation of the Dhalkout Port in the Governorate of Dhofar, apart from ports such as Khasab, Shinas, Shaleem, Shanna, Masirah, Manji and Sadah.

MoTCIT is also conducting a study for the establishment of yacht marinas and construction at Port of Shinas.

THE DIBBA PORT is part of the government's plan to diversify the economy and work to develop fishing ports in the Sultanate to be an attractive environment for investments. The area of the port following completion of the expansion in December 2023 will increase from 97,000 sqm to 779,000 sqm. The expansion will provide land plots that meet the needs of local and foreign investor.

The area of the **DIBBA PORT** following completion of the expansion in December 2023 will increase from

97,000
SQM TO
779,000
SQM





Cruise ship with over 4,500 tourists docks at Salalah

MUSCAT: The Italian cruise ship Aida Cosma with 4,507 tourists on board docked at Salalah Port on Saturday.

The ship is one of the largest cruise ships in the world and this is the first time it has docked in the ports of the Sultanate of Oman.

The programme for the passengers of the cruise ship, coming from the Egyptian port of Port Said and heading to the Port of Sultan Qaboos in the Governorate of Muscat, include tours of the most important archaeological, tourist and historical monuments for which the Governorate of Dhofar is famous, in addition to visiting the beaches and traditional markets in Salalah.

It is worth noting that Oman witnesses visits by many cruise ships annually due to its distinguished marine location overlooking the Indian Ocean, the Arabian Sea and the Sea of Oman. — ONA



Five-day Dhofar Theatre Festival opens

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

The five-day Dhofar Theatre Festival, organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, in the Governorate of Dhofar, was inaugurated on Thursday under the auspices of Dr Ahmed bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality. A large number of dignitaries and theatre representatives attended the opening day event.

In his opening remarks, Hamed al Masheikhi, Director of Culture in Dhofar Governorate, said, “With great pleasure, we gathered in this cultural incubator of knowledge to witness collective youth works and to celebrate skills in theatre and playwrights. This festival has been organised to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, which emphasises the importance of such festivals to care for the Omani youth and encourage them to participate in creative activities.”

This year’s Dhofar Theatre Festival, he said, “features theatre groups from Mirbat, Taqah, Awfir, Salalah and Ubar. The work of two prominent artists, the late Mohammed al Yafei and Abdullah al Shanfari, will be performed as well.

The Sultanate of Oman, the official said, attaches great importance to heritage, culture and youth in particular by providing all means of support and assistance to them in various



forums that are held at the regional and international levels, whether from a cultural or sports aspect.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth seeks to promote ways of showing cultural heritage in various forums, as well as encouraging those interested in the matter by providing an appropriate environment for practising various activities, whether in local or international festivals.

The participants expressed thanks to the parties supporting them, and that it is not only at the financial level, but also in the field of education and training, including developing the skills of young people in various fields that serve the comprehensive development goals in the country by providing an environment that supports artistic innovation.

Some of the attendees welcomed the festival as a reflection of the ministry’s efforts to enhance the role of the culture sector in spreading awareness of the importance of cultural theatre to spread social awareness among the younger generation.



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (44/2022)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Document Fee	Last Date for Inquires Submission	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Docs.	Last Date for Submission
129/2022/MM/PA-28	Tailoring & Supplying Uniforms for Muscat Municipality	25/- OMR	04/12/2022	12/12/2022	11/01/2023

- Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.
- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through link mentioned above.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond which is equivalent to (1%) of the total value of the tender to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality and valid for (90) days starting from the deadline for submission.
- Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.**
- Clarifications and support:**
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
 - For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to (etenderhd@mtc.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).
 - For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200/24402330).

Website: www.mm.gov.om

Vistara to start daily Mumbai-Muscat flights



VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](https://twitter.com/vinot_nair)

Indian airline Vistara on Saturday announced non-stop flights between Mumbai and Muscat starting from December 12.

Vistara will operate daily flights between the two cities using its A320neo aircraft. It will be the only airline to offer a premium economy class on the route, in addition to business and economy class.

As per the timings available on the website, the flight from Mumbai will depart at 8:30 pm to reach Muscat at 21:35 pm, while the outbound flight from Muscat will depart at 10:55 pm to reach Mumbai at 03:10 am. The Economy Class fares start from RO 7,500 for a few days, starting on December 12.

Vinod Kannan, CEO of Vistara, said: “We are excited to expand our presence in the Middle East by adding Muscat as the fourth city in the region. Given the strong bilateral ties and the thriving trade and investment relations between India and Oman, this new route will further aid the growing traffic between the two countries. The capital city of Muscat continues to attract a significant number of expatriates, traders, business travellers and high-end leisure travellers from India who will now have the choice of flying business class and premium economy on India’s best airline complemented with Vistara’s signature hospitality.”

Earlier, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in the Sultanate had issued its approval for the Indian company Vistara Airlines to operate direct flights between Mumbai and Muscat.



Sultanate of Oman Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources

TENDERS NOTICE

The Tenders committee of Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources Announces the following Tenders: -

Tender No.	Description	Tender Documents Price (R.O)	Class	Last Date for Collection of Documents	Last Date for Submission of Documents
521/2022/MAFWR/HQ-81 - Recall - 2	Maintenance Works of Aquaculture Center at Al Bustan	25/-	Fourth	Tuesday 15/11/2022	Thursday 24/11/2022
691/2022/MAFWR/HQ-73	Rehabilitation and Maintenance Works at Ministry Headquarter - Fourth Floor	25/-	Third	Thursday 17/11/2022	Thursday 8/12/2022
692/2022/MAFWR/HQ-74	Servicing and Cleaning the Fishing Ports in Sohar, Saham, Al Khaboura, Al Suwaig, Shinas and Liwa in North Al Batinah Governorate	25/-	Specialized	Thursday 17/11/2022	Thursday 8/12/2022
734/2022/MAFWR/HQ-75	Maintenance of Falaj Al Qabail in Falaj Al Qabail Village at Wilayat Sohar at North AL-Batinah Governorate	25/-	Fourth	Thursday 24/11/2022	Thursday 15/12/2022
735/2022/MAFWR/HQ-76	Rehabilitation and Improvement of Jabiat Hilal Falaj in Khuaysa Village at Wilayat Jalan Bani Bu Hassan at AL-Sharqiyah South Governorate	25/-	Fourth	Thursday 24/11/2022	Thursday 15/12/2022
736/2022/MAFWR/HQ-77	Design and Construction of Maintenance Works at Flood Protection Dam in Sur City, South AL Sharqiyah Governorate	60/-	Excellent	Thursday 24/11/2022	Thursday 15/12/2022
739/2022/MAFWR/HQ-78	Supply Dry Feed for Livestock Research Stations	25/-	Specialized	Sunday 27/11/2022	Sunday 18/12/2022
749/2022/MAFWR/HQ-79	General Maintenance and Supply and Installation of CCTV Cameras at Masira Fishery	25/-	Third	Monday 28/11/2022	Monday 19/12/2022
754/2022/MAFWR/HQ-80	Providing Workers to Implement the Vaccination Campaign for Livestock at Dhofar Governorate	25/-	Specialized	Monday 28/11/2022	Monday 19/12/2022

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the above mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- The value of the document will be paid & submitted on line on given website.
- The Tenderer should attach Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman (as required in the tender), and addressed to the Ministry of Agricultural, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, And the bidders can contact the Esnad technical support team at the number listed below to find out how to request electronic guarantees from local banks.
- All correspondence pertaining to the tender inquiry must be online at e-tendering System.
- All correspondence pertaining to the e-tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phonenumber: **+968 24402200** or etenderhd@mtc.gov.om.

TENDERS COMMITTEE

Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources



19 dead in Egypt after bus falls into canal

CAIRO: At least 19 people were killed and six injured on Saturday when the minibus they were travelling in overturned in northern Egypt's Nile Delta, the health ministry said.

Egyptian media outlets reported the accident was caused by a malfunctioning steering wheel, without elaborating.

The bus was carrying some 35 people when it derailed on a highway and fell into Mansuriya canal in Aga town, in the northern

governorate of Daqahlia, according to security sources.

Rescue teams saved some 17 people, the ministry said, after the vehicle plunged into a canal.

According to the Al Masri al Youm website, the victims became trapped inside the bus after it crashed into the water.

Fatal road crashes are relatively common in Egypt. They are often blamed on reckless driving and poor road conditions. In recent years, Egypt has built a network

of new routes, aimed at improving the quality of its roads.

Traffic accidents are common in Egypt where roads are often poorly maintained and driving rules flouted. In 2021, around 7,000 people were killed on the roads of the Arab world's most populous country, according to official figures. In July, 25 people died and 35 were injured in central Egypt when a bus crashed into a truck parked on the side of the road. — **Agencies**

Biden to press Xi on N Korea in G20 talks

PHNOM PENH: US President Joe Biden landed in Asia on Saturday vowing to urge Chinese leader Xi Jinping to rein in North Korea when they hold their first face-to-face meeting at next week's G20 summit.

Biden touched down in Phnom Penh for meetings with Southeast Asian leaders ahead of his encounter with his Chinese counterpart on Monday in Bali.

The meeting between the two superpowers comes after a record-breaking spate of missile tests by North Korea sent fears soaring that the reclusive state would soon conduct its seventh nuclear test.

In Monday's meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit, Biden will tell Xi that China — Pyongyang's biggest ally — has "an interest in playing a constructive role in restraining North Korea's worst tendencies," US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan told reporters.

Biden will also tell Xi that if North Korea's missile and nuclear build-up "keeps going down this road, it will simply mean further enhanced American military and security presence in the region," Sullivan said Biden would not make demands on China but rather give Xi "his perspective."

This is that "North Korea



US President Joe Biden shakes hands with Indonesia's President Joko Widodo as Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen stands at the ASEAN-US summit during the ASEAN summit held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on Saturday. – **Reuters**

represents a threat not just to the United States, not just to (South Korea) and Japan but to peace and stability across the entire region." Whether China wants to increase pressure on North Korea is "of course up to them," Sullivan said.

However, with North Korea rapidly ramping up its missile capacities, "the operational situation is more acute in the current moment," Sullivan said.

Biden and Xi, the leaders of the world's two biggest economies, have spoken by phone multiple times since Biden became president in January 2021.

But the Covid-19 pandemic

and Xi's subsequent aversion to foreign travel have prevented them from meeting in person.

The pair are not short of topics to discuss, with Washington and Beijing at loggerheads over issues ranging from trade to human rights in China's Xinjiang region and the status of the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

UN chief Antonio Guterres has urged the two sides to work together, warning on Friday of "a growing risk that the global economy will be divided into two parts, led by the two biggest economies — the United States and China". — **AFP**

AL FAJAR AL ALAMIA CO. SAOG				
PO BOX 78, QURUM CITY CENTRE, PC 102, SULTANATE OF OMAN				
Group's Unaudited Financial Results for the three months ended 30 September 2022				
Chairman's Report		Consolidated Statement of Comprehensive Income		
On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present to you the report on the activities and unaudited financial results of the company for the 1st quarter ended 30 September 2022.		GROUP		PARENT
		30.09.2022	30.09.2021	30.09.2022
		RO.	RO.	RO.
1. Operating Results				
The Group's total revenue for the three-month period ended 30 September 2022 was RO 2.176 million as against the previous year's revenue of RO. 4.417.		Revenue	2,175,666	4,417,834
		Cost of Sales	(2,897,208)	(3,743,593)
		Gross Profit	(721,542)	674,241
The Parent Company made RO 0.583 Million net loss after taxation compared to a net profit of RO 0.175 million for the same period in the last financial year.		Other Income	29,334	141,595
		Administration & General expenses	(461,661)	(431,084)
The Group recorded a consolidated loss after taxation of RO 1.667 million for the three months period ended 30 September 2022 against the net profit of RO 0.026 million in the same period of the previous year.		Sales & Distribution expenses	(95,271)	(169,173)
		Operating Profit	(1,249,140)	215,579
		Finance charges	(576,935)	(185,046)
2. Operations		Profit before taxation	(1,826,075)	30,533
The Group's revenue decreased by 51% year on year due to the non-availability of major raw materials. The management is currently working on options to bring the raw materials back and restore normal revenue levels. Due to limited raw material availability, the company is currently catering to very important projects and customers who are paying on time and have accepted the price increase.		Taxation	159,034	(3,991)
		Profit and total comprehensive income	(1,667,041)	26,542
Due to the scarcity of explosives, the drilling and blasting industry in Fujeirah (UAE) is also experiencing a decline in revenue.				
Geodynamics' supply of explosives is currently halted due to a lack of raw materials, and the company is focusing on completing construction work in order to obtain permanent facility approval from the authorities. We anticipate that after the completion of Phase 2 and the resulting additional storage facility, the volume will increase in the coming year, helping to improve the Group's revenue and profitability and strengthening its position in the UAE market.				
3. Health, Safety and the Environment				
Your Company is operated in a safe and efficient manner in strict compliance with the highest safety standards and in accordance with the prevailing Royal Oman Police Explosives Rules and Regulations.				
No accidents or environmental incidents were reported during the period ended 30 September 2022.				
Your Company was in compliance with the Code of Corporate Governance and other applicable rules and regulations during the 3 months ended 30 September 2022.				
4. Future Outlook				
We would like to inform our valued shareholders that construction work on Phase 2 of the proposed explosives facility in the UAE is currently underway, with the additional two permanent magazines expected to be completed by December 2022 and the ANFO production plant, and raw materials stores by June 2023. Once completed, these will aid in increasing volume in the coming months. We are confident that this will increase the Group's overall profitability.				
Going forward, we anticipate higher revenue growth in the drilling and blasting divisions in both the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, based on projects currently underway or scheduled to begin soon.				
Furthermore, we are in a strong position to meet the increased demand from the mining industry, given the increased demand from export markets impacted by COVID-19 over the last two years.				
We expect better results from Awam Minerals due to increased demand, which will certainly result in the market rate increase that we are currently experiencing. We are in the final stage of signing the agreement with the buyer for the off-take of 60-70 tons of gypsum monthly. We also anticipate that after FIFA, the Qatar market will resume aggregate exports of 600-700 tons per month beginning in January 2023.				
5. Acknowledgements				
The Members of the Board wish to record their gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haithem bin Tariq bin Taimur and the Government of Oman for the successful efforts made to improve development and prosperity within the Country.				
The Directors also wish to thank the Royal Oman Police, other Government bodies, our valued customers and Banker for their cooperation and support.				
Haythem Mahmood Abd Al-Nabi Macki Chairman				
Note The complete accounts shall be delivered to any shareholder or beneficiary upon request, in Arabic or English, within 7 days from receiving the application.				

Consolidated Statement of Financial Position				
		GROUP		PARENT
		As at 30.09.2022	As at 30.09.2021	As at 30.09.2022
		RO.	RO.	RO.
Fixed Assets		10,943,484	10,775,853	626,621
Intangible Assets		3,901,006	4,206,230	200
Goodwill		22,228,249	22,228,249	579,717
Investment in Subsidiary		-	-	36,996,677
Investment in associates		829,047	857,627	829,047
Right of Use of Assets		846,017	187,273	96,760
Deferred Tax		1,095,274	490,648	179,284
Due from Subsidiaries		-	-	3,121,106
Current Assets		12,769,516	20,599,591	4,018,026
Total Assets		52,612,593	59,345,471	46,447,438
Non-current Liabilities		11,699,994	11,052,273	7,858,097
Current Liabilities		22,580,580	22,297,384	13,111,029
Total Liabilities		34,280,574	33,349,657	20,969,126
Net Assets		18,332,019	25,995,814	25,478,312
Shareholders' Fund				
Share Capital		4,933,025	4,933,025	4,933,025
Legal Reserve		1,436,224	1,453,749	1,340,068
Special Reserve		579,717	579,717	579,717
Share premium account		13,550,576	13,550,576	13,550,576
Retained earnings		(2,167,523)	5,478,747	5,074,926
Total Shareholders' equity		18,332,019	25,995,814	25,478,312

British Tories deny Raab created culture of fear

LONDON: Members of Britain's Ruling Conservative, or Tory, party came out on Saturday in defence of Dominic Raab after the deputy prime minister was accused of being "rude" and "aggressive" towards civil servants.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is facing further questions about his judgment as allegations emerged about Raab's behaviour during his previous stint as justice secretary - with staff reportedly offered a "route out" of his department when he was reinstated in October.

Multiple sources have alleged the Cabinet minister created a "culture of fear" in the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), according to the Guardian.

But some Tories have come to his defence, with lawmaker Helen Grant saying she witnessed a "very decent" minister with "high



professional standards" when the pair came into contact during Raab's tenure as foreign secretary.

Grant, who said she worked with Raab last year in her capacity as the special envoy for girls' global education, insisted Raab had "zero tolerance for bullying."

Fellow Conservative Eddie Hughes also said he had never seen Raab be rude to anyone during his time in the housing or Brexit

departments. He tweeted: "When I got my first job as his PPS I was told Dom was demanding. 'He's very hard working and expects others to be too'."

"I was delighted. I wanted to work for someone who took their role seriously. We got on great from the start. Never saw him be rude to anyone at MHCLG [the Housing Ministry] or DExEU [Department for Exiting the European Union]."

Further allegations about Raab emerged late on Friday, with The Mirror reporting the justice secretary has acquired the nickname "The Incinerator" because he "burns through" staff.

The Sun, meanwhile, suggested Raab had once hurled tomatoes from a salad across a room in a fit of anger - an allegation branded "rotten" by shadow minister David Lammy. — **dpa**

SHORT TAKE

MANAMA

Bahrain holds parliament polls

Bahrainis on Saturday voted in parliamentary elections. The government said 344,713 voters were eligible to vote, down from 365,467 in the last polls in 2018. Justice Minister Nawaf Al Ma'awda, when asked, told reporters at a polling station that the voter list did not include individuals who did not previously vote but that they "were given the chance to then register".

A government spokesperson later said in a statement that "no one is penalised for choosing not to vote" and that the elections had seen "more candidates than ever before". Just over 500 candidates are running for 40 parliamentary and 30 municipal seats, including 94 women, more than double the 2018 figure, authorities say. Parliament consists



of the elected Council of Representatives and the 40-member Shura Council, appointed by the king. The Interior Ministry late on Friday announced hacking attempts on websites "to hinder the elections".

The fever is breaking



DAVID BROOKS

Americans are still deeply unhappy with the state of the country, but their theory of change seems to have begun to shift

A convulsion has shaken America and many other Western democracies over the past few years. People became disgusted with established power, trust in many institutions neared rock bottom, populist fury rose from right and left. On the right, in the United States, this manifested as Donald Trump. To his great credit, Trump reinvented the GOP. He destroyed the corporate husk of Reaganism and set the party on the path to being a multiracial working-class party. To his great discredit, he enshrouded this transition in bigotry, buffoonery and corruption. He ushered in an age of performance politics — an age in which leaders put more emphasis on attention-grabbing postures than on practical change.

The left had its own smaller version of performative populism. Rep Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez became a major political figure thanks to her important contributions to Instagram. The Green New Deal was not a legislative package but a cotton candy media concoction. Slogans like “Abolish ICE” and “Defund the police” were not practical policies, just cool catchphrases to put on posters.

The populist convulsion had its moment, but on the left, prominent Democrats tried to harness its energy while reining in its unelectable excesses. In 2020, James Clyburn threw his weight behind an establishmentarian moderate, Joe Biden. That year, after progressives appeared to cost the Democrats several House seats with randy talk of socialism, moderate Democrat Rep Abigail Spanberger roasted the left and was one of those who helped pull the party back towards the centre on crime and other issues. Biden rejected the performative style of the populist moment while harnessing some progressive ideas.

Performative populism has begun to ebb. Twitter doesn’t have the hold on the media class it had two years ago. Peak wokeness has passed. There seem to be fewer cancellations recently, and less intellectual intimidation. I was a skeptic of the January 6 committee at first, but I now recognise it’s played an important cultural role. That committee forced America to look into the abyss, to see the nihilistic violence that lay at the heart of Trumpian populism.

The election of 2022 marked the moment when America began to put performative populism behind us. Though the results are partial, and Trump acolytes could still help Republicans control Congress, this election we saw the emergence of an anti-Trump majority.

According to a national exit poll, nearly 60 per cent of voters said they had an unfavourable view of Trump. Almost half of the voters who said they “somewhat disapprove” of Biden as president still voted for Democrats, presumably because they were not going to vote for Trumpianism. In a Reuters/Ipsos poll in September, 58 per cent of respondents said that the MAGA movement was threatening America’s democratic foundations.

The single most important result of this election was the triumph of the normies. Establishmentarian, practical leaders who are not always screaming angrily at you did phenomenally well, on right and left: Gov Mike DeWine in Ohio, Governor-elect Josh Shapiro in Pennsylvania. Workmanlike incumbents from Sen John Thune in South Dakota to Sen Ron Wyden in Oregon had successful nights. Gov Tony Evers of Wisconsin had the quotation that summarised the election: “Boring wins.”

Americans are still deeply unhappy with the state of the country, but their theory of change seems to have begun to shift. Less histrionic media soap opera. Less existential



People near the Capitol building in Washington.

politics of menace. Let’s find people who can get stuff done.

The telling election results were at the secretary of state level. The America First Secretary of State Coalition features candidates who rejected the 2020 election results and who would have been a threat to election integrity if they had won on Tuesday. Most either lost or seem on their way to losing. Meanwhile, Brad Raffensperger, the secretary of state of Georgia who stood up to Trump’s bullying, won by a wide margin.

Because Democrats restrained their more extreme tendencies while Republicans didn’t, they held their own among independents in a year that could have been a GOP romp. On abortion and many other issues, the median voter rule still applies. If you can get towards the spot where moderate voters reside, you will win elections.

To be clear, I am not saying the fever has broken within the minds of those in the MAGA movement. I am not saying MAGA Republicans won’t unleash a lot of looniness in the next Congress. I am saying voters have built a wall around

that movement to make sure it no longer wins the power it once enjoyed. I am saying voters have given Republicans clear marching orders — to do what Democrats did and beat back the populist excesses on their own side.

There are two large truths I’ll leave you with. The first is that both parties are fundamentally weak. The Democrats are weak because they have become the party of the educated elite. The Republicans are weak because of Trump. The Republican weakness is easier to expunge. If Republicans get rid of Trump, they could become the dominant party in America. If they don’t, they will decline.

Second, the battle to preserve the liberal world order is fully under way. While populist authoritarianism remains a powerful force worldwide, people, from Kyiv to Kalamazoo, have risen up to push us towards a world in which rules matter, practicality matters, stability and character matter.

As Irving Kristol once wrote, the people in our democracy “are not uncommonly wise, but their experience tends to make them uncommonly sensible.”

Putin can’t escape his country’s history

There is a pattern to Russia’s history, and it may be catching up with President Vladimir Putin.

Under the czars and then the commissars, Russia’s rulers wrenched enormous sacrifice from their people to achieve the power, empire and respect they believed to be Russia’s due, whether by virtue of its vast expanse, natural wealth, culture, ideology or simply its power, only to find at some point that along the way they had lost their exhausted, battered nation.

Yegor Gaidar, the wunderkind who shaped the first post-communist reforms in Russia, mullied on this cyclical pattern in an article in the newspaper Izvestia in 1994, wondering — as did many in Russia and in the West at the time — whether the pattern would repeat itself after the collapse of the Soviet Union. “Russia’s race for a place in the civilised world recalls Achilles’ chase after the tortoise,” Gaidar wrote.

“Through superhuman effort, Russia would manage to catch up and overtake, especially in military technology. Yet the world would unnoticeably but steadily move on, and again after disgraceful and tortuous setbacks the country would regroup for a leap and make another lurch, and

everything would be repeated.”

Nearly 30 years later, Putin’s efforts to reconstitute a Great Russia by force, in the process mauling Ukraine with shocking cruelty and weakening his own country for decades to come, appear to be falling into Gaidar’s pattern. What Putin had intended as a quick march on Kyiv to install a quisling regime has turned into an embarrassing and costly slugfest, with Russia increasingly forced to back down, as it did most recently in announcing a retreat from Kherson.

Whether Russians have reached the breaking point is another question. The Kremlin’s considerable repressive apparatus has been in high gear since the war began, crushing any opposition to the war in Ukraine. Even calling the war anything other than a “special military operation” could be a crime. And Putin’s strongest pitch, that “losing” Ukraine represents a humiliating demotion of Russia the superpower, still resonates among people who were raised on the Soviet ethos, in which empire was a far stronger bond than nationalism.

Yet, whether Russians really accept Putin’s shifting justifications for the war, it is becoming clear that there are limits to what they are prepared to pay for his revanchist dreams. Tens of thousands of Russian men rushed for the borders after Putin announced a mass mobilisation, joining the estimated hundreds of thousands of the best and brightest who have fled since the war began. Meanwhile, pro-Kremlin hawks have taken to openly sniping at the



Russian President Vladimir Putin visits the Federal Centre for Brain and Neurotechnologies of the Federal Medical-Biological Agency in Moscow. — Reuters

What Putin had intended as a quick march on Kyiv to install a quisling regime has turned into an embarrassing and costly slugfest, with Russia increasingly forced to back down

incompetence of Russia’s military commanders and the enormous casualties Russia is suffering.

Making Russia great again is a theme Putin has elaborated over many years now, from bemoaning the collapse of the Soviet Union as a “genuine tragedy” to venting his consuming resentment of the “so-called West” — essentially the United States — for not accepting Russia, and himself, as an equal in global power.

He has drawn liberally on his rewriting of Russian history and culture — as he did again in the Valdai speech, citing, among others, Solzhenitsyn and Dostoyevsky — to claim a spiritual superiority over a West he sees as decadent and decaying. Never mind that these two writers were both repressed by the state, Soviet and czarist, and that Russia is widely perceived as a kleptocracy.

Much of Putin’s criticism of the West is shared, of course, by the West. Yet Putin approaches not from an informed analysis but through a Soviet prism that profoundly distorted the West, and projected onto it all autocratic and repressive machinations of the Kremlin.

There is no soft power in this equation, no appreciation of reasons Ukraine might be more attracted to Europe than to Russia, but only spheres of control parcelled out according to rules of conquest and control that the West rejected after World War II. The longings of the Ukrainians have no part in this; Russia’s — Putin’s — mission is to return to Russia what is Russia’s by right of might.

In search for a meaning



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

“The concept of having a meaning in life can be applied to all of us in different stages in our lives and can explain how our current social situation may contribute to our emotions and feelings of emptiness.”

A man in his early sixties was admitted to a mental health ward after he ingested 40 tablets of his blood pressure medication, his wife managed to call the ambulance and he was rushed to hospital and spent seven days in the intensive care unit. When he woke up he told the doctors that he wanted to end his life.

He was 61 years old. He retired a year ago from a job he has been doing since he was eighteen years old. His job involved working away from home and being with

his family on some weekends and public and annual holidays. His family lived in the village and his wife brought up their four children. When he retired he returned to live in the village, now all his boys are grown up and have their own families.

“The first thing that hit me was the feeling of emptiness, I wake up in the morning and I have nothing to do whatsoever, most of my friends were work colleagues too, so when I left my job we stopped meeting, I felt I have no purpose in life, I gradually felt depressed and became more withdrawn and lost the will to live.”

I spent around one hour talking to this man and it strikes me how determined he was to end his life. He sat there and told me all about

THE CONCEPT OF HAVING A MEANING IN LIFE CAN BE APPLIED TO ALL OF US IN DIFFERENT STAGES IN OUR LIVES AND CAN EXPLAIN HOW OUR CURRENT SOCIAL SITUATION MAY CONTRIBUTE TO OUR EMOTIONS AND FEELINGS OF EMPTINESS

it, how waking up in the intensive care unit thinking and wishing he was actually dead. “Nothing in life brings me joy any more,” he stated. Understandably his wife and grown up sons were devastated, some felt sorry for him while others were angry at him as he brought shame

to the family.

This encounter made me think about the concept of having a meaning in life. It also reminded me of the Austrian psychiatrist Viktor Frankl who was captured by the Nazis during the Second World War and was imprisoned in their concentration camp. He wrote a book titled “Man Search For Meaning” after his release in which he summarised the possible sources of meaning in three concepts, purposeful work, love and courage in the face of difficulties.

Dr Viktor Frankl used this idea to develop a new psychotherapeutic school of thought which helped him personally to overcome the trauma that he experienced during his imprisonment. This concept of having a meaning in life can be

applied to all of us in different stages in our lives, and looking back to my patient who tried to end his life one can see how his current social situation may have contributed to his miserable feelings.

Retirement in itself is not the only reason to how he is feeling, but it did play a part. How after all these years he felt his value in life ended as he does not have a job that fills his time and makes him feel that he is contributing to society. He may not have felt loved as his family lived without him being around. His wife and grown-up sons may not need him any more and he may have lost courage to deal with his new situations. Whatever the reasons are it is worth reflecting on ourselves and searching for what brings meaning to our lives.

How to spot impostor Twitter accounts

BILL MCCARTHY

The rollout of Twitter’s subscription service has prompted a string of accounts impersonating public figures, sparking concerns about the potential for scams and disinformation.

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

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

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

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

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

Twitter users can click a profile’s badge to see whether the account paid for it. The pop-up on paid accounts reads: “This account is verified because it’s subscribed to Twitter Blue.”

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

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

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

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

FAKE ACCOUNTS QUICKLY CREATED

Twitter has rules against misleading and deceptive identities. Musk tweeted on Sunday that “any Twitter handles engaging in impersonation without clearly specifying ‘parody’ will be permanently suspended.”

But the problem remains.

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

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

America just dodged an arrow



Thomas L. Friedman

The writer is an American political commentator and author



Voters wait to cast their ballots in Atlanta.

You can hold off moving to Canada. You can forgo the call to the New Zealand Embassy on how to become a citizen there. Tuesday’s election really was the most important test since the Civil War of whether the engine of our constitutional system — our ability to peacefully and legitimately transfer power — remains intact. And it looks to have come through — a little dinged up, but OK.

I am still not even close to ready to sound the all-clear, to declare that running on a platform of election denialism will never tempt another American politician. But given the unprecedented degree to which election denialism was elevated in this midterm and the way several big-name Donald Trump-imitating knuckleheads who made denialism central to their campaigns got their clocks cleaned — we may have just dodged one of the biggest arrows ever aimed at the heart of our democracy.

To be sure, another arrow could target us at any moment, but the whole US electoral system — in red states and blue — seemed to perform admirably, almost shrugging off the last two years of controversy, diminishing it to what it always was: the shameful fabrication of one man and his most shameless sycophants and imitators. Given the

WHILE ELECTION DENIALISM TOOK A THUMPING THIS WEEK AS A WINNING MESSAGE, NONE OF THE THINGS THAT ARE STILL EATING AWAY AT THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN DEMOCRACY — AND PREVENTING US FROM ACTUALLY GETTING BIG HARD THINGS DONE — HAVE GONE AWAY

threat posed by Trump denialists to the acceptance and legitimacy of our elections, that is a big deal.

It could not come at a better time as the leaders of Russia and China have manipulated their systems to entrench themselves in power beyond their previously established terms of office.

One of their arguments to their own people in doing so was to point to things like the January 6, 2021, insurrection in America and the seeming chaos of our elections to tell their citizens: “That’s what democracy looks like. Is that what you want here?”

Indeed, in May, during his commencement address to the

US Naval Academy’s graduating class, President Joe Biden recalled when President Xi Jinping of China congratulated him in 2020 on his election: “He said democracies cannot be sustained in the 21st century; autocracies will run the world. Why? Things are changing so rapidly. Democracies require consensus, and it takes time, and you don’t have the time.”

For that reason, Xi and Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin lost on Tuesday night, too. Because the more wild and unstable our politics, the less able we become to peacefully transfer power, the easier it is for them to justify never doing so.

But while election denialism took a thumping this week as a winning message, none of the things that are still eating away at the foundations of American democracy — and preventing us from actually getting big hard things done — have gone away.

I am talking about the way in which our primary system, gerrymandering and social networks have coalesced to steadily poison our national dialogue, steadily polarise our society into political tribes and steadily erode the twin pillars of our democracy: truth and trust.

— The New York Times

A madness we can change

It hasn't been a dramatic realisation, but one that has gradually emerged from the experiences of a lifetime, and the observations of a uniquely equipped generation, trying to make sense of having stuff, and not being able to use it. In education, there must be change, or we will become hostages to the past.

I recall, when I was at school, only being allowed to use pencils until my third year. Then we were allowed to use fountain pens. Remember them, once a sign of education and knowledge, but in reality, they were horrible things to reload and malfunctioned leaving unsightly ink stains on you, your desk, your books, and your clothing. Now... this was despite the ballpoint pen being invented a hundred years earlier and Lazlo Biro, yes that was his name, patenting his pen a full twenty years before my school days. Marcel Bic, he of the Bic pen empire, had become an almost obscenely wealthy man on the back of his advertising slogan, "Writes the first Time. Every time!" Yet, it was sacrilege to use a ballpoint, biro, or Bic pen in school.... How bizarre!

I reflect upon this today as I'm preparing students for some of the most meaningful tests and examinations of their academic lives, and they are not permitted to use computers, or laptops, and I don't understand why not. Because, when any of us are typing anything today, even the best of us make mistakes, and with our keyboards, we can fix those mistakes in a second, unlike me as a kid, who would need to cross out and redo something. God forbid, if we wanted to restructure a long answer, and essay, or some poetry. Yet, in our exams today, we make our young people use the tools of a half a century ago, when we have the capability to embrace the technology that is the norm, today.

I for one, and I'm certain so many readers would agree that they could never go back to writing essays or a thesis by hand, there is just so much



Ray Petersen
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The writer is a media consultant

WE MAKE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE USE THE TOOLS OF A HALF A CENTURY AGO, WHEN WE HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO EMBRACE THE TECHNOLOGY THAT IS THE NORM, TODAY

more flexibility in a keyboard, and even to the extent of restructuring academic papers, news reports, magazine articles. How many of those do you ever think are presented as they are written? I, personally, take a significant amount of time 'moving' text around, on a page, as I see greater effectiveness, more impact, or sometimes, more humor, in a different order.

Also, there's the matter of spelling. MS Word can correct spelling... but the students can't have that can they? Yet we do, we need that auto correct. Occasionally too, we need a wee grammatical nudge, and Word can do that too... and do these priceless assets make what we write any less valid? Not at all! What about too, a thesaurus, there are all the online ones we can access when we have a 'brain block,' and can't think of a word. But I keep my trusty Collins version close by, for as Roget (1852) declared, it is always handy, "to find the word, or words, by which an idea may be most fitly and aptly expressed."

I have heard those who cry loudest, "We can't trust them. They will copy paste and learn nothing!" However, that is to ignore the development of plagiarism checkers. The software is so good today, so effective at finding similar content, that we must dismiss some identified 'copying' as merely being incorrectly referenced, or not being contextual to the topic. I have no doubt whatsoever, that even a modest 'think-tank,' could come up with a way to make the new technology work in exams, however, as in most progressive debates, it is maybe only the 'will' that is elusive.

I do genuinely believe that for some reason, we have got into an educational rut, and that more than ever, 'the system,' is turning our clocks back for no clear reason. So, I guess then, we must ask ourselves... Is it a matter of a lack of trust, or of losing control? I would shudder to think so, but the fact we have not moved forward, is just madness!

WINCHED TO SAFETY



A migrant in need of urgent medical care (C) is winched up by a helicopter of the French Army from the Ocean Viking rescue ship on November Friday in the Tyrrhenian Sea between Italy and Corsica island. French authorities said they would evacuate three migrants from the Ocean Viking rescue ship in need of urgent medical care, plus one caregiver, amid a standoff between France and Italy over where the rest of the passengers should disembark. – AFP

Sharks, turtles, disease on agenda of wildlife trade summit

FRANCISCO JARA AND BENJAMIN LEGENDRE

The trade in shark fins, turtles, and other threatened species will come under scrutiny at a global wildlife summit in Panama, starting on Monday, that will also focus on the spread of diseases such as Covid-19.

Conservation experts and representatives of more than 180 nations will gather to study 52 proposals aimed at modifying protection levels set by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).

The CITES delegates will also take stock of the fight against fraud, and vote on new resolutions, such as the increased risk of diseases spreading from animals to humans, which is linked to trafficking and became a major concern after the 2020 outbreak of Covid-19.

CITES, in force since 1975, regulates trade in some 36,000 species of plants and animals and provides mechanisms to help crack down on illegal trade. It sanctions countries that break the rules.

The meeting of the parties to the convention takes place every two or three years.

This year it is happening in the

CONSERVATION EXPERTS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF MORE THAN 180 NATIONS WILL GATHER TO STUDY 52 PROPOSALS AIMED AT MODIFYING PROTECTION LEVELS SET BY THE CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES OF WILD FAUNA AND FLORA

shadow of two major United Nations conferences with high stakes for the future of the planet and all of its inhabitants: the COP27 climate meeting currently under way in Egypt, and the COP15 conference on biodiversity in Montreal in December.

During its last meeting in Geneva, 2019, CITES boosted the protection of giraffes, and came close to imposing a total ban on sending African elephants caught in the wild to zoos.

Delegates also maintained a ban on the sale of ivory in southern Africa, and decided to list 18 species of rays and sharks in CITES Appendix II, which requires the tracking and regulation of trade.

'Shark extinction crisis'

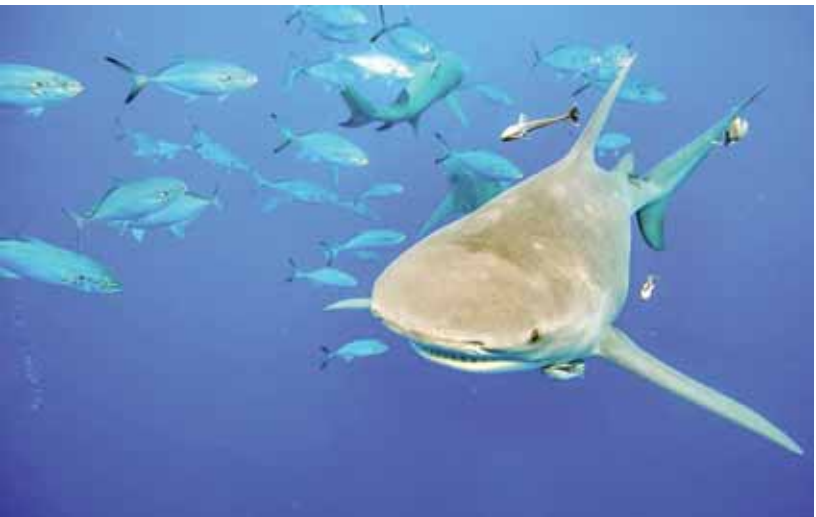
This year delegates will weigh a proposal to regulate the trade in requiem sharks, hammerhead sharks, and guitarfish rays.

"It would be a historic moment if these three proposals are passed: We would go from controlling around 25 per cent of the shark fin trade to more than 90 per cent," said Ilaria Di Silvestre, the head of European Union campaigns for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW).

Meanwhile, Luke Warwick of the Wildlife Conservation Society warned that "we are in the middle of a very large shark extinction crisis."

He said that sharks, which are vital to the ocean's ecosystem, are "the second most threatened vertebrate group on the planet."

"The trade in shark products — particularly fins, which can have a value of about \$1,000 a kilogram in markets in East Asia — for use in a luxury status dish of shark fin soup, is driving the decline of these ancient ocean predators around the world."



This year delegates will weigh a proposal to regulate the trade in requiem sharks, hammerhead sharks, and guitarfish rays.

Sue Lieberman, the vice president of the Wildlife Conservation Society, told AFP that China — one of the top consumers of shark fin soup — has never voted in favour of a CITES marine species proposal, but often "implements it after it's adopted."

"I like to say this is the reptile COP," said Lieberman, who has attended every CITES summit since 1989.

Three crocodile species, three lizard species, various snakes, and 12 freshwater turtles are up for a total ban in trade.

"The freshwater turtles of the world are being exploited unsustainably and illegally for the pet trade, the collectors trade, and the food trade in Asia," said Lieberman.

Endangered violin wood

The trade of certain trees will also be examined, with proposals to add African mahogany and some species of brightly coloured flowering Trumpet trees to Appendix II.

Brazil has asked for a total ban in the trade of Pernambuco wood — which is already protected — alarming musicians around the world as it has been used for centuries as the main source of wood to make bow instruments such as violins and the cello.

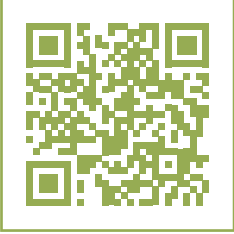
TRAFFIC, the scientific advisory body of CITES, has recommended rejecting the proposal, which is unlikely to obtain the required two-thirds of votes.

The Panama meeting, which will run until November 25, is the first to be held since the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in Wuhan, China, which many scientists believed originated in bats before infecting humans.

— AFP

sport

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Former Oman player Yousef Shaban passes away



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Former Oman national football team player Yousef Shaban passed away in Barka on Friday. The 38-year-old also played for many domestic clubs. Shaban breathed his last on Friday night after he was unwell for the last two years. Yousef, who hails from Barka, began his football career in Al Shabab club. He was well known more in Dhofar club as he spent many seasons with the Salalah giants. Shaban represented the Red Warriors in different regional and international championships and events. He was selected to the national team squad in 2004 and he was a key player in the three consecutive editions of Gulf Cup in 17th, 18th and 19th and he assisted the team to lift the historic Gulf Cup title in 2009 in Muscat. Czech football coach Milan

Macala depended on Shaban and he was one of the essential faces in the national team squad. His first presence with the national teams was in 2002 during the Asian Games qualifiers and then in the AFC Asian Cup in 2004 in Beijing. Also, he took part with Red Warriors in the World Cup qualifiers in 2006 and he assisted the national team to win against Singapore. The Oman Football Association (OFA) chairman, officials and the football family in the Sultanate mourned the death of the experienced national player. Former national team player Fawzi Basheer, who was the team-mate of Yousef Shaban, expressed his sadness at the passing away of Shaban. He was a brother before being a team-mate, Basheer said Fawzi urged OFA to honour the services of Yousef Shaban in the national team by allocating part of the Oman and Germany match's proceeds to his family.



Royal Cavalry finish second in Abu Dhabi race

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Royal Cavalry achieved second place in the fourth round competitions at Abu Dhabi Equestrian Club track, for purebred Arabian horses for a distance of 2,200 metres. Royal Cavalry's Al Thraa snatched silver, rode by jockey Qais al Busaidy, and supervised by coach Ibrahim al Hadrami, while 'Shamek' won the first place, owned by Yas Races stable, rode by jockey Patrick Dobbs, and coached by Jane Cloud. 'Ab des Filates' claimed the third place, owned by Faten Ahmed Rashid, rode by Patrick Cosgrave and supervised by coach Omar Darraj. At the Al Rahba farm competition in Barka, the Royal Cavalry managed state title for the teams, and state title for individual through contestant Saif bin Hamoud al Ashkari. Oman Army team achieved the women's title through Turkiah al Balushi, the International Academy for tent pegging team was able to snatch the wilayat title, and in the individual level, Sami bin Ali al Haddadi won the race. The Royal Cavalry Team 1 won first place in the teams category, represented by Hamad bin Nasser al Riyami, Hamad bin Saif al Raisi, Safwan bin Zaid al Maamari and Saif bin Hamoud al Ashkari. Oman Army Team 1 achieved second place through Ahed bin Khamis al Balushi, Mohammed bin Khamis al Siyabi, Ali bin Khamis al Balushi, Zaid bin Hamoud al Saeedi, and in third place was Oman Army Team 2 represented by Khalid bin Amer al Habsi, Yasser bin Barout al Hasani, Hisham bin Ali

al Bakri and Khalid bin Salim al Maamari. In the individual level, Saif bin Hamoud al Ashkari from Royal Cavalry won first place, in second place was Khalid bin Amer al Habsi from Oman Army team, and Khalid bin Salim al Maamari from Oman Army team claimed third. In the tent pegging competition, the International Academy team for tent pegging was crowned first, through Ali bin Saleh al Balushi, Humaid bin Saeed al Manouri, Khalfan bin Khamis al Rawahi and Nasser bin Saif al Hashimi, Bahla Stable team for tent pegging won second place, represented by Nasr bin Nasser al Mafraji, Ali bin Salim al Aghbari, Majid bin Saeed al Wardi and Yousef bin Salim al Shukaili, third place claimed by the Horse Committee team in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi, represented by Sami bin Ali al Haddadi, Saif bin Ali al Jabri, Mohammed bin Amer al Jabri and Shihab bin Saeed al Shahumi. Sami bin Ali al Haddadi from the Horse Committee in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi won the first place in wilayat individual level, while Nasr bin Nasser al Mafraji from the Bahla Stable for tent pegging came in second place, and the third place was claimed by Nasser bin Saif al Hashimi from the International Academy of tent pegging. In the women's competition, Turkiah al Balushi, from Oman Army team, was ranked first, Fatima bint Hussein al Balushi from the Oman Army team came second and the third place was claimed by Ghanima bint Abdullah al Shukaili from Royal Oman Police.



England and Pakistan eye T20 title in throwback final

MELBOURNE: A confident England will look to deny Pakistan a fairytale finish in Sunday's Twenty20 World Cup final and become the first nation to hold both global white-ball trophies — if Melbourne's fickle weather permits.

Heavy rain could disrupt the Melbourne Cricket Ground showdown and even see the teams crowned joint champions if unable to complete a match of at least 10 overs per side by the end of the reserve day on Monday.

However, conditions should hold up long enough to deliver a contest between the two nations who played for the 50-overs World Cup 30 years ago at the MCG.

After shaky starts both hit top gear in the semifinals, with Pakistan easing to a seven-wicket win over New Zealand in Sydney and England humiliating India by 10 wickets in Adelaide.

Pakistan, the 2009 champions, have had a charmed tournament since pushed to the brink of elimination by Zimbabwe, with

the Netherlands helping them into the semifinals by eliminating South Africa.

Thirty years after Imran Khan's Pakistan claimed the 1992 World Cup, Babar Azam's team may feel it is their destiny to deliver trophy.

"Of course the similarities are (there)," Babar told reporters of the 1992 final.

"But we will try to win the trophy as it is an honour for me to lead this team, especially in this big ground."

England, the reigning 50-overs world champions, are looking to win a second global T20 title after their 2010 triumph and to build on the legacy of former captain Eoin Morgan, who transformed the team into a white-ball juggernaut.

New skipper Jos Buttler had big shoes to fill following Morgan's retirement but has led from the front with rehabilitated opener Alex Hales.

Opening partnerships were decisive in the semifinals, with Buttler and Hales routing India with a 170-run stand the night

after Babar and Mohammad Rizwan set up victory over New Zealand with a 105-run stand.

Both teams' bowlers will be under pressure to strike early, lest the game quickly get away from them. "Utilising the powerplay to grab as many wickets will be essential for the match," said Babar.

There are few secrets between the teams, with Pakistan edged 4-3 by England in a T20 series at home.

They also played a rain-affected World Cup warm-up in Brisbane, which England won by six wickets.

UNHAPPY HUNTING GROUND

Neither have had success in this tournament at the MCG, though, with Pakistan losing a Super 12 thriller to arch-rivals India and England having their sole blemish against Ireland in a rain-hit upset.

"Obviously the Ireland match is a big disappointment for us as a team throughout this tournament, but certainly feels a long time ago now," said Buttler.

"I think we've seen a reaction to that game in the rest of the cricket we've played so far."

Pakistan are likely to be unchanged but England could opt to bring back express paceman Mark Wood and number three batsman Dawid Malan if the pair are fit. The final has been billed as a battle between Pakistan's vaunted pace attack and England's top order, but both sides boast other weapons.

England's Sam Curran has been a fearless death bowler while legspinner Adil Rashid proved an unlikely hero against India.

Pakistan all-rounder Shadab Khan has captured 10 wickets at the tournament and their maligned middle order carried the team while Babar and Rizwan struggled.

The crowd will be dominated by an army of green-clad Pakistan fans but it may have little impact on England, who delighted in silencing the massive crowd of India supporters at Adelaide Oval.

— Reuters



12,000 runners take part in Al Mouj Muscat Marathon 2022



MUSCAT: The Al Mouj Muscat Marathon 2022 proved to be a fine example of Oman's potential to become one of the world's leading long-distance running locations. Featuring the full marathon, the half marathon, and the 10km run, the day began early as thousands of athletes took to the start line for the 6am starting gun.

After 33 minutes and 30 seconds, the first runner to cross the line in the 10km run was Mohammad Bagheri Taj Amir followed by Majid bin Mohammed bin Khalfan al Jahdami in a time of 33 minutes and 41 seconds and Salim al Shukaili in third place with a time of 34 minutes and 7 seconds.

The first female to cross the line was Andrea Kovarova in a time of 56 minutes and 22 seconds. Hanan Abdullah came in second in a time of 57 minutes and 20 seconds and the third finisher was Girle Calvario clocking in 57 minutes and 28 seconds.

The next batch of runners to cross the finishing line came from the half marathon. Inyasi Sulley from Tanzania won the race with an impressive time of 1 hour and 3 minutes, closely followed by Issac Kibet from Uganda in 1 hour and 4 minutes. Abdelali Bouazzaoui from Morocco finished third in a time

of 1 hour and 6 minutes.

An hour later, the marathon runners began to appear on the horizon. Eluid Too from Kenya showed his desire and determination, leading the field across the line in a time of 2 hours and 17 minutes. Bernard Cheptoch from Uganda finished second in a time of 2 hours and 19 minutes, with Jackson Kiprop from Uganda coming third in a time of 2 hours and 20 minutes.

The first female to cross the line was Sophy Jepchirchir from Kenya in a time of 2 hours and 26 minutes. Finishing in close after was Emmah Cheruto Ndiwa from Kenya at 2 hours and 38 minutes and the third competitor to finish was Norah Chebet from Kenya in a time of 2 hours and 44 minutes.

After the elite athletes took centre stage on day one, the second day saw the fun runners and children — many taking part in their first ever Al Mouj Muscat Marathon race — show that there is a race for everyone.

Leading off with the 5km run, the day once again began early as thousands of athletes — including official race ambassadors Ali al Habsi, Oman's legendary goalkeeper and renowned broadcaster and television personality Ibtihal al Zadjali — set off.

Oman Sailing Festival sparks excitement in Salalah



QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, NOV 12

The fourth leg of Oman Sailing Festival 2022, held at Dahariz Beach in Wilayat of Salalah, concluded on Saturday, November 12, 2022. Held over five days, it offered free sessions to try sailing, windsurfing and kitesurfing.

A number of local SMEs and craftspeople showcased their wares as well. Local businessman Mohammed al Ibrahim, who has invested in the Dahariz beachfront, said he had opened up his premises for local families to display their merchandise and offer their services.

The Festival returns on November 24-26 to the Barceló Mussanah Resort offering Try

Sailing, Try Windsurfing, Try Kitesurfing, a showcase of local SMEs and a beach clean-up. The event coincides with the RS Venture Connect World Championships, Oman's first exclusively-para sailing event, and will also feature the chance to learn how to sail using the versatile RS Venture boat designed for people with disabilities.

In Salalah, the festival was supported by Office of the Governor of Dhofar Directorate General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar, Beach Front, Oman Air, National Mineral Water Company (Tanuf), Environment society of Oman (ESO), and National University Science and Technology (International Maritime College).



DAYS TO GO



NOVEMBER 20 - DECEMBER 18



RONALDO LEADS PORTUGAL SQUAD SEARCHING FOR FIRST WORLD CUP

PORTUGAL: Cristiano Ronaldo will lead Portugal into the World Cup after Fernando Santos named the veteran forward in his 26-man squad on Thursday.

The Manchester United striker, 37, has not been first choice for his club this season but will be part of his country's bid to win the tournament for the first time in their history.

Ronaldo, the captain and all-time leading scorer in men's international football with 117 goals, has plenty of younger team-mates in support in attack, including Atletico Madrid's Joao Felix and AC Milan's Rafael Leao.

"All the players I have called up come with the hunger to win and make Portugal world champions,

Ronaldo included," said Santos.

Ronaldo will go to his fifth World Cup, having played for his country in every edition of the tournament from 2006 onwards.

The coach, who led Portugal to Euro 2016 glory in France, left Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Renato Sanches out of the squad, bringing Wolves midfielder Matheus Nunes instead.

"What is most important are the players who will go to the World Cup," said Santos, refusing to discuss players who didn't make the cut.

"The 26 (selected) think that justice has been done, and those who don't go, the opposite."

Santos called up uncapped Benfica centre-back Antonio Silva,

19, as well as 39-year-old Pepe. The Porto defender has not played since October 4 because of a knee sprain but will be fit for the tournament in Qatar, which starts on November 20.

"I asked my medical department if there were any unfit players, the answer was no," said Santos when asked about Pepe.

CALF INJURY

Liverpool striker Diogo Jota misses out because of a calf injury.

Wolves midfielder Joao Moutinho, 36, who has appeared for his country 146 times, more than any other player apart from Ronaldo, was not included, and nor was his team-mate Goncalo Guedes.

Portugal open their World Cup campaign in Group H against Ghana on November 24, before facing Uruguay on November 28 and South Korea on December 2.

Santos was critical of the timing of the tournament, the first ever winter World Cup, but was happy about the lack of travel involved at the tournament, with all the stadiums relatively close together.

"It's not good for clubs, it's not good for anyone," said Santos.

"The exception is that it's good for travel. I've participated in several World Cups and travelling between games was difficult.

"In this aspect, there's an advantage. No stadium is more than 25 minutes away. We don't have to walk around carrying everything. It won't wear us down, the game ends and we go back to the hotel."

SQUAD

GOALKEEPERS: Diogo Costa (Porto), Rui Patricio (Roma/ITA), Jose Sa (Wolverhampton/ENG)

DEFENDERS: Diogo Dalot (Manchester United/ENG), Joao Cancelo (Manchester City/ENG), Danilo Pereira (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Pepe (Porto), Ruben Dias (Manchester City/ENG), Antonio Silva (Benfica), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Raphael Guerreiro (Borussia Dortmund/GER)

MIDFIELDERS: Ruben Neves (Wolverhampton/ENG), Joao Palhinha (Fulham/ENG), William Carvalho (Real Betis/ESP), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United/ENG), Vitinha (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Otavio (Porto), Joao Mario (Benfica), Matheus Nunes (Wolverhampton/ENG), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City/ENG)

FORWARDS: Rafael Leao (AC Milan/ITA), Joao Felix (Atletico Madrid/ESP), Ricardo Horta (Braga), Goncalo Ramos (Benfica), Cristiano Ronaldo (Manchester United/ENG), Andre Silva (RB Leipzig/GER) – AFP

**Portugal**

9th FIFA ranking

8th World Cup



Source: FIFA, UEFA, federation

"A Seleccion"

2022

COACH

Fernando Santos

Since 2014

BEST PERFORMANCE

3rd

1966

GROUP

H

opponents

Ghana

Uruguay

South Korea

AFP



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Oman Investment Authority to launch strategic projects worth RO 750m as part of 52nd National Day

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) announced the start of the opening of 10 national projects distributed geographically in a number of governorates, and varying in sectors, through its subsidiaries, and in partnership with local and foreign companies.

The launch of these projects, valued in excess of RO 750 million, comes against the backdrop of celebrations marking Oman's 52nd Glorious National Day.

Hisham bin Ahmed al Sheidi, Director General of Economic Diversification Investments at the Oman Investment Authority, said that these projects aim to contribute to efforts aimed at economic diversification, developing governorates, attracting investments, empowering the private sector, and creating job opportunities for citizens that

exceed 860 direct and indirect jobs.

The first project set for launch is Sanvira Carbon Sohar Free Zone. It is a partnership between the Oman National Investments Development Company (Tanmia), Sanvira Industries Limited and United Business Company. The product will be used in aluminium smelters and other mining industries inside and outside Oman.

Set up with an investment of RO 60 million, Sanvira Carbon will contribute to diversifying Omani industries, enhancing their presence in the local market and replacing them with imported industries, and exporting approximately 70 per cent of calcined petroleum coal to contribute to the foreign exchange reserves of Oman.

Oman Flour Mills Company



THESE PROJECTS AIM TO CONTRIBUTE TO EFFORTS AIMED AT ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION, DEVELOPING GOVERNORATES, ATTRACTING INVESTMENTS, EMPOWERING THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND CREATING JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZENS THAT EXCEED 860 DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS.

will open two projects: (i) Gulf International Poultry Farm located in the Al Subaikhi area in the Wilayat of Ibri in the Al Dhahirah Governorate. The project is a partnership between the Omani Food Investment Holding Company (Nitaj), and the Japan-Gulf Food Fund, among others. Covering an area of 18 million

square metres, the RO 26 million farm is one of the largest egg farms in the GCC with a capacity to produce 360 million eggs annually. It employs around 160 people.

The second project is a grain silo at Sohar Industrial Port, which was implemented at a cost of RO 21 million to support Oman's food security strategy. It has a storage capacity of 160,000 tonnes and provides 54 permanent jobs when fully operational OQ Group will open two projects:

The RO 178 million Salalah Ammonia with a capacity to produce ammonia from which fertilisers, cleaning products, refrigerants and other chemicals can be manufactured. The second is the launch of Bisat A, B and C in Block 60, which will boost oil production from 5,000 barrels per day to 55,000 barrels per day.

Oman Water and Wastewater Services will open two water supply projects — first, a water pipeline from Sohar in North Al Batinah Governorate to the Wilayat of Ibri in the Dhahirah Governorate; second, a water supply system to the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

Oman Oil Marketing Company is launching a bunkering depot at the Port of Duqm.

The Oman Power and Water Procurement Company, a subsidiary of Nama Group, will mark the start of a solar farm that will supply renewable electricity to the Al Sharqiya Water Desalination Plant.

Finally, Omran Group will mark the launch of Jumeirah Hotel in Qantab, which has been established with an investment of RO 60 million. — ONA

Marafiq doubles water production capacity in Duqm to 9,000 m3/day



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 12

The Centralised Utilities Company (Marafiq), a subsidiary of OQ Group of companies, affiliated with Oman Investment Authority (OIA), announced the doubling of the potable water production capacity of its desalination plant in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) to 9,000 cubic metres per day (m3/day).

According to Said al Sarhani, Operations Manager at Marafiq, the company has received a 25-year licence in 2019 to produce, transport and distribute potable water in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. In addition to doubling production capacity, the plant has also increased its storage capacity to around 22,000 cubic metres, which includes about 5,600 cubic metres storage in the Port of Duqm area.

"The number of customers to the network operated by Marafiq in Duqm increased during this year by 25% to reach about 2,100 customers

as of September 2022.

This increase reflects the volume of investment in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm. As well, it mirrors the Company's efforts to accelerate connecting various commercial and residential properties and industrial and investment projects in Duqm to the water network," he said.

Al Sarhani noted that the Company is responsible today for all operations related to water in Duqm, starting from water production, supplying it to tanks, distributing it to all customers in SEZAD and ending with billing and collection. Besides, he explained that the Company has allocated an office serving customers in the Zone.

This office, managed by Omani team, facilitates the completion of applications related to the delivery of water to residential, commercial, industrial and government entities, in addition to receiving customer complaints and resolving them. The Company also introduced a 24-hour emergency service.

Oman's energy-related subsidies climb to RO 563m for 9M 2022

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 12

Government subsidy on oil products soared to RO 563 million for the first nine months of this year — part of a safety net put in place by authorities to soften the impact of elevated utility and fuel tariffs on the local population.

According to the Ministry of Finance, government expenditures under the 'Contributions and Other Expenses' category — a subhead that includes subsidies — totalled RO 1.434 billion for the January - September 2022 period, up from RO 578 million for the corresponding period in 2021. It included RO 563 million in subsidies towards energy products, the ministry noted in its latest fiscal performance bulletin.

This compares with an allocation of RO 1.071 billion in the 2022 State Budgetary towards 'Contributions and Other Expenses' — a budget-item that includes subsidies for electricity, water, sewage and waste sectors, in addition to subsidies for oil products, housing and development loans.

The subsidy expenditure of RO 563 million towards energy products covers majorly the cost of providing electricity and water, produced from gas-based energy sources, to eligible



consumers.

This compares with an allocation of RO 575 million in the 2022 Budget towards electricity and water subsidies for the year.

Although longstanding subsidies for non-Omani residential customers were rolled back last year in line with government reforms announced as part of the Medium Term Fiscal Plan (MTFP), they will be gradually phased out for nationals over a 10-year period spanning the January 2021 – 2031 timeframe.

An estimated 80,000 Omani households are also eligible to receive monetary support under the National Subsidy System (NSS) set up by the government to help mitigate the impact of subsidy reform in the electricity and water sector.

The NSS scheme, previously designed to ease the impact of rising motor fuel prices on economically vulnerable citizens, was expanded in 2021 to include households faced with steeper electricity and water bills in the wake of the government's decision to roll back subsidy on most utilities.

Constituting a small part of the subsidy on energy products is an allocation announced by the government last year to offset a steep rise in retail fuel prices benchmarked to international crude prices. It capped fuel tariffs at the average of rates recorded in October 2021 and pledged to cover the differential up to the end of 2022. An allocation of RO 67 million was also announced towards this new subsidy.

Consequently, the price of Grade 91 fuel remains capped at a maximum of 229 baisas per litre, Grade 95 at 239 baisas and diesel at 258 baisas. But with international prices of crude having prevailed above the \$100 per barrel mark for much of the first half of this year, the new allocation has been barely enough to cover the differential, according to officials.

Furthermore, a grant of RO 35 million was included in the 2022 Budget towards subsidising retail petrol and diesel supply to low-income Omani vehicle owners and fishermen that are registered under the National Subsidy System (NSS).

Additionally, a subsidy expense of RO 18 million was incurred on certain food commodities during the first nine months of the year, according to the ministry.

Importers of grain, notably the two major flour milling companies of Oman, have been receiving financial assistance to offset the steep rise in the cost of wheat imports following the outbreak of hostilities between grain-producing heavyweights Russia and Ukraine.

Also included in the RO 1.474 billion expenditure under the 'Contributions and Other Expenses' sub-head is an allocation of RO 150 million for the future debt obligations budget-item, the ministry added.

Bank Muscat EGM, OGM approve raising authorised share capital to RO 800 million

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, held an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) and an Ordinary General Meeting (OGM) of the bank's shareholders on November 9, 2022 through the electronic platform provided via Muscat Clearing and Depository's website.

Both the meetings were presided over by Shaikh Khalid bin Mustahail al Mashani, Chairman of the Bank's Board of Directors.

At the EGM, shareholders of the bank granted their approval for the proposed increase of the authorised share capital of the bank from RO 450,000,000 to RO 800,000,000 and for amending the Articles of Association, accordingly.

Also approved during the EGM was the issuance by way of dividend of 375,319,853 subordinated, perpetual AT 1 bonds to the bank's list of shareholders at the rate of 1 bond per 10 ordinary shares held by the shareholders on the meeting date, and in accordance with the relevant conditions.



The Bank's Board of Directors was authorised by the shareholders to complete all the necessary actions after approval is received from regulators.

During the OGM, shareholders approved the distribution of bonus shares at the rate of 1 bonus share for every 1 share held by the shareholders of the bank on the meeting date, from the share premium reserves of the bank for the financial year ended December 31, 2021.

ALSO APPROVED DURING THE EGM WAS THE ISSUANCE BY WAY OF DIVIDEND OF 375,319,853 SUBORDINATED, PERPETUAL AT 1 BONDS TO THE BANK'S LIST OF SHAREHOLDERS AT THE RATE OF 1 BOND PER 10 ORDINARY SHARES HELD BY THE SHAREHOLDERS ON THE MEETING DATE, AND IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RELEVANT CONDITIONS

The approval of the distribution of bonus shares will result in an increase in the issued share capital of the bank from 3,753,198,531 shares (aggregating to RO 375,319,853) to 7,506,397,062 shares (aggregating to RO 750,639,706).

Speaking on the occasion, Shaikh Khalid bin Mustahail al Mashani (pictured) thanked the regulators, shareholders, customers and partners for their strong support to the bank, which has helped maintain the bank's

performance momentum over the years.

He added: "Bank Muscat, which celebrates its 40th Anniversary this year, continues to demonstrate its leadership in Oman's financial services sector. As the Sultanate of Oman's leading financial institution, Bank Muscat is poised for greater growth and development in the coming years as it strives to continue serving the nation and the people of Oman."

Shaikh Khalid bin Mustahail al Mashani added that Bank Muscat's Board of Directors welcomed and supported the measures undertaken by the Central Bank of Oman and the Capital Markets Authority to strengthen and diversify the financial sector. Shaikh Khalid al Mashani explained that the bank's growth and achievements could not have been achieved without the oversight and appropriate policies initiated by the government. Shaikh Khalid al Mashani also wished all the success to the banking sector in continuing its contributions to the Sultanate of Oman's economic development.

Al Ansari Group wins best MEP supplier award



MUSCAT: Al Ansari Group was awarded the 'Best MEP Supplier' award during the recently concluded Dossier Construction Awards 2022.

On behalf of the Group, Jesal Asher-Rajda, Executive Director, along with the Management Team, received the award from Dr Khalfan bin Said al Shueili, Minister of Housing & Urban Planning.

Up on receiving the award, Jesal stated, "We are extremely delighted to receive this prestigious Dossier Construction Awards 2022 in the category of Best MEP Supplier. This would surely motivate us to double up our efforts in excelling in what we do, remain as the market leader and be the first in the Sultanate

of Oman to bring in innovative solutions.

We thank our valued clients, consultants, contractors and suppliers for your continuous support and trust by giving us regular opportunities to be part of your projects and to demonstrate our successful teamwork".

Established in 1975, Al Ansari Group is a leader in MEP supplies & contracting and a provider of integrated building, infrastructure and engineering solutions in Oman. Al Ansari provide a wide range of engineering services and solutions for kitchen equipment, heating and ventilation, fluid Engineering, swimming pool services, sanitary ware, building services, lighting and infotech.

Sohar International's 11th Viewpoints highlights future demand for research

MUSCAT: Spearheading conversations on industry-relevant topics that positively impact the community, Sohar International recently concluded its 11th virtual edition of Viewpoints.

Conceptualised, and hosted by the Chairman of Sohar International, Mohamed bin Mahfoodh al Ardhi, the latest session welcomed as its guest speaker the celebrated historian and author, Prof David Nirenberg. Director and Leon Levy Professor at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, Nirenberg focused on 'What kind of research and research institutions does the future demand?' where he highlighted key aspects of research, the vital role of research institutions, and how its needs and demands are continuously evolving.

The virtual edition, which was live-streamed via Sohar International's YouTube channel and Zoom platform, saw the active participation of university students, industry leaders, C-suite executives and professionals from different sectors of society.

The session was streamed live for the students, faculty, and



management of the renowned College of Banking and Financial Studies in Oman.

The CBFS audience participated with intrigue and curiosity by asking several relevant questions that could help them in their future careers. Relevant, engaging, and inspiring, the forum, which is designed with a format that stimulates interaction, gave participants the opportunity to enter into meaningful dialogues with the speaker.

Commenting on the session, Mohamed bin Mahfoodh al Ardhi said, "Sohar International's Viewpoints is revered for its distinctive take on boosting interactions with the community through thought-provoking discussions. As an organisation, Sohar International has always been at the forefront of community initiatives that provide an impetus to enhancing knowledge, skills, and competencies of individuals

while giving them the needed exposure to and familiarising them with the dynamics of international markets."

Al Ardhi added saying, "Viewpoints features speakers who have led transformation in their areas at the highest level. The ideas discussed by Prof David Nirenberg were, therefore, enlightening.

It went beyond giving a renewed perspective to the participants on the critical role of research — it targeted a more fundamental level and highlighted the need to continuously keep an open mind, stay curious, and be receptive to change.

Through initiatives like these, Sohar International will continue to remain persistent in casting a resolute vision for the future of our nation, implementing concrete actions that yield results, and identifying opportunities for our youth to thrive."

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils special collection for Oman's 52nd National Day

MUSCAT: To pay tribute to the glorious spirit of the nation on the occasion of Oman's 52nd National Day, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 290 showrooms across 10 countries, has launched a special collection of diamond pendants and rings priced at RO 52.

"We are very excited to launch the limited-edition collection of pendants and rings to commemorate the 52nd National Day of Oman. Malabar Gold & Diamonds truly values and appreciates the significance of



this day for the country and its residents and is honoured to be a

part of the Oman's rich legacy of culture and commerce.

Our 18 showrooms across the Sultanate of Oman are widely accepted by both nationals and expatriates alike and is representative of Malabar Gold & Diamonds' position in the country's jewellery trade", said Najeeb K, Regional Head — Oman, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

The exclusive collection is available in 9 designs and reflects the vibrance of the Omani culture. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has a strong retail presence across Oman and has incorporated the special design as part of the Mine Diamonds collection.

The National day products will be available across all 18 outlets of Malabar Gold & Diamonds in Oman, located at Muscat, Al Seeb, Barka, Salalah, Suhar, Muttrah Souq, Ibri, Al Bandar, Nizwa and Al Khoudh.

The group is always proactive when it comes to CSR initiatives right from its inception and has kept aside 5% of its profit for enabling CSR activities in all regions of operation. The key focus areas of the CSR initiatives of Malabar Group are health, education, women empowerment, housing and environment.

OFA and TotalEnergies to hold conference on green energy transition in Oman



MUSCAT: In line with the country's ambition to position the Sultanate of Oman as a leading global green hydrogen hub, the Omani French Friendship Association (OFA), in collaboration with TotalEnergies EP Oman Development BV Oman Branch, organised an event on renewable energies on Tuesday, November 15, 2022 at the Crowne Plaza in Qurum from 8:30 am to 11:00 am.

The conference titled "To what extent can Solar & Hydrogen play in the energy transition?" will showcase the ongoing projects and future plans in Oman in the solar and hydrogen sectors. Abdulaziz al Shidhani, DG Renewable Energy & Hydrogen at the Ministry of Energy & Minerals will be the lead speaker of the panel discussion.

Sergio Giorgi, TotalEnergies Oman Country Chair will introduce the panel with his global vision of this accelerating green sector while Georgio Akiki, Gas, Renewables & Power Key Account Manager Oman of TotalEnergies will present the solar project already running in the country.

Yann Bourles, Renewable Energy Project Developer and Zakariya al Battashi, Business Developer Renewables of TotalEnergies will explain the trends we expect to see over the short term and beyond.

Stephan Gobert, SVP Hydrogen AMEA (ENGIE) will talk about how the hydrogen will impact the energy transition journey of Oman.

The panel discussion will be moderated by Mohammed al Riyami, Business Support Manager, TotalEnergies.

The Omani French Friendship Association is a non-profit association dedicated to strengthening Omani and French relationships through developing trade, economic, and cultural exchanges between the two communities.

Crowe Oman workshop to focus on Data Protection Law



MUSCAT: Instead of serving as a resource that can be freely harvested, countries in every region of the world have begun to treat personal data as an asset owned by individuals and held in trust by firms, says Jose Chacko, Partner, Technology Services in Crowe.

The Oman Data Protection Law will change the way companies used to handle personal data. Data handling will be one of the greatest challenges in the coming days along with data security. The Oman DP law shall apply to all organisations operating in Oman and to those organisations not based in Oman, but processing and collecting data on Omani residents and citizens.

The Oman Personal Data Protection Laws will be applicable from February 2023 vide Royal Decree 6/22.

The Omani Law is on the similar lines of global privacy laws which specifies strict requirements about how companies manage and protect personal data of individuals while respecting their choice, irrespective of where data is sent, processed or stored.

When the law is in action, firms that generate any value from personal data will need to change the way they acquire it, share it, protect it and profit from it.

As part of their client education series, to highlight the industry's best practices, Crowe Oman is holding a workshop for the clients on November 15 at the Sheraton Hotel, Muscat. The workshop will be guided by Subhi Rastogi, a leading expert on data privacy. This workshop will focus on general data protection and security issues based on the upcoming Oman DP law.

The Pearl REIF IPO raises over RO 35m

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, NOV 12

The Pearl REIF, the largest IPO in the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) in the last seven years, generated an overwhelming response with over RO 35 million raised during the subscription phase.

The IPO received strong levels of response from both retail and institutional category of investors. REIF IPOs being rare in the Sultanate made this a challenging transaction and its success promises to be a key benchmark



Wahbi al Riyami, Chairman

for similar future capital market offerings.

Wahbi al Riyami, Chairman of The Pearl REIF, said, "The response received for the IPO and the subscription numbers that we



Aown bin Abbas al Bahrani, Deputy Chairman

have witnessed reflects the robust offering which was underpinned by strong promoters, sound structure of the instrument and an experienced fund management team. Our thanks to all investors

who have participated and the Capital Market Authority (CMA) and Muscat Clearing and Depository (MCD) for their continued support and guidance."

Aown bin Abbas al Bahrani, Deputy Chairman of the Pearl REIF and Director of Public Markets at Oman Investment Authority (OIA), said, "We are pleased that investors across segments have appreciated the opportunity and the response shows the confidence placed in the offering. We extend our sincere thanks to all our partners for managing the IPO

process in an efficient manner."

The Pearl REIF IPO comprised an offering of 208,137,400 Offer Units at a price of 112 baisas per Offer Unit (including Offer Price of 110 baisas and Offer Expenses of 2 baisas per Offer Unit) for subscription.

The IPO received positive recommendations from leading brokerage houses in Oman.

Oman Investment Authority and its subsidiary Omantel are the promoters of The Pearl REIF. Sohara International is the Investment Manager and Issue Manager.

MSX 30 Index ends week higher

MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week up by 0.61 per cent. The Financial Index ended the week higher by 0.51 per cent. The Industrial Index and service index ended the week up by 0.61 per cent and 0.19 per cent respectively. The MSX Shariah Index was down by 2.03 per cent for the week.

During the week, Bank Muscat has approved the increase of the authorised share capital of the bank to RO 800,000,000 and amend the Article (5) of the Articles of Association of the Bank, accordingly.

Approved the issuance (by way of dividend) of 375,319,853 subordinated, perpetual AT1 bonds to the bank's shareholders list at the rate of 1 bond per 10 ordinary shares held by the shareholders on the meeting date and that is in accordance to the conditions.

Approved the distribution of bonus shares at the rate of 1 bonus share for every 1 share held by the shareholders of the bank on the meeting date, from the share premium reserves of the bank for the financial year ended on December 31, 2021.

The approval of the distribution of bonus shares will result in an increase in the issued share capital of the bank from 3,753,198,531 shares (aggregating to RO 375,319,853) to 7,506,397,062 shares (aggregating to RO 750,639,706).

Ooredoo Oman held its



conference call as well, in which it discussed its financial performance for 9M22 and outlook for 2023, whereby the company expects growth in wholesale, fixed-line subscribers, as well as data centres, plan to implement 2022 OHI Initiatives, and build capabilities including regional growth and distribution revamp.

Further to the announcement of October 12, 2022, Omantel informed shareholders that its subsidiary Pearl REIF has successfully completed its Initial Public Offering (IPO).

Through the IPO, Omantel has sold 136,752,563 units of Pearl REIF at the offering price of 112 baisas per share. Omantel will further hold the remaining 142,334,304 units of the Pearl REIF translating into a 33.51-per cent ownership. Previously the company holds a 65.7-per cent stake out of which a 33.51-per cent stake is remaining after the 49 per cent of units sold under Pearl REIF IPO.

As stated earlier, the units

sold which are valued at RO 15.0 million will increase the company's cash balance by ~4 per cent and will also lead to a gain of RO 1.2 million on the income statement side.

The total value of fish production in Oman increased by 2.2 per cent to reach RO 226.46 million at the end of July 2022, compared to the corresponding period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The fish production by the end of July 2022, reached 400,115 tonnes, comprising a decline of 21.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2021 when it stood at 510,020 tonnes.

Artisanal fishing, which constitutes the largest share of Oman's fish production, recorded a drop of 23.3 per cent to reach 375,992 tonnes by the end of July 2022 compared to 489,945 tonnes during the same period in 2021.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

Post pandemic tourism is a renaissance



STEFANO VIRGILLI
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The author is a member of the International Press Association

THE TOURISM SECTOR IN OMAN IS A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR TO THE SULTANATE'S ECONOMY. THE SECTOR HAS SEEN STEADY GROWTH OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS, AND IS ESTIMATED TO BE WORTH AROUND \$4.5 BILLION ANNUALLY. THIS IS LARGELY THANKS TO THE COUNTRY'S DIVERSE ATTRACTIONS, WHICH INCLUDE MOUNTAINS, DESERTS, BEACHES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES.

The travel season has recovered after the Covid-19 pandemic, with tourism industry reporting increased demand from international visitors. However, residual effects from the pandemic, such as a decrease in travel demand from some key markets, are still being felt.

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has said that the global tourism sector is still facing substantial uncertainty, with a slowdown in some key markets and a lack of clarity about the outlook for certain regions of the world.

The tourism sector in Oman is a major contributor to the Sultanate's economy. The sector has seen steady growth over the past few years, and is estimated to be worth around \$4.5 billion annually. This is largely thanks to the country's diverse attractions, which include mountains, deserts, beaches and archaeological sites. The major economic resources in the tourism sector include natural gas and oil.

In 2016, under Sultan Qaboos leadership, the sector generated RO 2.5 billion, of which RO 1.5 billion was generated by hotel and restaurant services, RO 300 million by car rental and rental companies, and RO 150 million by travel agencies and clubs.

The importance of tourism to Oman is reflected in the government's efforts to promote

the country as a tourist destination. The Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism oversees the country's tourism industry and is responsible for developing and promoting Oman's tourism infrastructure. Oman is a member of the World Tourism Organisation and the Arab Tourism Organisation.

The Oman Ministry of Heritage and Tourism operates the country's tourism infrastructure, including hotels, resorts and transportation. The Oman Tourism Development Fund, a government-owned corporation, invests in tourism-related projects.

According to pre-Covid data published by the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), the overall tourism industry in the Middle East generated \$44.6 billion in revenue in 2017. This represented a growth of 6.4 per cent over the previous year. The region was expected to generate \$51.4 billion in revenue in 2020, representing a growth of 6.9 per cent over the previous year. But due to the pandemic, the goal was not achieved. However, these figures show the importance of the tourism sector in the Middle East, and its potential for growth.

The WTTC report also shows that the travel industry is a key driver of the global economy. In 2017, the travel and tourism sector accounted for 2.5 per cent of global GDP.

The data related to 2022 will be published in early 2023. As an overall direction, there is a widespread consensus that sustainable tourism is a growing trend, opening up business opportunities for some countries. The term 'sustainable tourism' has been used in various ways and to different degrees, but at its heart, it refers to responsible tourism that meets the needs of both tourists and local communities.

Important challenges that sustainable tourism faces include the need to develop a growth model that is both effective and environment friendly, and to ensure that tourism quality is high enough to attract tourists.

Quality can be improved by implementing effective developmental growth policies, which can help to improve the economic development of the tourism industry and the informal sectors.

Growth model is important for sustainable tourism because it determines how much tourism will grow, how it will be developed, and how it will be beneficial for both tourists and local communities.

Masirah Oil produces 3,678 stock tank barrels per day in October

JOMAR MENDOZA

@JmObserver

Gross oil production from the Yumna Field in Block 50 offshore 50 Oman reached an average of 3,678 stock tank barrels per day (stb/d) in October 2022, according to latest statement of Masirah Oil Limited (MOL). The oil production in October is 32.81 per cent less than its production in September, which amounted to 5,474 stock tank barrels per day.

The decline in October production was caused by 7 days of either no production or restricted production during the positioning of the jack-up rig and driving of conductor pipe in preparation for the scheduled drilling, it said.

In addition, Yumna-3 was shut down for the last 5 days of



October when workover activities began to replace the electrical submersible pump (ESP) of the well. The workover of Yumna-3 has continued into November, the statement added.

In Q3FY2022, Masirah Oil spent \$11.04 million for exploration

and production related activities in Oman. The actual amount of funds used for exploration and production activities in Oman was \$1.64 million higher than the projected amount in Q2. The higher actual amount was mainly due to additional costs incurred in relation to the repair and replacement of a faulty Electric Submersible Pump (ESP) and a damaged flowline.

Production in the Yumna Field resumed on August 5, 2022 after the damaged flowline was replaced due to a minor leakage.

Meanwhile, Masirah Oil said, "The change-outs of the floating storage tanker and Mobile Offshore Production Unit (MOPU) were necessary and will serve until the end of Yumna Field's life.

"Notwithstanding regular

maintenance, the operational issues caused by the faulty Electric Submersible Pump (ESP) and flowline were unforeseen and unfortunately, extended the production stoppage time as MOL needed to first to identify the problems and then rectify them after procuring the required replacement parts, equipment and crew, on top of dealing with inclement weather and managing safety concerns and around rigid installation procedure."

"The ESP inside the Yumna Field which had an operation issue continues to be closely monitored. Further review of the ESP performance will be done, and a replacement would be considered in conjunction with the upcoming drilling campaign," the company added.

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First strokes at the Art Clinic

By Kabeer Yousuf

Can art be a healer? Can it be used as a therapy? Can art awaken the innate tastes and inclinations of a person?

Studies and research have found that by giving us a medium for expression, we communicate by drawing and expressing our own emotions, thoughts and experiences.

When one sees an object or a beautiful landscape or person, he or she is seeing the world through their eyes and when he creates, he is letting the world see through his.

A unique idea was born when the Indian school Muscat (ISM) from its thought of promoting the inculcation of art and craft in students in the formative years as it motivates them to reach superior levels of skill.

A one-of-its-kind art camp titled 'Art Clinic - An Artist Camp' was organised for the students under the guidance of the Department of Visual Arts that advocates the idea that children have innate talents and by giving them a brush and a few colours they can paint the impossible.



The camp commenced with the Chief Guest of the day, Shabab Bava, Chairman of the 'Co-Curricular Subcommittee at the Management Committee declaring the camp open with his first stroke of the brush and colour on a blank canvas. Rajeev Chauhan, the Principal of the school lauded the initiative taken up

by the Department of Visual Arts and expressed his heartfelt appreciation.

More than 150 art enthusiasts and budding artists painted their canvases with unimaginable hues. The contemporary art camp comprised abstract painting, landscape painting, figurative painting and

portrait painting. The outcome of the confluence of colours was magnificent and eye-catching.

An array of instrumental performances by the students under the guidance of the Department of Performing Arts added opulence to the event. Representing all facets of

visual art, each painting was overbrimming with emotions and expression of aesthetic mastery. The prodigious creativities which illuminated the hall were marvelous and deserved accolades.

Underlining what great artists have said, art is more than just a medium and is a way of life that connects people and cultures. It teaches one to appreciate the beauty of



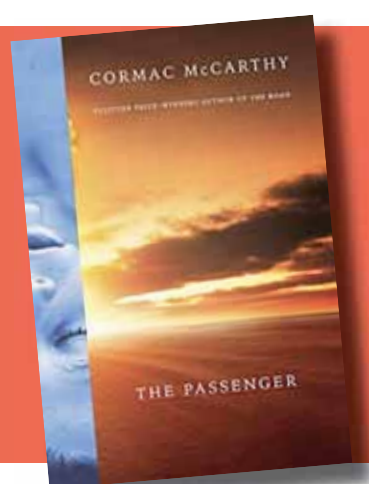
life and all things around the artistic eyes. It's significant to the students as it adds wings to their imagination and forms their ingenuity. Apart from relaxation and entertainment, art provides a sense of accomplishment to the creators.

READ

THE PASSENGER

BY CORMAC MCCARTHY

The first of a two-volume story. Bobby Western discovers things have gone missing from a jet in an underwater crash site, including the 10th passenger.



TRAVEL TALES

A child preparing to release a floating lantern into a river during the Loy Krathong festival in the southern Thai province of Narathiwat. — AFP



HOLIDAY SHOPPING

(From L) French actress Isabelle Huppert, Loewe's Northern Irish creative director Jonathan Anderson and British model Naomi Campbell pose after unveiling the Christmas shop windows of the Printemps Haussmann department store in Paris. — AFP





Thinning Greenland ice sheet may mean more sea level rise: Study

PART OF GREENLAND'S ice sheet is thinning further inland than previously believed, which will likely lead to greater sea level rise by the end of this century, a new study found on Wednesday.

The findings pertain to a north-east section of the giant ice block covering, but the trend is likely happening elsewhere on Greenland and Earth's other ice sheet, in Antarctica.

The implications are worrying, as sea level rise already threatens millions of people living along coasts that could find themselves underwater in the decades and centuries to come.

Scientists have previously

level projection," he said in an interview.

The researchers installed GPS stations on the ice sheet to gather more precise information, and also used satellite data and numerical modelling, all of which provided a new set of data likely to alter global sea level rise projections.

The research was conducted at the Northeast Greenland Ice Stream (NEGIS), which covers an estimated 12 per cent of Greenland, according to co-author Mathieu Morlighem.

It found that the thinning could add between 13.5 and 15.5 millimetres to sea levels by the end of this century — equivalent to the entire



focused on the edges of Greenland's ice sheet to examine active melting as global temperatures rise, largely using satellite data.

But the authors of Wednesday's study looked further inland, over 100 kilometres from the coast.

What they found was alarming: thinning from Greenland's coast stretched back 200 to 300 kilometres (125 to 185 miles).

"What we see happening at the front reaches far back into the heart of the ice sheet," said first author Shfaqat Abbas Khan in a press release about the study, published in Nature.

"The new model really captures what's going on inland, the old ones do not... you end up with a completely different mass change, or sea

Greenland ice sheet's contribution during the past 50 years.

"The NEGIS could lose six times more ice than existing climate models estimate," the report found.

- 'REDUCE CO2' -

One reason for the inland thinning is the intrusion of warm ocean currents, which in 2012 caused the floating extension of the NEGIS to collapse.

That event "has accelerated ice flow and triggered a wave of rapid ice thinning that has spread upstream".

The Greenland ice sheet is currently the main factor in swelling the Earth's oceans, according to Nasa, with the Arctic region heating at a faster rate than the rest of the

planet.

In a landmark report on climate science last year, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said the Greenland ice sheet would contribute up to 18 centimetres to sea level rise by 2100 under the highest emissions scenario.

The massive ice sheet, two kilometres thick, contains enough frozen water to lift global seas by over seven metres (23 feet) in total.

The researchers will now extend their methods to look at other glaciers on Greenland and Antarctica, and some new data could be available in a year or so.

Earth's surface has warmed, on average, nearly 1.2 degrees Celsius since pre-industrial times, unleashing a catalogue of impacts from heatwaves to more intense storms.

Under the Paris climate deal, countries have agreed to limit warming to well under 2C.

World leaders are currently meeting in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt, for UN climate talks aimed at slashing harmful emissions and boosting funding to green developing country economies.

Khan said the thinning trend on Greenland's ice sheet will be near impossible to reverse, but can at least be slowed with the right policies in place.

"I really hope that they agree on a reduction on CO2 and as soon as possible," he said in a message to leaders at the COP27 climate talks. — AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

What makes a great music documentary?



COLM FORDE, co-founder of Britain's Doc'n Roll film festival, knows what makes a good music documentary.

"75 minutes!" he said with a laugh.

Given the thousands of hours of music-related content flooding streaming services, he is only half-joking.

Barely a single famous popstar has not received the high-profile doc treatment in the last few years.

From David Bowie to Taylor Swift, Nina Simone to Beyonce, Kurt Cobain to Olivia Rodrigo — they have become reliable weaponry in the contest for eyeballs among streamers.

For Forde, whose festival champions "outliers and weirdos" in the world of music documentaries, many of these big label-sponsored films are just "recycling crap to boost their own back catalogues".

He focuses on innovative films that explore little-known political moments, such as "Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records" about Jamaican immigrant culture in 1960s Britain, or "The Rumba Kings" on the unexpected way that Cuban music influenced

mental health toll.

New films about Sinead O'Connor ("Nothing Compares") and Selena Gomez ("My Mind and Me") follow recent hits about Nina Simone ("What Happened, Miss Simone?") and Amy Winehouse ("Amy").

"The best music documentaries aren't necessarily about the music. What's interesting is the human context that catalyses it," said Bridger.

Pulse hopes its upcoming film about Wu Tang Clan's Ol' Dirty Bastard will be the "Amy" of hip-hop.

"ODB created this persona that was so powerful that it ultimately destroyed him," said Bridger.

"Just as Amy became a tabloid version of herself that was the knife from within."

- 'VERY FRANK CONVERSATIONS' -

The challenge is creating something raw and honest without upsetting the artist or estate who control the music.

Recent Bowie doc "Moonage Daydream" had unprecedented archive access, but some critics felt it was wrong to skip over controversial episodes, such as his



Congo's fight for independence.

But he's happy to admit even the big boys have moved beyond the simple talking heads and bland self-promotion of old.

He would like them to keep it short, though, rolling his eyes at mention of the 4.5-hour "Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy" or the nearly eight-hour Beatles doc "Get Back".

"Make a great 75-minute film, and leave all the extras for an expensive Blu Ray edition for the super-fans," he insisted.

- 'FLUFFED-UP PROMO' -

One mainstream release Forde praises is "Meet Me in the Bathroom", the new archive-heavy nostalgia trip through New York's early-noughts featuring bands such as The Strokes and Yeah Yeah Yeahs.

"It's not enough to just follow a musician or do a visual version of a Wikipedia entry anymore," agreed Sam Bridger, of Pulse Films, which produced "Meet Me in the Bathroom".

"Nobody wants a fluffed-up promo piece. Audiences are savvy to that," he said.

That demand has led to a trend for unvarnished accounts about fame's

"cocaine-fuelled comments in support of fascism (and) repudiation of his bisexual persona as he tried to break America," in the words of The New Statesman.

Director Brett Morgan rejects the criticism: "It's not a biography," he said at its premiere in Cannes in May.

"The film is meant to be sublime, and kaleidoscopic, and kind of wash over you."

Pulse says the key is having "very frank conversations" in the early stages of production and building trust.

"We make films collaboratively with artists. That doesn't mean giving them full editorial control because that isn't necessarily in their best interests," said Bridger, highlighting an upcoming film with Lewis Capaldi that goes deep into his mental health challenges.

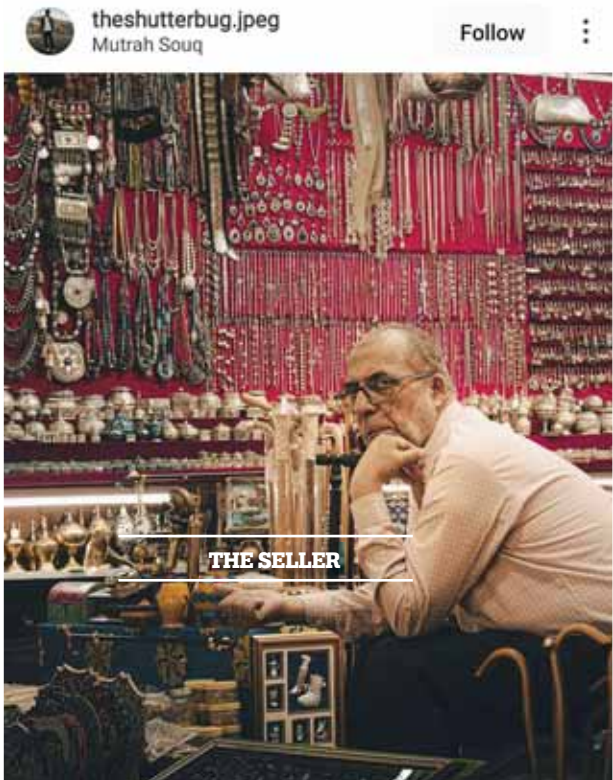
Doc'n Roll, which has its own streaming service, has shown there is also an appetite for wilder fare, such as "Myth" about a Ukrainian opera singer on the frontlines of the war.

"We have more passion than sense, but what we're interested in is the power of music to bring people together," said Forde. — AFP



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AROUND THE WORLD

ANIMAL PLANET

It Looks Like a Shell, but an Octopus and 40,000 Eggs Live Inside



ARGONAUTA ARGO is not a typical octopus. When a female mates, first she keeps her partner's detachable, sperm-filled limb inside of her. Then she begins making something like a handbag.

She uses the tips of two of her blue-sheened arms to secrete a mineral formula, crafting it into a paper-thin basket shaped like a shell. The construction can grow to nearly 1 foot in length, becoming the home of more than 40,000 embryos. The argonaut octopus crawls inside its shell-like purse, traps some air bubbles inside, then uses its buoyancy to bob just beneath the surface of water in warm oceans around the world.

This egg holder has such an uncanny resemblance to the hard shells of the Nautiloids, the octopus's distant relatives, that scientists nicknamed the argonaut the "Paper Nautilus." But now, genetic sequencing data reveals the octopus independently evolved the genes to make its intricate embryo armor, instead of repurposing DNA it inherited from its shelled-ancestors.

These findings upend some misconceptions among scientists about how cephalopods evolved, said Davin Setiamarga, a researcher at the National Institute of Technology, Wakayama College in Japan, who detailed the new data recently with colleagues in the journal *Genome Biology and Evolution*.

The last common ancestor of most cephalopods likely had a chambered, pearly shell, not unlike the iconic one worn by the nautilus. But over millions of years of evolution, soft-bodied cephalopods like octopuses, squids and cuttlefish evolved to internalise that outer shell and shrink it while adapting to their individual habitats.

Because the argonaut still carries around a nautilus-shell-like construction, it has fueled the scientific debate about whether, and how, an animal can lose such a structure during the course of evolution, then get it back. Other researchers initially speculated that argonauts reactivated archaic genes from the mollusk era to form their egg case. But after sequencing the genome of *A. argo* from samples collected in the Sea of Japan, the data suggested otherwise. Like their nautilus relatives, scientists found that argonauts have protein-coding genes needed to build what scientists call "true shells," the kind you find around an oyster. But they use entirely different genes than the nautilus do to make these formations. It means the shell-like egg case didn't evolve from the ancestral shell, but it is the argonauts' own evolutionary innovation for a new purpose. — **NYT**

ENTERTAINMENT

Marrakech film festival returns after Covid cancellations



THE MARRAKECH International Film Festival returns to the Moroccan tourist hub this month, with organisers hoping to woo star-struck fans after a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

British actress Tilda Swinton is set to attend, with Italian director Paolo Sorrentino heading up the jury.

The festival, running from November 11-19, features emerging directors from across the world who will "shape the cinema of tomorrow", according to Prince Moulay Rachid, who presides

festival "brings together different cinematic worlds, through 76 films (representing) 33 countries covering all continents".

The opening film is "Pinocchio", a remake of Carlo Collodi's animated tale by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro.

Tributes will also be paid to American director James Gray and to Swinton, who headed the festival's jury in 2018 and 2019, as well as Moroccan director Farida Benlyazid and Bollywood star Ranveer Singh.

Known for its conversational side events, the festival will

Saint Laurent museum will also host the "11th continent" collection of recently restored archive films, including "Muna moto" (1975) by Cameroonian Jean-Pierre Dikongue-Pipa or "Beirut the Encounter" (1981) by Lebanon's Borhane Alaouié.

Other screenings will include films that have already debuted recently at top festivals, including "No Bears" by Iran's Jafar Panahi, who has been detained in Iran since July. The film received the Special Jury Prize at the 2022 Venice Film Festival.

Legal drama and Venice Silver Lion winner "Saint Omer", by French director



over the festival's foundation.

Sorrentino, whose film "The Great Beauty" won a foreign-language Oscar in 2014, is joined by French actor Tahar Rahim, Lebanese director Nadine Labaki and German-American actress Diane Kruger.

Fourteen feature films from across the world, including six by women, will be in the running for the festival's top prize, the Gold Star.

Artistic director Remi Bonhomme told AFP that the

give the public the chance to question Iran's two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi.

US independent director Jim Jarmusch is also on the line-up, with events set to take place at a string of venues across the city with its famous red buildings.

Marrakesh's iconic Jamaa El-Fna square will host outdoor screenings of science fiction epic "Dune" and James Gray's "Ad Astra".

The city's famous Yves

Alice Diop, will also be screened.

Alongside the festivities, organisers will hold the Atlas Workshops, a programme supporting young film-makers from Africa and the Middle East with development and post-production that also awards prizes.

A previous winner, Egyptian director Omar El Zohairy, was awarded a Grand Prize at the Semaine de la Critique in Cannes in July for his scathing "Feathers". — **AFP**

SCIENCE

'Planet Killer' Asteroid Spotted That Poses Distant Risk to Earth



ASTRONOMERS on the hunt for modestly sized asteroids that could vaporise a city or bulkier beasts that could sterilise Earth's surface have spotted a new potential threat. But there's no immediate need to worry — it'll be many generations until it may pose a danger to our planet.

Detecting uncharted space rocks relies on spying sunlight glinting off their surfaces. But some asteroids occupy corners of the sky in which the sun's glare smothers them, and, like

Science in Washington, DC, and an author of the study.

After the asteroid was discovered in January, additional observatories studied its motion and other astronomers retrospectively identified it in older images. This data set made it clear that it won't be paying Earth a visit during the next century and perhaps far longer.

And if, in the unluckiest of timelines, 2022 AP7 ultimately impacts Earth?

"This is what we call a planet killer," Sheppard said. "If this one hits the Earth, it



embers flitting in front of a thermonuclear bonfire, they fade from view.

Last year, in the hope of finding asteroids cloaked by excessive sunlight, an international team of astronomers co-opted a camera primarily designed to investigate the universe's notoriously elusive dark energy. In an announcement recently based on a survey first published in September in *The Astronomical Journal*, the researchers announced the discovery of three new light-drowned projectiles.

One of them, 2022 AP7, is roughly 1 mile long, and its orbit crosses Earth's path around the sun, getting as near as 4.4 million miles to Earth itself. That makes 2022 AP7 "the largest potentially hazardous asteroid found in the last eight years or so," said Scott Sheppard, an astronomer at the Carnegie Institution for

would cause planetwide destruction. It would be very bad for life as we know it."

But as we are safe for many generations, this asteroid's orbit is not its most noteworthy feature. Its existence suggests that other elephantine asteroids, veiled by the sun's glare, remain disconcertingly undiscovered.

Today, astronomers looking for potentially hazardous asteroids — those that get at least as close as 4.6 million miles to Earth and are too chunky to be incinerated without incident by our atmosphere — focus on finding rocks around 460 feet across. Such threats have motivated Nasa and other space agencies to develop planetary defence missions like DART, the spacecraft that successfully adjusted the orbit of a small, non-threatening asteroid in September. — **NYT**



Astronaut geology training for future missions to Moon and Mars on the island of Lanzarote in Tinajo.

Astronauts flock to Moon like Spanish isle to train



German astronaut Alexander Gerst (R) work on the summit of an ancient volcano during a training program in Lanzarote to learn how to explore the Moon and Mars in the Timanfaya National Park. – AFP

DANIEL SILVA

KNEELING ON THE EDGE of a deep crater, astronaut Alexander Gerst uses a chisel to collect a sample of volcanic rock which he carefully puts inside a white plastic bag.

Gerst is not on the Moon, even if it looks like it. He is in the middle of Los Volcanes Natural Park on the island of Lanzarote in Spain's Canary Islands, off the northwest coast of Africa.

With its blackened lava fields, craters and volcanic tubes, Lanzarote's geology can be uncannily similar to that of the Moon and Mars — so much so that the European Space Agency (ESA) and Nasa have for years been sending astronauts to the island to train.

"This place has lavas that are very, very similar to the ones that we find on the Moon," Gerst, a 46-year-old German astronaut with the ESA, told AFP.

He said the island was "a unique training ground". Gerst, who has completed two missions on the International Space Station, is one of about a dozen astronauts who have taken part in the ESA's Pangaea training course in Lanzarote over the past decade.

Named after the ancient supercontinent, Pangaea seeks to give astronauts as well as space engineers and geologists the skills needed for expeditions to other planets.

Trainees learn how to identify rock samples and collect them, do on-the-spot DNA analysis of micro-organisms, and communicate their findings back to mission control.

"Here, they are put into the field to experience the exploration of a terrain, which is something they will have to do on the Moon," said Francesco Sauro, the technical director of the course.

SIX-YEAR ERUPTION

Gerst said the Pangaea training course, which he has just completed, helps prepare astronauts to work in a remote setting on their own.

"If we run into a problem, we have to solve it ourselves," he said.

He completed the Pangaea training along with Stephanie Wilson, one of Nasa's most senior astronauts. Both are possible candidates for Nasa's next crewed Moon missions.

Named for the goddess who was Apollo's twin sister in ancient Greek mythology, Nasa's Artemis programme aims to return astronauts to the Moon's surface as early as 2025, though many experts believe that time frame might slip.

Twelve astronauts walked on the Moon during six Apollo missions from 1969 to 1972, the only spaceflights yet to place humans on the lunar sur-

WITH ITS BLACKENED LAVA FIELDS, CRATERS, AND VOLCANIC TUBES, LANZAROTE'S GEOLOGY CAN BE UNCANNILY SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE MOON AND MARS — SO MUCH SO THAT THE EUROPEAN SPACE AGENCY (ESA) AND NASA HAVE FOR YEARS BEEN SENDING ASTRONAUTS TO THE ISLANDS TO TRAIN

face.

Nasa and the ESA also regularly use Lanzarote's landscape of twisted mounds of solidified lava to test Mars Rovers — remote controlled vehicles designed to travel on the surface of the Red Planet.

Lanzarote's unique geography stems from a volcanic eruption that began in 1730 and lasted six years, spewing ash and lava over large swathes of land.

Considered one of the greatest volcanic cataclysms in recorded history, the eruption devastated over 200 square kilometres (77 square miles) of terrain — about a quarter of the island which is currently home to around 156,000 people.

'SEE FAR AWAY'

While there are other volcanic areas such as Hawaii that could also be used for astronaut training, Lanzarote has the advantage that it has little vegetation due to its desert-like climate.

"You have a lot of different types of volcanic rocks in Lanzarote. And they are exposed. You don't have trees," said Pangaea project leader Loredana Bessone.

"You can see far away, as if you were on the Moon," she told AFP.

The Canary Islands is making a big contribution to space exploration in another way too. The island of La Palma is home to one of the world's largest optical telescopes.

Located on a peak, the Great Canary Telescope is able to spot some of the faintest, most distant objects in the Universe.

La Palma was selected as the site for the telescope because of its cloud-free skies and relatively low light pollution.

— AFP