

Time for Syria to return to Arab fold

The UAE's president on Sunday told his Syrian counterpart it was time for Damascus to be reintegrated into the wider Arab region during a meeting in Abu Dhabi, state media reported. The trip by Syrian President Bashar Al Assad – his second to the United Arab Emirates in as many years – comes after a visit last month, his only official engagements in Arab countries since the start of Syria's war in 2011. – AFP



P12

FRENCH TRIATHLETE CHANE BAGS 2023 XTERRA MUSANDAM TITLE



P15

THE KEY TO SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH IN THE MODERN ERA



P20

THIS OMANI PILOT WANTS TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO GET A CAREER IN AVIATION



MUSCAT

HM GREETINGS TO TUNISIA PRESIDENT

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Kais Saied of the Tunisian Republic on his country's Independence Anniversary. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and long life to President Kais Saied. His Majesty also prayed to Allah the Almighty for the return of this and similar occasions while the people of Tunisia realise aspirations of further development and growth. — ONA

TEHRAN

IRAN 'WELCOMES' SAUDI INVITATION

Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has "welcomed" an invitation from Saudi Arabia's King Salman to visit the kingdom following the reconciliation deal between the two countries, an Iranian official said on Sunday. "In a letter to President Raisi... the King of Saudi Arabia welcomed the deal between the two brotherly countries (and) invited him to Riyadh," tweeted Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president's deputy chief of staff for political affairs, adding that "Raisi welcomed the invitation". DETAILS ON P7



INSIDE



NORTH KOREA FIRES BALLISTIC MISSILE

P6



TRUMP COULD BE CHARGED ANY DAY... WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

P9

FAREWELL TO US AMBASSADOR



On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received at his office on Sunday Leslie M Tsou, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty. The ambassador expressed thanks for His Majesty the Sultan's support during her tour of duty. DETAILS ON P3

Oman Flour Mills receives 34,728 metric tonnes of Australian wheat

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 19

Oman Flour Mills Company received the first Australian wheat shipment it purchased through its affiliated company OMAUS PTY Ltd, as part of its plan to purchase wheat directly from Australian farmers. The affiliated company signed an agreement with Australian farmers for purchasing 34,728 metric tonnes of Australian wheat.

Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, inspected the first wheat shipment, accompanied by Mark Lawrence Donovan, Ambassador of Australia to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Sultanate of Oman, Kingdom of Bahrain and Yemen Arab Republic. They also listened to an explanation about the efforts exerted by Oman Flour Mills (OFM) to diversify the sources of purchasing wheat.

Haitham bin Mohammed al Fannah, Chief Executive Officer



of OFM, said: "Oman Flour Mills Company secured high quality wheat from farmers in Australia. This resulted in shortening the supply chain, as part of its role played to enhance food security and secure the strategic stock of grains in the Sultanate of Oman."

He added: "The establishment of OMAUS PTY Ltd in Australia, which worked directly with farmers to secure wheat shipments from Australia adds value to the strategic stock by receiving

high quality grain in a way that achieves a competitive advantage in the international markets."

The chief executive officer said that his company is moving forward to invest in strategic assets across the grain value chain. This will ensure that Oman will receive quality grains at competitive prices. It will also guarantee the availability of grains, which will enable Oman to secure strategic procurements and ensure food security. SEE ALSO P5

Youth told to benefit from experience



HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, presided over the opening of the forum.

MAI AL ABRI
MUSCAT, MARCH 19

His Highness Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, on Sunday, presided over the opening of the "Together We Advance" forum organised by the Secretariat-General of the Council of Ministers at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

HH Sayyid Theyazin affirmed that the topics raised at the forum assume special significance. He expressed his delight at the organisation of the forum, and said that he was interested to listen to the queries and discussions of the participants and viewers.

The forum reviewed government policies under three

important categories: Oman Vision 2040; the various measures taken in light of global economic changes; and mechanisms for dealing with employment through the National Employment Programme.

The forum also discussed the new Social Protection Law, under which there is a possibility of increasing the period of maternity leave to 98 days with payment of wages during the leave by the system, not the employer.

Al Fadhil bin Mohammed al Harthy, Secretary-General of the Council of Ministers, said that the forum was organised under the directives of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, and that this reaffirms His Majesty's keenness on...

First day of Ramadhan in all likelihood on Thursday

SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
[@shadadm](#)

Oman is abuzz with excitement about Ramadhan, the first day of which is likely to fall on Thursday (March 23) the world over, according to astronomical data.

Abdulwahab al Busaidy, head of the observatory at Oman Astronomical Society, informed the Observer that the first day of Ramadhan, in all likelihood, would fall on Thursday (March 23) because there would be ample time to see the crescent moon

on Wednesday evening.

"In order to see the crescent moon, it has to be in the sky for at least 12 to 15 hours. This time we are having enough hours, which is sufficient to see it on Wednesday evening. In fact, this time, there will be no differences the world over except for a few. But the whole region will start observing the fast on March 23," Al Busaidy said.

The fasting hours at the beginning of Ramadhan this year in the Sultanate of Oman will be approximately 14 hours, and gradually increase everyday to approxi-



Diversity of programmes to enrich the content of the Sultanate of Oman TV during the holy month of Ramadhan.

mately 14 and a half hours.

The good news is that this Ramadhan, starting in the third quarter of March and ending in the third quarter of April, is in spring.

"During Ramadhan, the weather isn't expected to be hot. However, the hours will be long – averaging 14 hours throughout the month. According to the climate data for this period, the (average) temperature ranges between 32 to 34°C which is good news for those fasting," Al Busaidy added.

Al Busaidy urged people to

take good care of their health by drinking plenty of water and eating hydrating foods.

"People also need to stay healthy by doing some light exercises before iftar. There is a debate over the merits and demerits of exercise while fasting, but take it from my own experience, I have been doing some light exercises – like walking – before iftar for the past 15 years and it has helped a lot. I feel energetic and the health experts I have consulted advised me to continue doing the same," Al Busaidy said.



Study under way to raise minimum wage

FROM P1

the principle of active public participation and the consolidation of communication between the government and society.

ELECTRONIC PLATFORM

He pointed out that, when organising this forum, the Secretariat-General of the Council of Ministers was keen to ensure the largest volume representation of various segments of society. This, he added, was envisaged through the establishment of an electronic platform for the registration of participants. The forum saw a large turnout of registrants, he explained.

Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Head of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, presented a visual display featuring components of Oman Vision's charter, which comprises 4 main pillars, 12 national priorities, 12 strategic approaches, 75 strategic goals and 68 national and international performance indicators.

He added, "A sustainable financial situation is important to attract investments and is mainly linked to economic growth. The reasons for implementing the mid-term Fiscal Balance Plan were drop in global oil prices for a long time and lack of flexibility in public spending due to decline in oil prices.

"As a result of the improvement in oil prices and the financial situation, projects began to return to normal, and last year RO 200 million was added to development projects, and this year also RO 200 million was added to various projects", he added.

Speaking at the forum, Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, said that a study is under way to raise the minimum wage to RO 400 while taking into consideration the economic viability, supply and demand of manpower and their skills. The ministry is also working with the Ministry of Finance to upgrade the late payments from 2013 to 2018.

NEW LABOUR CULTURE

Dr Baowain also noted, "We are working intensively to build a new labour culture where graduates take all the available chances to build up their experience and then move to a more sustainable job opportunity. Graduates need to accept working in hour-based system as a start, and put into account that productivity is the higher standard for any job. Among the goals of supporting and promoting



nature of professions in the local labour market.

He explained that between 2011 and 2012 employees received their belated promotions, and that the Ministry is currently embarked in coordinating with the Ministry of Finance to study the promotion of belated promotions for batches from 2013 to 2018.

The minister explained that Ejada system for individual performance is aimed at improving the System of Promotions, which stipulates that, after a 'referral period' of 3 to 4 years, a high-performance employee deserves a job promotion.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Making a presentation at the "Together We Advance" forum, Nasser bin Khamis al Jashmi, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Finance, said that a sustainable financial situation is important to attract investments and is mainly linked to economic growth.

Al Jashmi added that the outcomes of improvement in oil prices includes the acceleration of economic growth by increasing developmental spending beyond allocations approved in the State Budget towards a total of RO 1.1 billion, with an increase of RO 200 million that would be channelled to urgently needed projects that have an economic and social impact.

Al Jashmi pointed out that a second outcome was the development of policies that enabled the State to contain inflation by increasing government subsidies for fuel and basic food commodities by more than RO 760 million, which, he said, contributed to reducing the impacts of global inflation.

The implementation of the medium-term financial plan resulted in a drop in the oil price break-even point to \$68 per barrel from 2021 to 2025, compared to \$80 during the past years 2016-2020, and the increase in non-oil revenues from RO 1.6 billion in 2021 to RO 2.1 million in 2022.

"We used the surplus revenues from the improvement in oil prices to pay off loans and reduce indebtedness and did not increase spending. The most important impact of the improvement in oil prices is the reduction in public debt of GDP from 69.7 per cent in 2020 to 46.5 per cent in 2022 by reducing external borrowing, buying back some sovereign bonds at less than their value, paying off high-cost loans, in addition to issuing local Sukuk for trading", he said.

Al Jashmi also highlighted, "The social protection system has been developed according to international standards, and it will be an example in the region upon approval. The main objectives of the social protection system are to build the integration of civil, military, and private funds in addition to addressing problems in retirement systems and ensuring their sustainability and addressing current problems in social programmes.

"In the new Social Protection Law, the Sultanate of Oman is studying the possibility of increasing the period of maternity leave to 98 days, and the system will bear the payment of wages during the leave, not the employer", he added.

self-employment is to create an organisational package that facilitates the involvement of young men and women in this field like easing the procedures of establishing a commercial registry, and including it within the social insurance system", he added.

Dr Baowain said that the National Employment Programme (NEP) is an independent, executive national system launched under Royal blessings in 2021.

The NEP deals with studying the employment system in two concepts: Supply and Demand. Supply caters to job-seekers and their capacity building, while demand deals with the labour market, the economic situation

and finding sustainable employment solutions in accordance with the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

The NEP will launch the "Marsad" electronic service specialised in providing detailed data for decision-makers about the labour market, job-seekers and students studying in various educational institutions, he added.

He added that "Khuta" (steps) platform emerges as the first interactive national electronic platform that provides students and job-seekers with specialised counselling services, as well as comprehensive data on higher education study programmes, employment opportunities and the

First day of Ramadhan in all likelihood on Thursday

FROM P1

Meanwhile, some of the people that the *Observer* contacted said Ramadhan is the most sacred month and hence deserves adequate preparations.

"We believe Ramadhan is the most sacred month. Therefore, because of this, we have to prepare in a number



of ways including mentally. In any case, we welcome the month with eagerness.

"I'll finish all my shopping so that I can be free to observe the month," Hassan al Numani, Al Amerat resident, while shopping for Ramadhan, said.

Sawsan al Ajmi, who is passionate about cooking

and loves experimenting the new recipes that she comes across, said, "I love cooking and baking so I exchange of recipes with my friends and try to perfect them before Ramadhan so I become confident about what I would be presenting to my family during the iftar days," she said.

SALE

20% - 70%

Terms & Conditions apply

Clarks

SHOEMAKERS SINCE 1825

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



Follow us on **Twitter**
@omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | MARCH 20 | 2023

3

Low-pressure to bring rains from Monday

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The first weather alert for thundershowers was issued on Sunday evening for Monday and Tuesday. Heavy thundershowers are forecast from Monday and are expected to continue till Tuesday morning covering the governorates of Dhofar, Al Wusta and South Al Sharqiyah.

Within the mentioned 24 hours, the expected rainfall may range between 20 mm to 100 mm. There are chances of isolated rain over the rest of the governorates. The Civil Aviation Authority has advised the public to take precautions during rains, and has requested everyone not to cross wadis and avoid low-lying areas and not set sail during the alert period.

There are chances of sporadic rain over most of the governorates of the

Sultanate of Oman.

Since morning, clouds were seen over most of the governorates, and the Oman Met Office said there could be chances of rain of varying intensity, sometimes with thunders, especially in the governorates of Al Wusta, Dhofar and South Al Sharqiyah.

Low clouds and fog were seen over parts of Al Wusta and Dhofar.

The effect of the low-pressure trough is expected to continue until Thursday as per the weather summary published by the Civil Aviation Authority. This may result in rain and thunderstorms associated with downdraft winds and hail with chances of overflowing wadis and flash floods over most of the country, particularly over South Al Sharqiyah, North Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates.

Sayyid Asaad bids farewell to US Ambassador

MUSCAT: On behalf of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, received in his office on Sunday

Leslie M Tsou, Ambassador of the United States of America to the Sultanate of Oman, to bid her farewell at the end of her tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed thanks for His Majesty the Sultan's support during her tour of duty. She also voiced

appreciation to the Omani government and people. She wished His Majesty good health, happiness and a long life and the Sultanate of Oman further development and growth under the wise leadership of his Majesty. On his turn, HH Sayyid Asaad expressed his appreciation

for the efforts exerted by the ambassador in serving bilateral relations. He also wished her success and the American people further progress and prosperity.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary-General and the two advisors at the Office of HH Sayyid Asaad. — ONA

RO 20,000 fine for not following wastewater projects guidelines

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has issued a regulation to prevent risks during ground installations for water and wastewater purposes.

The decision states that it is not permissible to implement projects for water and sewage networks or to install associated in wadis or in any other locations that may endanger these projects, except after conducting a detailed technical study of the site and identifying all the risks associated with the work.

In case of violations, a fine of not less than RO 1,000 and not more than RO 20,000 will be imposed, which will be doubled if the offence is repeated.

If a similar violation is committed within the following two years, a fine of RO 100 per day for each violation will be imposed,



followed by the suspension of the license or permit for a period not exceeding three years months and revocation of the license or permit.

It is necessary to ensure the protection of the installations and submit a request to the authority.

The design and implementation of water and sanitation network projects must be in accordance with the approved technical

specifications and the approvals and permits required by law must be obtained before starting the implementation of water and sewage network projects, and the necessary initial approvals must be taken to approve the proposed route for the water and sewage networks, before issuing any tenders.

After obtaining these approvals

and permits, network designs and drawings must be submitted to the competent authorities for final approval.

The application for obtaining approval or permission to start excavation works for the proposed path must be submitted before a sufficient period of time.

In case of damage to the water and sewage networks, efforts must be taken to correct the situation as soon as possible and compensate the affected person for the loss.

Prior approval of the Royal Oman Police (ROP) and other competent authorities must be obtained prior to undertaking the implementation of underground water and sewage network projects close to the busy roads.

Work sites shall also be appropriately fenced with red and white tapes or any suitable warning signs so that they light up brightly at night.

EA concludes 'Turtle Commandos Programme'



MUSCAT: The Environment Authority (EA) on Sunday concluded the 2nd edition of the 'Turtle Commandos' programme, which focuses on the protection and detection of turtles in the Sultanate of Oman.

The concluding event was held under the auspices of Dr Yahya bin Badr al Maawali, Governor of South Al Sharqiyah.

The 6-month programme

was participated by more than 270 volunteers from Oman and abroad.

As many as 16,369 campaigns were conducted within the framework of the programme, in addition to awareness programmes on the importance of marine turtles.

Moreover, the first edition of Turtle Commandos was inaugurated in 2021. — ONA

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Education signed on Sunday a cooperation agreement with the Asyad Ports Company to finance a number of schools in Al Suwaiq in North Al Batinah with interactive screens. Majid bin Said al Bahri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Administrative and Financial Affairs, presided over the signing ceremony that took place at the ministry.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the ministry by Dr

Waleed bin Talib al Hashmi, Director-General of the Directorate-General of Education in North Al Batinah Governorate, while Faisal bin Ali al Balushi, Director-General of Commercial Affairs, Asyad Ports Company signed on behalf of the company.

Dr Waleed said, "The signing of this agreement comes as a translation of the real partnership between the Educational Directorate of North Al Batinah and the private sector, which will enhance the educational process



in schools, and support modern educational methods that aims to achieve the educational system in the Sultanate of Oman in line with Oman Vision 2040."

On his part, Al Balushi said: "This partnership with the educational sector comes as part of the company's societal mission aimed at advancing and serving the community. It's a pleasure to provide this support to the Directorate-General of Education in North Batinah, and we hope that this partnership achieves the goals and visions it was set for, the most important of which is the development and enhancement of student's abilities and the educational process."

Cooperation programme inked to develop 'Oman Innovate Platform'

MUSCAT: A joint cooperation programme to develop the digital platform for the Sultanate of Oman's National Innovation System was signed on Sunday during the meeting of the steering committee of 'Oman Innovate Platform'.

The cooperation programme is conducted jointly by the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, Research and Innovation, Oman Information and Communication Technology Group (ITHCA Group) and the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The programme was signed by Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of



Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Research and Innovation, Dr Ali bin Amer al Shaithani, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Communication and Information Technology and Eng Said bin Abdullah al Mandhari, CEO of ITHCA.

Al Haddabi said that the signing of the cooperation

programme comes within the framework of ensuring the establishment of effective and integrated digital milieus in the field of innovation. The programme also aims to benefit from global experiences in this field.

On his turn, Al Shaithani pointed out that the development of the digital platform for innovation

reflects the government's relentless pursuit of maximising the benefits of employing modern digital technologies and applying best practices in this field. The move, he underscored, comes in line with the directives of the Sultanate of Oman in achieving the objectives of the National Programme for Digital Economy. — ONA

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For SUBARU WRX

Date of Campaign : 20.03.2023
Campaign Type : Recall
Recall Segment : Back Lamp Switch
Product Description : Subaru WRX 2015 to 2021 Model

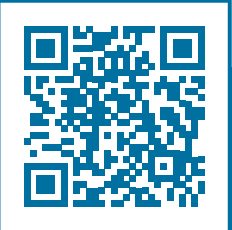
Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2015 to 2021	Subaru	WRX	JF1VA22KXFG002597 to JF1VA22K9MG020201	39

Description:
In an environment where the transmission gear oil temperature is 100°C or higher, such as continuous traveling at 120km/h, chemical reaction between the oil and the terminal or flat spring of the back lamp switch forms a black coating (non-conductive copper sulfide) on the terminal and/or flat spring. Due to the black coating, conduction failure may occur between the terminal and the flat spring, causing the back lamp not to illuminate when the vehicle is in rearward motion.

Procedure:
For all the affected vehicles, Subaru dealer replace the Back lamp switch with an improved part.

For More Information:
Customers of effected vehicles may please call Oman Gulf enterprises LLC for further details/booking.

Contact Details:
Toll free No 80050004 on all working days between 8:00 am to 1:00 pm & 2:00 pm to 5:30 pm with effected from date 20.03.2023.



Check your vitals before Ramadhan

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

A comprehensive checkup of all vitals just before the holy month is essential for those who suffer from chronic diseases, people on dialysis, and other illnesses that require medical attention on a regular basis. Ramadhan is the month when our body, mind and soul go for a total transformation and metabolism tends to change from time to time. Hence a complete body checkup is strongly recommended. The issue came for discussion at a recently held conference on 'HSE at workplace' where Dr Ali al Lawati from OQ urged all those who fast during the month to "Consult a doctor at least a week before the beginning of the holy month or a few days before fasting so that all body vitals can be confirmed under control as our complete systems go for a complete change during the fasting month." This is more applicable to those who work longer hours exposing themselves to the sun as dehydration and fatigue can happen more often as they fast. A lot of physical and mental preparations well before the beginning of the holy month will help one follow the rituals of the month in full. One needs to get sugar level, blood pressure, creatinine etc checked before getting into the new way of life for a month. It will help prepare the body and mind fully for the month of Ramadhan. "So, if one is planning to observe Ramadhan fasting, then he should get going with both pre and post-Ramadhan checkup packages as physical and mental preparation can ensure their health during and post-fasting," he adds. Consult a medical expert before Ramadhan fasting if one is unsure whether the body will be able to take the stress of fasting for one month continuously. The health experts can guide you about the feasibility of your body being able to undergo the stress or not. The Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Department of Non-Communicable Diseases Control in collaboration with AstraZeneca has organised a symposium on 'Management of Diabetes in Ramadhan' where the focus was sharpened on the risk stratification of patients with diabetes to assess their ability to fast, and on pre-Ramadhan education to patients.

Saham Ayurvedic Hospital opens clinic center in the heart of Muscat



Saham Ayurveda Hospital & Health Center LLC, the first fully fledged IP (In Patient) Ayurvedic Hospital in the country, opened its branch in Sarooj, Qurum on Thursday under the auspices of Dr Muhanna Nasser al Maslahi, Director General of Private Health Institutions, MoH along with many ministerial representatives as well as other key people from both private and public sectors. Located at way number 1309 in Al Sarooj, the one of its kind Center will be providing all Integrated ayurvedic health and wellness treatments in three floors, the promoters claimed. Led by an outstanding in-house medical team, and in a liaison with India's acclaimed name in ayurveda, "Vaidyaratnam", a range of comprehensive authentic Ayurvedic treatments from the various departments of Ayurveda, a plethora of services from the Panchakarma are offered by the Centre which is equipped with

multi-disciplinary physiotherapy and rehab equipment. Also in recent developments, a dealership agreement was signed with the ayurvedic pioneers Vaidyaratnam to make their products available in Oman. "Apart from various wellness services with Yoga, Physical medicine and Rehabilitation, we are also offering Physiotherapy and designing Speech therapy aids and an integrated customised treatment for the patients from the center," said Chandrahasan Menon, Hospital Director of the Center. Parallel and alternative medicinal branches like Saham Ayurvedic center can support Oman tourism for the center can be the attraction for people seeking both health and wellness treatments in Ayurveda, according to Dr Muhanna Nasser al Maslahi. "It is a great move to offer ayurvedic treatment services for Muscat residents but on the

other hand, it can also attract many health and wellness service seekers to Oman from across the region and beyond as visiting Oman for medical services is a better option for many reasons for those who are from the Middle East and Africa region," Dr Musalhi added. According to available statistics, more than almost 2 million patients visit India from Middle East and Africa every year and it is a major revenue generator for the country. Saham Ayurveda Hospital & Health Center is in an attempt to offer the same services at their doorsteps in Oman. The first such center in the country, in Saham near Sohar, was opened to the public 18 months ago offering all ayurvedic services in 68 rooms spread across 50,000 sqft vast hospital, catering to all GCC nationals and both citizens and residents of Oman. Due to the high demand the hospital management are into

their expansion programme to facilitate more to the patients needs and a new team of professionals within the management team including Mr. Asish Menon, as business development manager, who has served more than 7 years in a leading firm in Oman, looks after the areas of business development, Marketing strategies and coordinate with the Hospital Director for more areas to capture in health care. "It is my 43rd year in the Sultanate and I have always felt the need in integrated Ayurveda in Oman," says Menon. "Many medical professionals and paramedical staff specialised in Osteoarthritis, Psoriatic arthritis, Infectious Arthritis, Cervical and Lumbar Spondylosis, Inter Vertebral Disc prolapse, Rheumatic Disorders, and stroke and the like are currently offering services at Saham Ayurveda Hospital & Health Center," adds Menon.





Follow us on **instagram**
omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | MARCH 20 | 2023

5

AUSTRALIAN WHEAT SHIPPED TO OMAN



Oman Flour Mills Company (OFM) received the first Australian wheat shipment it purchased through its affiliated company OMAUS PTY Ltd, as part of its project for purchasing wheat directly from Australian farmers. The affiliated company signed an agreement with Australian farmers for purchasing 34,728 metric tonnes of Australian wheat.

Meeting held to attract projects, investments in North Al Batinah

SUHAR: Factory owners in Sohar Industrial City, owners of small and medium enterprises, and companies in the Al Batinah North Governorate discussed developmental areas in the various commercial and industrial sectors in the governorate.

The meeting was held on Sunday by Dr Saleh bin Said Masan, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry, in the presence of members of the Board of Directors of the Public Corporation for Industrial Estates (Madayn).

The meeting reviewed the promotion of competitive advantages to attract investments, development of economic projects and the development of the



governorates, and a closer identification of the needs of business owners and the promotion of investment opportunities in all governorates of Oman.

The meeting also touched on scientific disciplines in higher education institutions in the governorate that deal with the economic and commercial field, and the importance of creating

competitiveness according to a clear scientific methodology that contributes to building pioneering Omani economic and commercial companies that support the national economy at all levels. The Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion for Commerce and Industry visited a number of factories and industrial

projects in North Al Batinah Governorate.

He was also briefed on the progress of work, ways of developing them and keeping pace with the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and the most important aspects concerned with trade, industry and investment opportunities in the governorate.

He was also briefed on the work of the Suhar Production Company for Advanced Industries, a second phase of the project, which came in cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit and Sohar University, which is one of the economic diversification initiatives.

— ONA

Efforts to combat insect pests in Dhofar continues

SALALAH: The Environment Authority (EA), represented by the Directorate-General of Environment in Dhofar Governorate, continues its efforts to fight insect pests with the aim of conserving and sustaining vegetation in the mountains of Dhofar.

In this context, the



Environment Authority carried out a series of campaigns to combat insect pests in the mountains of Dhofar as part of its programmes aimed at protecting perennial trees.

Said bin Mohammed al Shuhri, head of Department of Biodiversity in the Wilayat

of Mirbat, said that the campaigns against insect pests began in the Hashir area in the Wilayat of Mirbat in 2021.

He added that the control methodology is based on a number of remedial and preventive steps for perennial trees especially fig trees.

— ONA

Symposium discusses water security in Dhofar

SALALAH: The Directorate-General of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources in Dhofar Governorate, in cooperation with the Oman Water Association, organised a scientific symposium at the Millennium Resort Salalah, entitled 'Water Security in Dhofar Governorate: Challenges-Solutions.'

Eng Ali bin Mohammed al Abri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Water Resources, patronised the opening of the symposium.

The Under-Secretary and the attendees were briefed on an introductory exhibition. These included Oman Water Society, well licensing, the Wadi Adunib Dam project, measurements of rainfall, groundwater levels and salinity, in addition to management and use of water produced in the oil and gas sector. — ONA

Four-day Omani Culture Festival from March 19

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
@afrahbalushia

The Omani Culture Festival will be held from March 19 to 22 and will have various activities ranging from poetry, culture and art for all those who have an interest in those areas.

With the participation of several poets and guests from inside and outside Oman, the festival in its new edition seeks to keep pace with the people's aspirations in line with the Omani cultural strategy that was launched recently as part of the Oman Vision 2040.

Abdullah bin Mohammed al Harthy, General Director of Knowledge and Cultural Development and Director of the Omani Culture Festival, said: "The return of the festival with cultural and artistic aspects, is great



evidence of the interest of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in the country's cultural growth in all fields."

He explained out of 122 applications in the poetry category, 16 qualified while among 38 folk arts interests 11 teams qualified.

Mohammed bin Hamad al Masrouri, Head of the Committee, to sort and select folk art groups, confirmed that the return of the movement through the festival created opportunities for all sections of people.

The aim is to shed

light on folk arts due to the diversity in arts in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. The band is registered with the ministry and holds a valid license.

The idea of the festival comes as an embodiment of the Omani heritage and the various arts that accompany it. The festival sheds light on poetry in both its eloquent and popular parts, as well as folk arts, according to a creative vision in which elite Omani poets and guests from inside and outside the Sultanate of Oman meet.

Wheat production up in Shinas

SHINAS: The wheat cultivation in the Wilayat of Shinas is witnessing an increasing growth.

In order to achieve interest in cultivating agricultural crops with economic returns, which enjoys continuous support from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, as the area of land cultivated wheat crop this season is estimated at 4 acres, distributed over four main sites for commercial wheat cultivation.

Mohammed bin Sultan al Habsi, Director, Department of Agricultural, Fisheries and Water Resources in Shinas, said: "Wheat cultivation is one of the ancient agricultural professions. This interest is reflected through the allocation of a special extension programme to preserve the seeds of the improved Omani varieties of wheat to spread its cultivation."

He further added that Shinas is one of



the wilayats that produces wheat crop in abundance. It is grown in five different locations with an agricultural area estimated at four acres.

The crop is grown in the villages of Farfara, Hail Ka'b in Wadi Rajma, and Al Jalta in Wadi Fayd. The ministry has provided farmers from the wilayat with wheat seeds, along with periodic follow-ups which has reflected in the increase in the amount of production of wheat crop.

— ONA



شركة المغليفات الصناعية المرنة (ش.م.ع)
Flexible Industrial Packages Co. (SAOC)

ORDINARY GENERAL MEETING AGENDA

The Board of Directors of **Flexible Industrial Packaging Company SAOC** is pleased to invite all Shareholders to attend the company's Ordinary General Meeting, which will be held on Wednesday 05/04/2023 at 10:00am, in the head quarter of Mohammed Al Barwani Company in Al azaiba. If the quorum not satisfied a second Annual Ordinary General Meeting will be held on Tuesday 11/04/2023, in the same place and at the same time to discuss the following Agenda:

- To approve the resignation of all the members of the Board of Directors in accordance with the provisions of Article (200) of the Commercial Companies Law No. 18/2019.(as per the attachment)
- To elect a new Board of Directors for the Company from amongst Shareholders or non-shareholders. Any person who wishes to be nominated to the Board of Directors of the Company is required to fill in a Director's Nomination Form. Such a form can be obtained from the Company. The complete Form should be delivered to the Company at least two (2) working days prior to the date of the Ordinary General meeting (no later than the end of the business hours on 02/04/2023). The candidate must satisfy the company's board membership requirements.

Shareholder would have access to reports, documents and statements relating to the agenda items of the Ordinary General Meeting during the official business hours at the Company's head office, according to the Company's Articles of Association, each shareholder is entitled to authorize in writing any other person to attend the meeting and to vote on his/her behalf on the decisions of the general meeting

The shareholders are requested to arrive a half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

For further information please contact
Mr. Ahmed Sulaiman Al Amri on telephone No. 24446121

Chairman

Auditor

Legal Adviser

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (13/2023)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following bidding:

Serial	Bidding No.	Bidding Description	Document Fee	Deadline for Obtaining Bidding Docs.	Deadline for Inquires Submission	Deadline for Submission
1	AB/03/2023	Manage & Operate Consumer Exhibition	50/- OMR	30/03/2023	30/03/2023	03/04/2023

Registered companies with Muscat Municipality which are Specialized in above bid are invited to participate as per the following procedures:

- Company registration with Muscat Municipality have to be valid as per note number one below, to be able to get the bid document.
- Pay the specified document fee for the requested bid via bank deposit to Muscat Municipality's Bank account as follows:

Bank Muscat 0423010702710024

- A copy of the transaction's receipt MUST be send to the following e-mail (**MM.PC@mm.gov.om**), provided with the company data (name and bid number, delegate name, office phone number, mobile number, email address approved by the company and commercial registration number of the company).
- The tender document will be provided to the company via email.

- 2:00 PM** on the above mentioned dates, is the last timing for obtaining Bidding Documents. Any bid's document request received after the specified time will not be considered, even if the fee of the document is paid.

Submitted offers must be accompanied with a bond mentioned in the tender document valid for a period not less than (90) days issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat Municipality. Bidding that do not meet the required bond **will not be accepted**.

Documents must be enclosed in a plain closed envelope (without any company information) and to be submitted in the box located at the first floor of Muscat Municipality, Head Office, Darsait (at Department of Quantity Surveying & Contracts).

NOTES:

- Companies which are not registered in Muscat Municipality or their registration has been expired shall register through the municipality's website (**www.mm.gov.om**). For technical support, please contact Muscat Municipality through this email (**crm@mm.gov.om**).
- If the bidders have any inquiries regarding the scope of the work, they have to send their inquiries through the following e-mail (**MM.PC@mm.gov.om**)
- 10:00 AM** on the above submission mentioned dates, is the last timing for receiving bids. Offers submitted after the above mentioned date & time shall not be accepted for any reason.
- Muscat Municipality has the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason.

Website: www.mm.gov.om



North Korea fires ballistic missile as US-South Korean drills go on

SEOUL: North Korea fired a short-range ballistic missile towards the sea off the east coast of the Korean Peninsula on Sunday, South Korea and Japan said, in the latest of a series of tests carried out by the nuclear-armed state since the start of this year.

The missile, launched from the Dongchang-ri site on the west coast around 11:05 am (0205 GMT), flew some 800 km before hitting a target, a South Korean military statement said. Japan's Defence Ministry said the missile flew as high as 50 km.

Soon after the launch on Sunday, South Korea's Ministry of National Defence said the US deployed a B-1B strategic bomber to a joint air drill, which Seoul and Washington say they are holding to strengthen deterrence.

The deployment of the bomber was planned in advance and unrelated to the latest North Korean launch, South Korean news agency Yonhap reported, citing the military.

Japan and the US also conducted joint air and sea military exercises over the sea between the Korean peninsula and Japan for a third straight day on Sunday, Japan's local media reported. Seoul has condemned North Korea's ballistic missile launches as a "clear violation" of a UN Security Council resolution.

In a statement on Sunday, G7 foreign ministers said they "deeply regret" inaction by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) against the North caused by some members' "obstruction". No country was named, but China and Russia have blocked attempts at the United Nations to respond to North Korea's series of missile tests.

The launches have prompted criticism



US Air Force B-1B bombers, F-16 fighter jets and South Korean Air Force F-35A take part in a joint air drill, South Korea, on Sunday. — Reuters

from Tokyo and Washington, as well as from Seoul.

"North Korea's behaviour threatens international peace and security, and is unacceptable," Japan's State Minister of Defence Toshiro Ino told a news conference, adding that Japan had protested strongly via North Korea's Embassy in Beijing.

The US Indo-Pacific Command said Sunday's launch did not pose an immediate threat to US personnel or its allies. But the missile launches highlight the destabilising impact of Pyongyang's unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes, it said in a statement.

The North last Thursday fired a suspected intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) into the sea between the Korean Peninsula and Japan, hours before South Korea's president flew to Tokyo for a summit that discussed

ways to counter the North. Pyongyang said Thursday's ICBM launch was a warning against the US-South Korea military drills, state media KCNA reported.

South Korean and US forces began 11 days of drills, dubbed "Freedom Shield 23", a week ago on a scale not seen since 2017. North Korea criticised the US and UN Secretary-General António Guterres, KCNA reported on Sunday, for raising the issue of its human rights abuses at an informal meeting of the UNSC, describing it as a "serious challenge" to its sovereignty.

"The US launched a human rights campaign against the DPRK in the UN arena while staging the aggressive joint military exercise which poses a grave threat to our national security," North Korea's Permanent Mission to the UN was quoted as saying by state media. — Reuters

Indian Railway starts Buddhist Circuit train

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

In line with the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) nations meeting in India in April this year, the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has lined up services for Buddhist destinations. The train covering Buddhist Circuit will cover nine destinations including some non-Buddhist places like Varanasi and Agra.

An international conference on 'Shared Buddhist Heritage' was held here under India's SCO Presidency this week on March 14-15. Under the circuit, the special train will cover Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Varanasi, Sarnath, Lumbini (Nepal), Kushinagar, Sravasti, and Agra.

Under the service, the tourists will have an opportunity to spend time at the Buddhist circuit destinations and see the places of importance at each of them.

In Bodhgaya, they can visit Mahabodhi Temple, the Niranjana River, the Thai Temple, the Japanese Temple, and Buddha Statue. In Rajgir, there is Bimbisara Jail, Gridhakut hill, and Venuvan, while Nalanda has the famous Nalanda University, and Nalanda Museum. The above destinations are in the Indian state of Bihar.

The rest of the destinations except Lumbini are in Uttar Pradesh. Sarnath has Dhamekh Stupa, Sarnath Museum, Ashokan Pillar, and Mulgandha Kuti Vihar. In Varanasi, tourists can see Evening Aarti. In Kushinagar are Mahaparinirvan Temple, Rambhar Stupa, Mata Kutir Temple, and other sites. In Sravasti, sightseeing places are Jetvana Vihara, Pakki Kuti, and Sehat Mahet. In Agra, tourists can visit the World famous Taj Mahal.

Lumbini in Nepal has Maya Devi Temple and Ashokan Pillar.

The Buddhist Circuit train is part of the IRCTC's Bharat Gaurav Trains concept commenced to facilitate the spiritual journey of the locals and tourists.

The SCO meeting under India's Presidency brings together Central Asian, East Asian, South Asian and Arab countries on a common platform to discuss 'Shared Buddhist Heritage'. The meeting aimed at reaffirming India's role in the spread of Buddhism to Central Asia and Eurasia and from there to East Asia.



أنجز المزيد
Achieve more

Board of Directors' Report 2022

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I am pleased to present the audited financial results of our company for the year ended 31st December 2022.

Economic Overview

The year that went by was tumultuous, hopeful, challenging and satisfying, all rolled into one. In short, it was a year like no other. Leaders globally battled the twin challenges faced by saving and creating jobs, versus the challenge that Covid and its various variations of concern kept throwing at them. At the end, we feel that in Oman we have taken the bull by the horns and are opening up the economy slowly but surely, and we expect that normalcy will return by mid-2023, inshallah.

The buoyant Oil and Gas prices have helped tremendously and given Oman some breathing space in the coming year, with Higher Oil prices boosting the 2022 revenues to 14.23 billion riyals and public spending was 13.09 billion riyals. The Net surplus allowed the government to reduce public debt to 17.7 billion riyals in 2022 from 20.8 billion riyals in 2021. Credit rating agencies have also upgraded the outlook for Oman and with the global economy on an upswing, the World Bank has projected a GDP growth rate of 3.2% in 2023 for Oman. Oman's economy is expected to grow by 5.5 per cent in 2023 as compared to estimated 5.0 per cent growth in 2022, mainly due to increase in Oil, Gas production and Hydrocarbon GDP is projected to grow by 10.1 per cent and non-hydrocarbon GDP is expected to grow by 2.9 per cent. All this augur well for our company and we expect to continue our good performance in the coming year as well.

Financial Performance

During 2022, we were conservative in onboarding new customer and cautiously grew the Gross Loan Book. The net instalment finance debtors went by 9.9% during 2022.

The company continued its strict focus on collection of overdue loans and the total impaired loans have come down to RO 21.53 million in 2022 from RO 26.29 million in 2021. Despite a challenging economic environment, the impaired loans of the company have been coming down over the last two years and the company holds adequate impairment reserves. Our total provisions including special reserves, is 61.7%. The company is continuously fine tuning the model for impairment provision based on the expert opinion of an external firm and the same has been vetted by our external auditors. Our Profit after tax is at RO 1.60 million for the year 2022.

We believe our company is in a strong position going into next year and we expect the strong financial performance to continue.

Looking Ahead

We are optimistic for the year 2023 even though the challenges of 2022 have not gone away. The efforts of His Majesty's government have led to the budget deficit reducing and Oman has embarked on a transformation journey which emphasizes the diversification of the economy. In line with His Majesty's Vision 2040, United Finance Company SAOG (UFC) has also

undertaken a transformation. While it has always placed its values around Oman's people, community and economic development, the company is now fast tracking its emphasis on technology-led growth. This will lead to many opportunities for improved service delivery, new products and higher customer satisfaction. We believe this will be transformative, make us future ready and serve our ambition of the becoming a finance powerhouse in Oman.

Technology & Branding

In line with our transformation strategy, we are working on improvements across virtually every aspect of our business. This is underpinned by the new promise to customers – to achieve more in their personal lives and their businesses and to expect more, seek more and Achieve more - with help from United Finance Company. We did the rebranding in Oct 2022, invested in new core banking system and its implementation will commence in Q1 2023. The envisaged digitally enabled solutions will support UFC to serve its customers more effectively and efficiently, thereby delivering our new brand promise "Achieve More".

Human Resources

We continue to work on improving our employee engagement through various initiatives and have engaged a leading training company to train our staff. Our goal is to ensure that by the end of 2023 every Omani employee has been through at least two training programs. We have also identified young Omanis to undertake special Leadership Training so that we can develop them as the future leadership of the company. The program commenced in 2022 and expected to be completed in Q3 2023. It will be followed by inhouse training for the team to bring up future leadership. We believe that our efforts will result in higher retention, improved productivity and also lower the overall costs of the company going forward.

Dividend

The Board of Directors has recommended a cash dividend of 2.75 % and stock dividend of 2% for the year 2022.

Acknowledgement

The Board of Directors and Management express their highest gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik Al Said and respectfully acknowledge his able leadership to nurture the country in the years to come.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to express our gratitude to the Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Ministry of Manpower, Royal Oman Police and other Regulatory Authorities and thank them for their support and guidance. We also take this opportunity to extend our sincere thanks to our bankers, shareholders and other stakeholders for their unstinted support.

On behalf of the Board I would like to place on record my appreciation and thank the Management and staff for their individual and collective contribution to achieving operational efficiency and realizing the company's goals.

May Allah bless all of us,

Mohamed Abdulla Al Khonji
Chairman

Statement of financial position As at 31 December 2022

	2022 RO	2021 RO
ASSETS		
Cash and cash equivalents	1,007,164	896,294
Deposit with the Central Bank of Oman	250,000	250,000
Other receivables and prepaid expenses	464,439	106,977
Instalment finance debtors - net	88,236,802	80,301,718
Investment securities	724,150	554,150
Deferred tax asset	16,923	16,923
Property and equipment	2,312,742	2,330,284
TOTAL ASSETS	93,012,220	84,456,346
EQUITY		
Share capital	34,914,441	34,914,441
Share premium reserve	528,402	528,402
Legal reserve	5,252,136	5,091,813
Special reserve	2,368,989	2,368,989
Impairment reserve	1,911,736	1,911,736
Investment revaluation reserve	170,000	-
Retained earnings	2,906,214	2,510,743
Total equity	48,051,918	47,326,124
Liabilities		
Creditors and other payables	5,109,438	4,820,934
Borrowings	36,205,556	27,947,227
Taxation	295,308	362,061
Corporate deposits	3,350,000	4,000,000
Total liabilities	44,960,302	37,130,222
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	93,012,220	84,456,346
NET ASSETS PER SHARE	0.138	0.136

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the year ended 31 December 2022

	2022 RO	2021 RO
Interest income on instalment finance income	7,711,497	8,191,013
Interest expense	(1,767,572)	(1,940,915)
Net instalment finance income	5,943,925	6,250,098
Fee commission and other income	604,429	536,306
Net operating income	6,548,354	6,786,404
Operating expenses	(3,858,037)	(3,069,545)
Depreciation	(95,306)	(95,004)
Allowance for expected credit losses	(708,860)	(1,302,729)
Profit before tax	1,886,151	2,319,126
Income tax expense	(282,924)	(405,385)
PROFIT FOR THE YEAR	1,603,227	1,913,741
Other comprehensive income		
Other comprehensive income that will not be reclassified to the income statement		
Revaluation gains/(losses) on equity instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income	170,000	-
TOTAL PROFIT AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE YEAR	1,773,227	1,913,741
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.005	0.005

The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English within 7 days of the receipt of such request addressed to:
Chief Executive Officer, United Finance Co. SAOG
P O Box 3652, PC 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.
Tel: 24577300 Fax 24561557
E-mail: ufc@ufcoman.com, Website: www.ufcoman.com



أنجز المزيد
Achieve more

Invitation to attend Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The Board of Directors of the United Finance Co. SAOG is delighted to invite the shareholders of the company to attend the Annual General Meeting of UFC scheduled to be held on Friday, 31st March 2023 at 3:00 PM via the electronic platform which can accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository company (www.mcd.gov.om) and in the Auditorium at the company's Head Office, Wattayah. If the quorum is not met, the second meeting will be on Sunday 2nd April 2023 at 3:00 pm to consider the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the Report of the Board of Directors for the financial year ended on 31.12.2022.
- To consider and approve the Report on Corporate Governance for the financial year ended on 31.12.2022.
- To consider the Statutory Auditor's Report and approve the audited Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account for the financial year ended on 31.12.2022.
- To Consider and approve Board of Directors Evaluation Reports (as per the annexure) for the financial year ended on 31.12.2022
- To Consideration and approval of a proposal to distribute cash dividends to the shareholders as on the date of meeting, at the value of 2.75 Baiza per share for the financial year ended 31st December 2022.
- To Consider and approve of stock dividend of 2% for the financial year ended 31st December 2022. The approvals of the distribution of bonus shares will result in an increase in the issued shares capital of the company from 349,144,411 shares to 356,127,299 shares.
- Approve the sitting fees paid to the Board of Directors for attending the Board and the Board Committee meetings for the financial year 2022 and to approve the sitting fees for the current financial year 2023 (as per annexure).
- To consider and approve the proposal Directors remuneration of OMR 80,000 (Eighty Thousand Omani Rials) for the financial year ended on 31.12.2022.
- To notify the meeting with the related parties transactions during the financial year ended 31.12.2022 (as per the annexure attached).
- To Disclose to donations pledged during the year as corporate social responsibilities for the financial year ending 31st December 2022 (according to the annex)
- To consider and approve the proposal of allocating RO 10,000 to support social services during the financial year ended 31 December 2023.
- To appoint the External Auditors for the financial year ended on 31.12.2023 and specify their fees.

Pursuant to the Company's Articles of Association, every shareholder has the right to authorize in writing any other person to attend the meeting and vote on the decisions taken on his behalf provided that such authorization should be on the authorization card issued from Muscat Clearing and Depository Co. SAOC (MCDC) attached with the invitation. If the authorized person is a national, he should attach a copy of his ID with the authorization letter for the adults and passport for ladies and minors who do not have ID, or resident card or passport for non-Omani. For legal entities, the proxy form should be stamped and signed by an authorized signatory of the legal entity and the commercial registration certificate and list of authorized signatories should be attached, along with the proxy form.

The shareholders are requested to be present at least half an hour before the time of the meeting.

In case of any enquiry please contact **Mr. Ali bin Jaffar bin Mohammad**
on (968) 24577373, Mobile No: (968) 99245088, Fax No. (968) 24560885.

Chairman

Auditors

Legal Advisor



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER
MONDAY | MARCH 20 | 2023

7

In brief

■ DORTMUND



FAIR SHUT DOWN AFTER FATAL ATTACK

A fatal knife attack on a merry-go-round led the organisers of a large fair in the northern German city of Münster to cancel its final day on Sunday.

City authorities said the Send fair, which draws up to a million visitors every year, would remain closed after a 31-year-old man died in the attack late on Saturday. His assailant has not been caught.

Out of respect for the victim, the fair could not be allowed to continue following the attack, mayor Markus Lewe said in a statement. Lewe described the attack as a shock to the community and said the victim was a father. Send fair is held three times a year.

■ ZAGREB



WWII NAVAL MINE DESTROYED

Experts on Sunday destroyed a large World War II naval mine found by chance in a northern Croatian port, prompting residents to be evacuated, officials said.

The 150-kilo mine, laid by German forces more than 80 years ago during WWII, was uncovered during construction work at the Rijeka port in June. The explosive device had not been noticed earlier as it was partially buried in the muddy seabed at a depth of about 50 metres.

Traffic was halted and some 500 residents of the area where the mine was found were evacuated for safety reasons ahead of the operation.

■ DHAKA



ROAD CRASH KILLS AT LEAST 19

At least 19 people were killed and scores more wounded after a passenger bus fell into a ditch in the central Bangladeshi district of Madaripur, police and rescuers said on Sunday.

The accident occurred in the morning when the bus carrying more than 40 passengers smashed through a highway fence and fell into the ditch near Shibchar of Madaripur district, leaving 14 people dead on the spot, local police chief Masud Alam said.

The accident site is about 70 kilometres south of the capital Dhaka. A burst tyre or speeding might have caused the accident.

Israeli-Palestinian talks in Egypt aim to ‘restore calm’

CAIRO: Israeli and Palestinian officials were holding talks in Egypt on Sunday “to restore calm” after a surge in deadly violence in the occupied West Bank, Egypt’s foreign ministry said.

The meeting, which follows similar talks last month in Jordan where both sides pledged to prevent more violence, comes amid concerns of a feared escalation during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan starting in the coming week.

The meeting is aimed at “supporting dialogue between the Palestinian and Israeli sides to put a stop to unilateral actions and escalation and break the cycle of violence”, Egypt’s foreign ministry added.

Officials from Egypt, Jordan and the United States were attending the meeting in the Red Sea resort of Sharm al-Sheikh, it added.

Hussein al-Sheikh, Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) secretary general, said on Saturday that the Palestinian delegation would participate “to demand an end to the continuous Israeli aggression against us”.

Few details have emerged from the talks, but the efforts were already rejected by Palestinians.

Hamas said it “rejects the Sharm al-Sheikh conference and conferences that aim for calm,” senior member Mussa Abu Marzouk said in a statement.

“Our choice... is to escalate the resistance in the face of the occupation”, he added.

Islamic Jihad and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said in a joint statement



A man holds a Palestinian flag as he passes burning tires during a protest against Israeli-Palestinian meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, at the Israel-Gaza border fence east of Gaza City. — Reuters

that Israel “takes advantage of these security meetings to launch more aggression”.

The Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine also demanded Palestinian representatives leave the talks.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has claimed the lives of 86 Palestinian adults and children this year, including civilians.

Islamic Jihad said on Sunday one of its commanders had

been shot dead in Syria in an assassination by Israeli agents.

The Gaza Strip-based group said Ali Ramzi al Aswad, 31, was killed on Sunday morning “by agents of the Israeli enemy” in the countryside outside the Syrian capital Damascus.

Aswad, a Palestinian refugee living in a Syrian camp and also known as Abu Abed al-Rahman, was a member of the group’s Al

Quds Brigade armed wing, it said.

Many of the group’s senior leaders have been based in Damascus, and the killing is the latest reported targeting of the group by Israel.

Last week, Israeli airstrikes targeting a weapons depot in Syria killed an army officer and two fighters, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor. — AFP

French govt defiant on pensions ahead of crucial votes

PARIS: France’s government on Sunday held its ground over a bitterly contested pension reform rammed through parliament without a vote, a day before it faces crucial no-confidence motions.

“There will be no majority to bring the government down, but it will be a moment of truth,” Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said of the two efforts to unseat the cabinet planned for Monday afternoon.

“I understand our countrymen’s fears and anxieties, but we will definitely not improve things by denying economic reality,” he said.

Monday’s two no-confidence motions have been filed by a small group of centrist MPs and the far-

right National Rally.

Although President Emmanuel Macron’s camp has no absolute majority in the lower house National Assembly, it is the largest group and all of the opposition would need to unite for one of the votes to pass. Most MPs from the conservative Republicans party are not expected to back a no-confidence motion.

Republicans chief Eric Ciotti wrote on Sunday that his constituency office had been pelted with rocks overnight. “The killers who did this want to put pressure on my vote on Monday,” Ciotti wrote on Twitter, posting pictures showing smashed windows and threatening graffiti. — AFP



A protester faces riot police officers during a demonstration against the use by French government of the article 49.3 to push the pensions reform bill in Nantes, France. — Reuters

KENYA POLICE BAN PROTEST BY OPPOSITION

NAIROBI: Kenya’s police on Sunday banned the opposition from holding a protest over inflation, saying requests for the demonstrations were filed too late, but organisers vowed to go ahead with the rallies.

Raila Odinga, leader of the Azimio la Umoja party, had called for Monday’s demonstration in Nairobi over soaring inflation, which in February reached 9.2 per cent year-on-year in the East African nation.

Odinga also claims that last year’s tight presidential election was “stolen” from him, denouncing the government of President William Ruto as “illegitimate”.

Nairobi police chief Adamson Bungei said on Sunday that police received requests to hold two demonstrations only late on Saturday and early on Sunday, when normally three days’ notice is required for public rallies.

“For public safety, neither has been granted,” he said at a press conference in the capital. Organisers had planned to march near the State House, the presidential palace. “I want to underline some areas such as State House where we have heard people planning to invade or visit is covered by the laws of Kenya that it is a restricted area for unauthorised persons,” Bungei said.

But Odinga vowed that the gathering would go ahead.

“I want Kenyans to come out in large numbers and show the displeasure of what is happening in our country,” he told his supporters on Sunday. Ruto for his part warned that “you are not going to threaten us with ultimatums and chaos and impunity.”

“We will not allow that,” he said, calling on Odinga to act in a “legal and constitutional manner.”

According to official results from the August presidential vote, Odinga lost to Ruto by around 233,000 votes, one of the closest margins in the country’s history.

Odinga, who was running for the fifth time to lead the country, rejected the results, calling them fraudulent.

— AFP

Iran’s Raisi ‘welcomes’ invitation by Saudi king

TEHRAN: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi has “welcomed” an invitation from Saudi Arabia’s King Salman to visit the kingdom following the reconciliation deal between the two countries, an Iranian official said on Sunday.

“In a letter to President Raisi... the King of Saudi Arabia welcomed the deal between the two brotherly countries (and) invited him to Riyadh,” tweeted Mohammad Jamshidi, the Iranian president’s deputy chief of staff for political affairs, adding that “Raisi welcomed the invitation”. The two regional



Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian speaks during a news conference in Tehran, Iran. — Reuters

heavyweights announced on March 10 a Chinese-brokered deal to restore ties seven years after they were severed.

The deal is expected to see Iran and Saudi Arabia reopen their embassies and missions within two months and implement security and economic cooperation deals signed more than 20 years ago.

The Iranian government has proposed to Saudi Arabia three locations for a meeting at foreign minister level, Iran’s foreign minister said on Sunday, citing the latest messages with Riyadh

since the countries agreed to re-establish ties.

Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian told a news conference in Tehran his country had agreed to such a meeting, although he did not list the three locations or say when such a meeting might take place.

Amir-Abdollahian also said Tehran was ready for the mutual reopening of embassies.

Amir-Abdollahian signalled Iran was also hoping for steps towards normalising ties with Bahrain, a close Saudi ally.

— Reuters/AFP

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

“From addressing key social

Museums also bring to attention the fleeting role that humans have played in the past. Set against millions of years of geographical

Technology and digitalisation have re-conceptualised the role of

Stories make us care about the past and its role in our future

In a world that is constantly looking forward, a backward glance will help to ground us, remind us of our origins, and help us look ahead in empathy and humility.

JOANNA PLUCINSKA

Some clinics, facing their own higher costs, have hiked charges. A hip or knee replacement at Nordorthopaedics in Lithuania is about 15 per cent more expensive now than five years ago, the clinic said. — **Reuters**

The writer is an
international
correspondent, winner
of the Pulitzer Prize

But as the war drags on, an almost unbearable amount of pain builds up. And just like the sudden outburst at the restaurant, which surprised everyone at the table, especially the man himself, so many people here try to conceal their suffering that it creates

She had a metaphor for this

AS THE WAR DRAGS ON,
AN ALMOST UNBEARABLE
AMOUNT OF PAIN BUILDS
UP. MANY PEOPLE IN
UKRAINE TRY TO CONCEAL
THEIR SUFFERING THAT IT
CREATES A PRECARIOUS
EMOTIONAL LANDSCAPE,
FULL OF UNMARKED CLIFFS

Even before the war, she said, Ukrainians tended to be stoic and reluctant to emote. She chalked this up to the lingering haze of Soviet times when the survival strategy was: Don't



Mourners grieve during the funeral for fallen soldier Artemiy Dymyd at Lychakiv cemetery in Lviv, Ukraine.

Recently, I saw a photo of a building on fire in eastern Ukraine, not far from Pokrovsk. I looked closer and felt a pang of fear. Wait a sec, I said to myself. I've been to that building.

— The New York Times

To comment and email: opinion@omanobserver.om

OMAN عُضَائِد DAILY Observer ESTABLISHED ON 15 NOVEMBER 1981	E D I T O R I A L					ADVERTISING Tel: 24649444, 24649430, 24649437, 24649401 Fax: 24649434	PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY:	
	EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Tel: 22651222	DESK Tel: 22651209	LOCAL Tel: 22651212	BUSINESS Tel: 22651208	SPORTS Tel: 22651205	FEATURE Tel: 22651220	DISTRIBUTION AGENT Tel: 24649351/24649360 Fax: 24649379	Ministry of Information P.O. Box 974, Postal Code 100, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman
	SECRETARY Tel: 22651200	ONLINE Tel: 22651202	DESIGN Tel: 22651210	TRANSLATION Tel: 22651204	PROOFREADING Tel: 22651206			
Website: omanobserver.om		EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili			e-mail: editor@omanobserver.om			
Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in these pages are solely those of the authors and do not reflect the opinion of the Observer.								

Join hands to combat child abuse

Despite having laws, regulations and tremendous efforts made by the Ministry of Social Development, as a key stakeholder, to control child abuse cases, a significant number of children and young people remain exposed to violence and abuse in their schools, community and families in Oman.

The ministry's annual reports show a remarkable increase in child abuse cases. There are legal punishments stated in the Child Law issued by the Royal Decree No 22/2014 to stop different forms of child abuse and behaviours violating children rights.

Child abuse leads to serious social and psychological issues to families and children. Further serious actions should be taken by government and social and legal bodies concerned to stop this menace. All stakeholders concerned should join hands to combat child abuse with the support of individuals and society. In view of that, an academic study, "Child Maltreatment Prevention Readiness Assessment in Oman", published in Sultan Qaboos University Medical Journal, was conducted between May and August 2016 to evaluate Oman's readiness for implementing large-scale child maltreatment prevention (CMP) programmes. The study indicated that Oman has a modest level of readiness to implement large-scale evidence-based prevention programmes against child maltreatment. It emphasised the importance to develop a national strategy, outlining a framework for organising and prioritising efforts towards child maltreatment programmes.

On the other hand, Moeness al Shish-tawy, in his article, responding to the article "Child Rights: What can we do in Oman?", published in 2012 by Sultan Qaboos University's Medical Journal, stressed the significant action to stop child abuse and neglect, and called for developing a national strategy for protecting children. He recommended that this strategy should identify the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders concerned by protecting and promoting the welfare of children and identify measures to reduce child abuse.

Reflecting on the stakeholders' support to serve this issue, their efforts must be strategically unified and stream-



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

CHILD ABUSE
LEADS TO
SERIOUS
SOCIAL AND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ISSUES TO
FAMILIES AND
CHILDREN

lined. This must be effectively planned, executed and properly directed to target audiences through different public initiatives, programmes and media awareness campaigns. For the stakeholders concerned to change public attitude towards child abuse issue, a comprehensive national media campaign should be organised.

This campaign should be driven by various powerful tools, messages and platforms including social media, in addition to traditional media. However, to achieve an excellent exposure to media messages and fruitful outcomes, certain key factors are also required. Various media platforms including newspapers, TVs, radios, social media and outdoor media (billboards, posters, newspapers and magazines) should be intensively dedicated to serve this campaign.

Further, community-based programmes, policies that support behavioural change, public awareness sessions are needed to support the campaign too. Incorporating technology is of high benefit, including bulk mobile SMS, online advertisements and posters. Moreover, the campaign's awareness sessions and events need to target schools, sports clubs, health institutions, NGOs and public facilities. Such a big-scale campaign could be frequently conducted in short-term with different health-related or social occasions or as a long-term national campaign extended for months. This will ensure bringing effective impacts on public attitudes, which could be measured via the tracking child abuse cases recorded by the Ministry of Social Development.

The great promise of this media campaign comes in its ability to broadcast precise social-focused messages to large audiences frequently. The messages must be very persuasive to the audience and factual-oriented. Also, the communicated messages must spotlight on all aspects related to child rights and protection, impact of abuse on children, family and society, parenting principles, child laws and related legislations, legal punishments against child violence and other relevant topics too. This could be executed via online and offline media, games, videos and storytelling for children to ensure a better impact.

(The article is part of a social research conducted by the writer)

ONE MILLION DAFFODIL GARDENS



A harpist plays at Cholmondeley Castle in the one million daffodil gardens for Mothering Sunday, in Cholmondeley, Britain, on Sunday. – Reuters

Trump could be charged any day... what happens next?

Donald Trump could be charged in New York as soon as this week for allegedly covering up hush money payments to a film star during his 2016 presidential campaign, nearly seven years after the money changed changes.

But any trial of the former US president would still be more than a year away, legal experts said, and could coincide with the final months of the 2024 presidential campaign as Trump seeks a return to the White House.

In a social media post on Saturday, Trump said he expected to be arrested on Tuesday and called on his followers to protest, though a spokesperson later said Trump has not been notified of any pending arrest.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg has presented evidence to a New York grand jury about a \$130,000 payment to Stormy Daniels in the waning days of the 2016 presidential campaign in exchange for her silence about an alleged affair, according to sources. Trump has denied the affair, and his lawyer has accused Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, of extortion.



Joseph Ax

The writer is a reporter at Thomson Reuters

IF CHARGED, TRUMP
WOULD BECOME
THE FIRST FORMER
US PRESIDENT TO
FACE CRIMINAL
PROSECUTION

Were he charged, Trump would become the first former US president to face criminal prosecution. Polls show him leading other potential rivals for the Republican nomination, including Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who is widely expected to mount a White House bid.

The average criminal case in New York takes more than a year to move from indictment to trial, said Karen Friedman Agnifilo, former Manhattan chief assistant district attorney, and Trump's case is far from typical.

That raises the possibility of Trump having to stand trial in the middle of the 2024 presidential campaign, or even after Election Day, though putting a president-elect or president on trial for state charges would enter uncharted legal waters. If elected, he would not hold the power to pardon himself of state charges.

"This is so unprecedented that it's hard for me to say," Agnifilo said when asked whether a judge would put Trump on trial close to the election. "I think it's tricky."

The New York case is one

of several focused on Trump, including a Georgia election interference probe and a pair of federal investigations into his role in the January 6, 2021, assault on the US Capitol by his supporters trying to overturn his defeat and into his retention of classified documents after leaving the White House. In his early career in real estate, as a television celebrity and then in politics, the famously litigious Trump has employed aggressive counter-attacks and delay tactics when



Former President Donald Trump greets fans at BOK Center in Tulsa, Okla. – AFP

confronted with legal challenges.

Trump has accused Bragg, an elected Democrat, of targeting him for political gain and could try to seek dismissal of the charges on those grounds. Trump would likely pursue other avenues as well, some of which could present thorny legal issues that take time to resolve.

While serving as president, Trump reimbursed Cohen for the Daniels payments, and federal prosecutors who charged Cohen said in court papers that the

payments were falsely recorded as for legal services. The New York Times, citing sources, has reported the most likely charges against Trump would be for falsifying business records, typically a misdemeanor.

To elevate that charge to a felony, prosecutors must prove that Trump falsified records to cover up a second crime. One possibility, according to the Times, is that prosecutors could assert the payment itself violated state campaign finance law, since it was effectively an illegal secret donation to boost his campaign.

Using state election law to elevate a false business record charge is an untested legal theory, experts said, and Trump's lawyers would be sure to challenge it.

Trump could also challenge whether the statute of limitations — five years in this instance — should have run out. Under New York law, the statute of limitations can be extended if the defendant has been out of state, but Trump may argue that serving as US president should not apply.

— Reuters

sport

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



Alcaraz sets desert duel with Medvedev with No 1 at stake

INDIAN WELLS: Former world number ones Carlos Alcaraz and Daniil Medvedev will battle for a first Indian Wells ATP Masters 1000 title after straight sets semifinal victories on Saturday. Spain's second-ranked Alcaraz, the top seed who can return to the summit with a third Masters 1000 title on Sunday, defeated 13th-ranked Italian Jannik Sinner 7-6 (7/4), 6-3 to reach his third final of 2023.

After a season start delayed by injury, Alcaraz has won the title in Buenos Aires and reached the final in Rio de Janeiro last month. Meanwhile, Medvedev is riding a 19-match ATP win streak and seeking his fourth title in as many tournaments after victories in Rotterdam, Doha and Dubai. The sixth-ranked Russian — who had never made it past the fourth round at Indian Wells — survived a late surge from Frances Tiafoe for a 7-5, 7-6 (7/4) victory over the 16th-ranked American.

In control for most of the match, Medvedev needed eight match points to finally put it away with an ace on his final opportunity.

"I'm just really happy that I managed not to lose this match and not to have regrets, nightmares, whatever," Medvedev said.

Alcaraz, who beat Sinner in an epic five-setter on the way to the US Open title last year, had gained the upper hand on the Italian with an early first-set break, but he gave it back with a sloppy game that featured four unforced errors and allowed Sinner to level the set at 4-4.

With Alcaraz suddenly struggling, Sinner held for 5-4 and piled on the pressure with a set point at 6-5 that Alcaraz saved with a with a drop shot followed by a textbook volley winner.

A reinvigorated Alcaraz

powered through the tie-breaker, sealing the set with a backhand cross court winner, and broke Sinner in the second game of the second set — sealing the break with a dazzling lob.

Up 4-2, Alcaraz got out of a 0-30 jam with the aid of three straight unreturnable serves, and he closed it out with a confident game that he opened with an ace and finished with a thundering forehand winner.

"Playing against Jannik is never easy," Alcaraz said. "I knew that I had to increase my level. It was really close the first set.

"On the second I calm down the nerves, played more relaxed and (that) was the key of everything."

Alcaraz was looking forward to taking on red-hot Medvedev.

"I am an ambitious guy," he said. "I want to play against the best players in the world and I would say that Daniil is the best player right now.

"Amazing winning streak — it's going to be a difficult challenge but I am prepared for that."

CRAZY END

A dialed-in Medvedev had looked in control for most of the match, showing no sign of trouble from the right ankle he twisted in a fourth-round win over Alexander Zverev. Tiafoe had reached his first Masters 1000 semifinal without dropping a set, but Medvedev kept him at bay in the opening set, winning 24 of his 27 service points.

Unable to convert three break points in the fifth game, Medvedev broke through suddenly in the 11th, another backhand into the net from Tiafoe giving him a chance that Medvedev converted with a net-skimming forehand.

Medvedev quickly gained the edge in the second, breaking



Carlos Alcaraz of Spain plays a forehand volley return at the net to Jannik Sinner of Italy during their Indian Wells Masters semifinal in Indian Wells, California. — AFP



Russia's Daniil Medvedev returns a forehand to Frances Tiafoe of the US during their Indian Wells Masters semifinal match in Indian Wells, California. — AFP

Tiafoe in the opening game with a forehand winner that curled back inside the sideline as it dropped.

Up 5-3, Medvedev had three chances to claim the match on Tiafoe's serve in the ninth game,

and after failing to convert, he was broken for the first time in a sloppy service game featuring three unforced errors — including a double fault on break point.

Undeterred, he broke Tiafoe to

love in the next game, but once again the American refused to yield, surviving four more match points on the way to a service break to force the tie-breaker.

"It was crazy at the end,"

Medvedev said. "I got super tight. I would say that (after) 6-5, 40-0, I think I got tight at deuce when I was like, 'Oh my God, that's a lot of opportunities missed. This could go not well for me.'" — AFP

Coffee-powered Bopanna becomes oldest Masters champion

INDIAN WELLS: Coffee connoisseur Rohan Bopanna credited the special Indian blends he consumes on Tour for his success after the 43-year-old became the oldest ATP Masters 1000 champion by winning the men's doubles title on Saturday.

Bopanna and his playing partner Matthew Ebden of Australia beat the top-ranked pair of Dutchman Wesley Koolhof and Briton Neal Skupski 6-3, 2-6, 10-8 to claim their second title together and first of the season.

"Truly special. It's called Tennis Paradise for a reason. I've been coming here over the years and

seeing all these guys win and I'm really happy that Matt and I were able to do this and get this title here," Bopanna said.

"There have been some tough matches, close matches and today we played against one of the best teams out there, so I'm really happy we got the title."

SECRET OF SUCCESS

Former doubles world number three Bopanna, whose family owns a coffee plantation in Coorg district in the south Indian state of Karnataka, said the drink was the secret of his success.

"It's the Indian coffee that I



keep having when travelling. That's the secret. The biggest thing is to make sure you recover well after matches and that's really helped me," Bopanna said.

Bopanna beat the record held by former partner Daniel Nestor and said taking care of his body had paid off.

"That's the most important part, especially when you're getting older. Some days I tell Matt I maybe just practised 20 minutes, but I'd rather rest the body and be ready for our matches," Bopanna said.

"That's really been the key. I spoke to Danny and told him

'sorry, I'm going to beat your record'. Being in the final I was already the oldest and winning the final that stays with me. Really happy with that."

Indian doubles great Mahesh Bhupathi hailed former playing partner Bopanna's longevity and ability to peak late in his career.

"Bring it home Bofors," Bhupathi tweeted, alluding to the nickname Bopanna has earned because of his booming serve.

"Bofors gone where no Indian man has gone before ... The distance in the desert! Keep climbing."

— Reuters

Perez on pole as Verstappen hits trouble

JEDDAH: Red Bull's Sergio Perez took pole position in Saudi Arabia for the second year in a row on Saturday after Formula One champion team mate Max Verstappen suffered a driveshaft failure and qualified only 15th.

Aston Martin's 41-year-old double world champion Fernando Alonso, who had hoped for his first pole since Germany 2012 with Ferrari, will join the Mexican on the front row for Sunday's race in Jeddah.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc qualified second fastest but has a 10-place grid penalty that will drop the Monegasque to 12th place.

Perez's best time of one minute 28.265 seconds around the floodlit Corniche street circuit was more than a tenth quicker than Leclerc's effort.

"You really feel the Formula One cars coming alive in this place and maximising that lap was very important," said Perez of what was also his second career pole.

"It's a shame," he added of championship leader Verstappen's early departure. "Max has been really strong the whole weekend so hopefully tomorrow we can have



Red Bull's Sergio Perez during qualifying for Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah. — Reuters

both cars up there."

Verstappen's early exit provided the big shock of the session.

Last year's winner in Jeddah had dominated all three practice sessions and he was fastest in the first phase of qualifying with pole looking a formality before it all went wrong.

"I have a problem," he told the

team over the radio after exiting turn 10.

"It's almost not accelerating," added the Dutch driver as he nursed the car back to the pits and was pushed back into the garage before stepping out with just over six minutes of the second session remaining.

"Every session was going really

well, every time we were on the track the car was working really well. It will be a bit more tricky to get to the front but it's all about scoring points," said Verstappen, who led Perez in a season-opening one-two in Bahrain.

"Of course I would have liked to start a bit further up the road but we cannot change that now.



Red Bull's Sergio Perez poses after qualifying in pole position with second placed Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and third placed Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso. — Reuters

Anything is possible at this track... it's going to be tough but we have good pace so for sure we'll move forward."

CONFIDENT ALONSO

Alonso will be the first Aston Martin driver to start a grand prix on the front row since Britain's Roy Salvadori at Silverstone in 1959.

"Qualifying was our weak point in Bahrain but today the car seemed to perform very well on one lap. Let's see tomorrow what we can do from here," said the Spaniard, who finished third in the opener behind the Red Bulls.

"This is just amazing," added Alonso, who joined seventh-

ranked Aston Martin from Alpine after the end of last season in what now looks like an inspired move.

"We are confident...the car felt very strong. The strongest point of the car is the long-run pace and how we treat the tyres so it should be better on Sunday than Saturday."

Mercedes' George Russell and Ferrari's Carlos Sainz will share the second row with Canadian Lance Stroll fifth for Aston Martin and Esteban Ocon sixth for Renault-owned Alpine.

Seven times world champion Lewis Hamilton, winner in Saudi Arabia in 2021, will start seventh for Mercedes. — Reuters

Starc scythes down India as Australia win

VISAKHAPATNAM: Australian pacer Mitchell Starc ripped through India's line-up with five wickets to lay the platform for a crushing 10-wicket win in the second one-day international in Visakhapatnam on Sunday that levelled their three-match series at 1-1.

Chasing 118 to win after Starc claimed 5-53 for his ninth five-wicket haul in ODIs in a fiery spell earlier in the day, Australia romped home in only 11 overs to set up a thrilling finale in Chennai on Wednesday.

A ferocious Mitchell Marsh cracked an unbeaten 66 in 36 balls — a knock that included six sixes — while Travis Head made 51 not out to get the tourists over the finish line. "It was a quick one, 37 overs for the game. You don't see that too often," Australia captain Steve Smith said. "I thought our bowlers were outstanding.

"Starc in particular with the new ball, swinging it back down the line and putting them under early pressure. He complemented really well with the rest of our bowling group."

Australia put India in to bat and struck early as Starc had Shubman Gill caught at point for a duck with a wider ball in the first over and the left-armers then dismissed Rohit Sharma and Suryakumar



Australia's Mitchell Starc with Sean Abbott before bowling. — Reuters

Yadav off successive balls a little later.

Skipper Rohit, back after missing India's five-wicket win in the series opener due to family commitments, was caught at slip for 13 while the explosive Suryakumar fell lbw in the next ball to leave India in trouble at 32-3 inside five overs.

KL Rahul enjoyed a return to

form in the last match with an unbeaten 75, but he fell victim to a sharp inswinger from Starc and Hardik Pandya joined him in the pavilion shortly after thanks to a spectacular catch by Smith.

The Australia captain flew to his right to pull off a one-handed blinder at slip in Sean Abbott's second over as the hosts lost half their side for 49 on a track that

offered the quick bowlers some early swing and bounce.

After a spell of low-risk cricket, India lost Virat Kohli when Nathan Ellis trapped him lbw for 31 in the 16th over and the paceman then had Ravindra Jadeja caught behind for 16 to snuff out the home side's hopes of a late comeback.

Abbott removed Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammed Shami before Axar Patel (29 not out) carted Starc for two big sixes but the bowler rattled Mohammed Siraj's stumps as India were restricted to their lowest ODI total against Australia at home.

"It's disappointing. We didn't play to our potential and didn't apply ourselves with the bat," Rohit said after India's heaviest defeat in terms of balls remaining.

"We always knew that wasn't enough runs. It wasn't a 117 pitch at all. Starc is a quality bowler. He's been doing it for years for Australia with the new ball. He kept bowling to his strength and we kept falling to his strength." — Reuters

BRIEF SCORES

India 117 all out in 26 overs (V Kohli 31, A Patel 29 not out; M Starc 5-53, S Abbott 3-23, N Ellis 2-13) v **Australia** 121 for no loss in 11 overs (M Marsh 66 not out; T Head 51 not out) **Result:** Australia won by 10 wickets Series: Three-match series level at 1-1

Kashyap's 200 takes Muscat CT to Super League final

MUSCAT: Muscat CT's Kashyap Prajapati smashed a double century against Oman Stallions confirming Muscat CT's berth into the final of the Oman Cricket Super League 2022-23 powered by Muscat Pharmacy.

Oman Stallions won the toss and put Muscat CT to bat first. Opener Kashyap Prajapati along with Jatinder Singh powered Muscat CT with a good start. Kashyap looked in sublime form carrying Muscat CT innings and went onto score his century at run-a-ball well supported by Ayaan Khan (49 off 58). Kashyap scored his second ton within 48 balls aggregating an innings of 204 runs off 147 balls with 21 fours and 6 sixes helping Muscat CT to reach 333-5 in 50 overs.

In reply, the Muscat CT bowlers ran through the Oman Stallions batting bundling them down for 147 in 44.4 overs with Ayaan Khan (3-13), Samay Shrivastav (2-23) and Sandeep Goud (2-34) among the wickets. Muscat CT registered a 186 run victory, their fifth win of the Super League out of six games.

Muscat CT take on Oman Stallions in the final of the Super League on Monday starting at 9:15am.



Kashyap Prajapati of Muscat CT

YALLA SHABAB PREVAIL

Yalla Shabab scored 182 all out in 38.3 overs electing to bat first courtesy of Imran Alam (32 off 51) and Khalid Kail (31 off 25). Nadeem Khan picked 4-40 for Renaissance with support from Imran Ali (2-22) and Bilal Mohammed (2-35). In reply, Renaissance were cruising close to the target before losing wickets in clusters. Nadeem Khan's (54 off 83) salient effort to get Renaissance close fell short by 3 runs after brilliant spells from Mohammed Nadeem (4-37) and Hassnain Ali Shah (4-37) bundling them at 179 all out in 49 overs.

Yalla Shabab now take on Renaissance for the third place of the Super League on Tuesday starting 9:15 am.

Al Hail CC to organise Ramadhan Premier League

MUSCAT: Al Hail Cricket Club is organising the fourth edition of the Danube group Ramadhan Premier League 2023 at the Al Hail Cricket grass ground in Mabela on March 24.

The tournament matches will be played on a league basis with participation limited to 16 teams divided into four groups, each team gets a chance to play three matches in group stage with toppers qualify for the semifinals. The tournament is open to all the teams that are participating in Oman Cricket-conducted 'A' division and all other divisions

below A division.

The organisers have decided to give some interesting prizes besides the main trophy and cash prize for the winners and runners-up teams. There will also be prizes for the best bowler and best disciplined team apart from regular prizes.

This is the first time in the history of Oman to have tennex ball league format tournament in the holy month of Ramadhan with Danube Group management lending their support to have such event on yearly basis and bring new things for the cricket



lovers in Oman. In this format, the teams get more games to play and enjoy. The tournament slogan

is 'Celebrate Ramadhan, Celebrate Sport, Celebrate Life'.

In addition, there are other

exciting prizes that will be given away in various categories. To make it more exciting for the viewers as well, the organisers will also give away surprise gifts on a weekly basis to the visitors and viewing audience. A separate area will be provided for children to play during the course of the tournament.

All the matches will start at 9:30 pm after 'Taraweeh' prayer. The interested teams can register through the Al Hail CC website. The website can be accessed on the following URL www.alhailcricketclub.com.

Registration will be on a first-come first-served basis with limitation up to 16 teams maximum. The tournament draw is scheduled to take place in HCT ground in Mabela at 7.30 pm on March 21 in the presence of all the team captains and managers.

The main sponsors for the tournament are Al Danube Group. Al Hail CC's Moula al Balushi thanked Tamin Ansari, Country Head-Oman of Danube Group, for his support.

For more information contact this numbers: 00968 99623536 and 00968 96972291

FRENCH TRIATHLETE CHANE BAGS 2023 XTERRA MUSANDAM TITLE

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSANDAM, MARCH 19

French triathlete Maxim Chane claimed the overall title of the first-ever 2023 Xterra Musandam in the Middle East which concluded at the historic Khasab Fort in Oman's Musandam Governorate on Saturday.

The winner of 2021 Europe Triathlon Xterra Cross Championships, Dolomiti Paganella, completed the full course race which included 1.5 km open-ocean swim in the Sea of Oman, 30 km mountain-bike and 10km trail-run route that traced its way through much of Musandam's spectacular desert-mountain terrain in a time of 2:06:06.

Italian Gianfranco Cucco came in second with a timing of 2:21:12 followed by Italian triathlete Marta Menditto who completed the race in 2:39:18.

Marta was also the first overall female finisher as she bagged the crown after registering a timing of 2:39:18 followed by Ana Celia Creus Del Campo in second with a timing of 2:47:36. Mia Anna Andersson finished third (3:05:59).

"It was a different experience for me from other races I have attended before. I enjoyed the first-ever Xterra race in the Middle East in Oman's Musandam Governorate. During all the race days, every day in Khasab has been a cultural learning experience that

definitely I will never forget," top world triathlete Maxim Chane said after the event.

The official closing ceremony for the 2023 Xterra Musandam took place at the Khasab Fort in the presence of Mubarak Ali al Rahbi, President of Musandam Governor Office, and Engineer Nasser al Hosni, Director-General of Musandam Municipality, Mohamed Khalfan al Obaidani, CEO & Founder of Triathlon Middle East. He delivered the awards to the top winners of all the events and categories of race.

ISSA TAKES 10KM TRAIL RUN TITLE

Earlier on the first day of the event, a thrilling Xterra Musandam 10km Trail Run and Xterra Musandam 21km Trail Half Marathon started with tough competitions among the elite triathlete across the world. Omani runner Issa al Kamzari managed to take the overall title of the 10km Trail Run event while for the 21km Trail Half Marathon men's event, Maxim Chane took the overall win and Marta Menditto won the women's event.

The first edition of 2023 Xterra Musandam offered a combined \$23,000 prize purse for the winners, which included a \$16,000 pro prize purse for the main event, and \$7,000 prize purse for the Trail Run.

The final closing ceremony also witnessed delivering awards to the official event sponsors of the 2023 Xterra Musandam including



the Governorate of Musandam, Musandam Municipality, ROP, Ministry of Tourism and Heritage, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Public Authority for SME Development besides other private sector sponsors including the global energy company Oxy, Triathlon Middle East and the European tour partners for the event included Zoggs, Vittoria and Elle-Erre.

The action of 2023 Xterra Musandam began on Thursday with a fun and festive atmosphere with the opening of the official 2023 Xterra Musandam Race Village at Khasab Fort. The Xterra Kids Fun Run for boys and girls also went ahead with much success and served to inspire a sporting spirit among the young athletes. A total of 28 slots were also made available for the 2023 Xterra World

Championship on September 23 in Molveno, Trentino, Italy.

Mohammed bin Khalfan al Obaidani, Chairman of Oman Triathlon Committee and Chief Executive Officer of Trime.om (organisers) said: "The 2023 Xterra Musandam proved to be a significant success for the Musandam Governorate as it highlighted Musandam and Oman as a premium destination in the

Middle East for hosting world-class, globally-recognised sporting events. We had a fantastic response from the athletes taking part – who were delighted with the stunning natural beauty of the Musandam Peninsula. Our team were also very proud to witness the warm welcome shown by the local Musandam community to all foreign athletes taking part – as they welcomed them to their magnificent land."

Oman Racing fight back to finish 9th on FIA WEC debut

SEBRING, UNITED STATES: Ahmad al Harthy, Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood mounted a competitive recovery during the opening round of the 2023 FIA World Endurance Championship at Sebring in the USA on March 17 to rescue a ninth place finish – following a costly puncture in the first hour of racing.

The Oman Racing with TF Sport trio had been set to mount a challenge for the GTE Am podium during the eight-hour race, thanks to a superb top three qualifying performance from Al Harthy, but instead had to be satisfied with a strong fightback after losing significant time during the first stint.

American racer Dinan took the start at his home race in the No 25 Aston Martin GTE and held third place early on, but just five laps into the contest a heavy accident for the No 83 Ferrari 488 resulted in the appearance of the Safety Car.

Almost all of the GTE Am cars served their first pit-stops while the race was under caution,

with the D'Station Racing Aston Martin an exception. So, when racing resumed, Dinan was fourth but when the D'Station car pitted around 75 minutes into the race Oman Racing moved back into third.

Just a short while later, though, a puncture to the front-right Michelin tyre put Dinan off the circuit and a huge amount of time was lost as he coaxed the car back to the pits. Rejoining the track in 12th position in GTE Am, Dinan pitted again with one hour and 45 minutes elapsed.

Al Harthy climbed into the driving seat of the Aston Martin for his first race miles in FIA WEC and he immediately set the squad's fastest lap of the race at that point. The Omani, supported by Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS, then climbed into 11th place before the end of hour two and closed time on the cars ahead.

Dinan returned to the driving seat late in hour three, before Al Harthy started his second stint in



2023 FIA World Endurance Championship GTE Am Driver Standings:
9th Ahmad al Harthy/Michael Dinan/Charlie Eastwood, 3pts
2023 FIA World Endurance Championship GTE Am Team Standings:
9th Oman Racing with TF Sport, 3pts

hour four and continued to push as the team tried to recover as much time as possible. Halfway through the race Al Harthy held 10th position and he lapped impressively, delivering pace which

confirmed the squad's podium potential had the early puncture not occurred.

During the second half of the encounter Eastwood became part of the mix but with so much time

Strong recovery from Al Harthy, Dinan and Eastwood in Sebring 8hr race

P9 finish best result available for Oman Racing after opening hour puncture

Pleasing pace and performance lifts spirits for Rd2 in Portimao, Portugal

having been lost, his only option was to consolidate the ninth place which was secured later on – a character building event in some respects but a clear indication of Oman Racing's WEC potential.

Ahmad al Harthy said: "It was a tough race unfortunately because of the puncture in the first hour, we had to catch up from there but the time lost was just too big in such a competitive championship where it's very difficult to come back. But we did come back to P9, which was the best we could do after the puncture and losing more time in the pits after serving the second mandatory stop due to the

technical regulations.

"I was really happy with my performance, it showed if things go perfectly well for us we can get good results here in WEC. It's a very, very competitive championship and we learnt a lot as well, which will hopefully help us in Portimao." Round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship, the 6 Hours of Portimao, will take place on April 16 at the Autodromo do Algarve in Portugal.



STRONG UPTAKE: Solar Wadi and Nafath Renewable Energy to execute portfolio of projects offering 30 MW-peak in total capacity

Two independent Omani companies operating in the renewables space have announced a collaboration to support the delivery of a sizable portfolio of small-scale solar PV based projects for a number of public and private sector customers.

Muscat-based Solar Wadi
and Nafath Renewable Energy
both well-established players in
the solar PV segment, signed a
framework agreement during
Oman Sustainability Week
(OSW), which took place at Oman
Convention and Exhibition. The
pact was inked in the presence
of Eng Salim bin Nasser al Afi,
Minister of Energy and Minerals.

The pact commits the two sides to collaborating in the engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) of a portfolio



of private-wire solar PV projects of an aggregate capacity of around 30 megawatt-peak (MWp).

['Private-wire' projects are those that are not directly linked to the grid, but are connected to the consumer via a privately owned transmission line.]

"This is the first of a number of 25-30 MWp portfolios of projects planned as part of this collaboration between our two Omani companies to serve the Commercial & Industrial sector within Oman," said Solar Wadi in a post.

“Each portfolio comprises of a number of individual private-wire distributed generation solar

PV plant ranging in scales of 1 to 15 MWp and using various application types (roof, ground, car-park, wadi etc.) to reach the combined 25-30 MWp capacity," it further stated.

The announcement attests to a burgeoning uptake of mainly solar-based power generation by a diverse mix of industrial, commercial, agricultural, retail and hospitality-based customers to help, on the one hand, offset the cost of subsidy-free electricity supply from the grid, and on the other, to meet their sustainability goals.

According to Solar Wadi, the collaboration will also enable

local and international businesses to embrace renewable energy to improve their competitiveness and achieve their environmental goals as well.

Additionally, this switch to green energy will help Oman achieve its goal to source around 40 per cent of its power requirements from renewable resources by 2040, the company noted. Majority owned by Omani shareholders, Solar Wadi was established by a group of pension funds, Omani investors and international solar developers.

Together with the team behind Solar Wadi, the shareholders have delivered over RO 2 billion worth of renewable energy projects over the last 20 years.

Last month, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) signed a usufruct contract with Wadi Solar for the allocation of land within Suhar Industrial City for the installation of a 100 MW capacity solar PV project. The project will be established as part of Madayn's strategy to provide a large part of the energy needs of its tenants from a sustainable source of renewable energy.

The UK-based Standard Chartered Bank (Stanchart) is an international brand with a strong presence in the retail banking sectors of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. However, it may be noted that Stanchart does not conduct retail banking in some of the markets it operates, including in the Sultanate of Oman and its home country, the United Kingdom. Bill Winters (**pictured**), CEO, who was recently in the Sultanate of Oman as part of his tour of the Middle East and North Africa region, spoke exclusively to the Observer about its role in Sultanate of Oman where it has been operating for over five decades.

Winters said, "The bank operates in over 60 markets and in one way or another has some presence in 130 countries. We have a long history in Oman, and it is very important for our business as the GCC broadly, which has been growing. We've got very strong relationships in Oman, both with the local corporations and the government, but also with our international clients, multinationals who are operating in Oman. It's important for us,



it's growing, and we have really focused our business in on those things that we think where we can really add some value, including working very closely with the local banks."

Oman is strategically important. Winters added, "The local banks are amongst our biggest clients and of course, the government continues to be. I think Oman is a strategically important country, both geopolitically, but also in the Gulf, playing a very constructive role through the ups and downs and ins and outs of geopolitics in this region and beyond. We are absolutely committed to the business that we're doing here."

I just wanted to come and say thanks to the team because we've gone through a lot. We've made quite a few changes in the past few years and those changes are always hard, but I think it's left us as a stronger, more focused operation that can really serve the clients that we've got in a differentiated way."

 شركة المطاحن العمانية (س.م.ع.) Oman Flour Mills Company (S.A.O.C.) P.O. Box 566, P.C 112, Ruwi, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman		 		   omanflourmills.com					
Consolidated and Separate Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2022									
BOARD OF DIRECTORS' REPORT									
RESPECTED SHAREHOLDERS, On behalf of the Board of Directors, I present Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG (the Parent Company) along with its subsidiaries (The Group's) financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2022. GROUP PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS: Revenue: The total revenue recorded is RO 118.66m as compared to RO 97.34m recorded in the previous year i.e. an increase of 21.9%. All sectors achieved an increase in the revenues, mainly of sector by 28% and feed sector by 23%. Expenses: The group total expenses (COGS, selling and admin) have increased by 29.3% as compared to the previous year. The main reason for its increase is attributed to the increase in the purchase prices of raw material compared to last year. Investment & Other income: The group earned total investment income of RO 1.32k as compared to RO 1.04k. There was an increase mainly due to the rental income from the newly completed silos of Sohar Flour Mills. The rental income received this year was RO 328k. This was offset by the fair value losses due to decrease in the value of the Company's investments in the Muscat Stock Exchange. Net Profit: The net profit after tax recorded for the year is RO 1.75m as compared to RO 4.74m in 2021. The group's net profit has reduced by 63.1% compared to the previous year. PARENT, SUBSIDIARY AND ASSOCIATES COMPANIES: The parent company performance (before tax) along with our subsidiaries and associates is as follows: Oman Flour Mills Company SAOG (OFM): OFM sales revenue has increased by RO 22.5 million (29.4%) as compared to last year mainly due to increase in the sales price by 16.0% followed by increase in the sales volume by 13.4%. This was offset by increase in the raw material prices. Raw material cost has increased by RO 24.6 million (36.2%) mainly due to an overall increase in the prices of raw materials (grains) by 22.8% followed by increase in the quantity sold by 13.4%. This has led to an overall decrease in the operating profit by RO 2.5 million (-42.8%) as compared to last year. OFM recorded a profit (before tax) of RO 2.6m as compared to previous year's profit (before tax) of RO 6.3m. During the year, the Ministry of Finance had taken the initiative to stabilise the fluctuating grain prices by granting subsidy. The Company has taken a total credit of RO 4.45m as subsidy income during the year (net of agreed discounts). Subsidy for wheat was RO 3.75m and for feed raw materials were RO 696k (net of agreed discounts). Sohar Flour Mills LLC (SFM) (60%): The Company completed its silo project during the year. The silos are fully operational and was inaugurated on 4th of January 2023. The silos have a total capacity of 160k MT and this opens up a new revenue stream for the Company. During the year, the Company had an increase in revenue by RO 398k. This was offset by increase in the cost of goods sold by RO 949k. Increase in the cost of goods sold was mainly due to the increase in the prices of grains and depreciation costs related to the new silos. The Company look forward to utilize the new storage spaces to control the grain prices in the coming years. SFM has reported a net loss of RO 1,910k as compared to loss of RO 1,430k for the last year. The net loss after tax was reduced to RO 646k after the recognition of deferred tax income of RO 1,264k during the year. Ayah Food Industries LLC (AFI) (100%): AFI, as a plan to expand its presence in the region, has started a new entity in UAE. The new branch which is opened in 2022 is fully operational. During the year, the Company had an increase in revenue by RO 1.79m (14%). This was offset by the increase in raw material prices and initial setup and pre-operational costs of the UAE branch. In addition, Company had to provide a one-time provision of RO 500k during the year against a litigation. AFI made a profit (before tax) of RO 1.48k as compared to previous year's profit of RO 1,010k. Ayah International Services LLC (AIS) (100%): AIS has setup a fully equipped laboratory in Uzbekistan. The new foreign branch will be fully operational from 2023. This will be a new revenue stream for the Company. During the year AIS made a profit (before tax) of RO 168k as compared to the previous year's profit (before tax) of RO 354k. The decrease in profit is due to the one-time expenses incurred in setting up its new subsidiary in Uzbekistan followed by the increase in the cost of operation. Ayah Technical Services LLC (ATS) (100%): ATS has a net loss of RO 2.97k during the year. The losses are due to the provision provided against the receivables during the year. OMAUS (100%): The Company in Australia was formed in the current year as a part of the vision of the group to directly import the raw materials from the growers. The Company will be having their first shipment of wheat from Australia in the first quarter of 2023. In addition, the management is planning to acquire a land in the country to grow wheat and to export to Oman for the groups consumption. The process to acquire the land has already been initiated. During the year the Company incurred a pre-operational cost of RO 15k. Oman Fisheries Company SAOG (OFC): The share of OFM in the associate was reduced from 25.16% to 17.27% during the year as a result of new investors getting added in the Company. OFM had a share of loss of RO 73k in the year 2022 from the associate. Food Techno Park LLC (FTP) (50%): AIS holds 50% stake in FTP. The Company has not yet commenced its commercial operations. During the year, the Company incurred a pre-operational cost of RO 4.7k. Bio Product Oman SAOC (BPO) (33.33%): Ayah Investment LLC holds 33.33% share of BPO and Nakheel Development holds 66.67% shares. BPO reported an initial operational expense of RO 158k during the year. The Company is still not fully operational. Ayah IFCCO Poultry (50%): Ayah Poultry Co SAOC (SPC): SPC had an increase in revenue of RO 1.6m (23%). The increase in revenue was mainly due to the increase in quantity sold by 1.2k MT compared to the previous year. The Company had an increase in production of birds by 26%. During the year, the Company has reported a profit of RO 218k as compared to the loss of RO 392k in the previous year. However, in the previous year Company had a one-time provision of RO 628k but in the current year there was no such provision recorded. Osool Poultry Co. SAOC: The share of Ayah IFCCO amounted to 9.9% of the Company's capital as of 31 December 2022. The Company reported a net loss of RO 3,501k during the year. The Company is not fully operational. Arabian Food Production Company SAOC (AFPC) (33.33%): Modern Poultry Farms SAOC (MPF): MPF has reported a net loss of RO 441k as compared to the loss of RO 392k in the previous year. Emirates Poultry Farms (EPF): The Company has reported a net loss of RO 2671k as compared to the loss of RO 211k in the previous year. Gulf Poultry Farms (GPF): The Company commenced its new farm producing eggs in Irbid in December 2022. During the year the Company has reported a net loss of RO 250k. AWARDS AND ACHIEVEMENTS: Oman Flour Mills achieved a new milestone by grossing a revenue of RO 100 million during the year. With the partnership with AFPC, the Company build a new egg farm under GIFF in Irbi. The farm is extended to an area of 18 million square meters, and it is considered one of the largest poultry farms for table egg production in the GCC countries. The Company completed its SFM silo project in the year 2022. The storage capacity of the project is 160,000 MT, and it is considered one of the strategic national projects. It will help increase the storage capacity of the grains to ensure that there are sufficient quantities to cover the consumption in the Sultanate of Oman for longer periods. The project stems from the responsibility assumed by OFM in enhancing food security and securing a strategic stock of grains. To support local growers in Oman, the Company has signed an agreement to continue to procure wheat from growers at harvest. The Company procured 1,174 Mt of Omani wheat in the current year compared with approx. 300 Mt procured in 2021. CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR): In the last AGM held on 27-March-2022, the shareholders have approved a budget of RO 150,000 for CSR activities. Appropriate projects covering a wide range of activities/beneficiaries such as sponsoring schools, youth training, sporting events, SME development, Ramadan initiatives, and other humanitarian aids will be taken up to achieve the objectives of the shareholders.									
FUTURE OUTLOOK: Multiple projects are being evaluated across the group. The projects focus on integration across the value chain as well diversification into new ventures. OFM FUTURE PLANS ARE: - OFM is completing its first trial shipment of wheat, this wheat (APW) has been bought directly from growers in Australia. The ship is expected to arrive in Oman in March 2023. The quantity of wheat is about 34,500 MT. The Company is expected to achieve savings during the aggregation process, in addition the quality of wheat is expected to be better as the grains are sourced from fewer sources that giving better consistency. - Pre-Mix and New Feed mill expansion – The Feed mill and Pre-Mix Projects are progressing well and have commenced civil construction. - To develop an Industrial cluster for various Mini factories; The Company has developed a schematic for the cluster, in addition the Company is in the process of shortlisting a consultant to study the top 10-12 industries that would become a part of the cluster. In addition, a food scientist has been retained to assist in New product development for potential products that could be included as a part of the cluster. - OFM is also working on evaluating farming opportunities in Australia. The Company has evaluated a few properties. - OFM acquired a 40% stake in Modern Dairy Factory LLC in 2023. In Feb 2023 the Company re-launched the Al Khamayil brand. OTHER GROUP COMPANIES - AIS is progressing in the setting up a fully integrated laboratory in Uzbekistan, Agriculture is one of the main sectors in Uzbekistan. The Company is established and pre-operative activities are in progress. The Company is due to commence operations in 2023 - AIS is planning to open a new fully equipped laboratory in Kazakhstan. - A steering committee has been developed to lead the Food Technopark project. - AFI now have their own distribution set up in UAE. - Bio Product Oman is a new venture which aims to make Long Fiber Pellets for animal Feed and Aqua Feed. The project is currently in pre-operative execution phase. THANKS AND APPRECIATIONS: The Members of the Board of Directors would like to extend their most sincere appreciation and gratitude to the wise government for the continuous support under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, may God protect and preserve him. Best Regards, Salah Hilal Al Maawali Chairman, Board of Directors									
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME - GROUP AND PARENT COMPANY									
	Group		Parent Company						
	2022	2021	2022	2021					
	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000	RO '000					
INCOME									
Revenue from contract with customers	118,659	97,337	100,391	77,574					



Vodafone Oman celebrates quadruple win in the 2023 Stevie Awards

MUSCAT: Crowning its one-year anniversary celebrations, Vodafone in Oman brought home a quadruple win from the 2023 Middle East & North Africa Stevie Awards, receiving three Gold and one Bronze accolades in recognition for its digital innovation, creative drive and impactful proposition.

The three Gold Stevie Winner victories came for Most Innovative Tech Startup of the Year for its My Vodafone App; Award for Innovation in Brand Development for the launch of Vodafone in Oman; and Most Innovative Advertising or Marketing Team of the Year. Vodafone also received a Bronze Stevie Award for Innovation in Cross-Media Marketing for its memorable Hello Oman campaign.

Fahad Abdulaziz bin Saud al Busaidy, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Vodafone Oman, said: “We are extremely proud to be recognised by the Stevie Awards for all our innovation and hard work since launching our operations in early 2022. To have earned four awards shows exactly how much Vodafone has been able to achieve during such a short time, setting a benchmark for new generation telcos in the region.”

Today, Vodafone is the only 100% digital operator in Oman. Its agile business model has enabled it to push innovation and set a benchmark in the country, and in fact, its App is the only telecom app with 100% market penetration at 2 million downloads.

Offering convenience and choice, customers can onboard themselves fully digitally in less a few minutes, including plan and number selection, identity verification using advanced AI and facial recognition capabilities, payment and eSIM (and physical SIM delivery or pick-up). My Vodafone is the first telecom app to allow customers to replace their SIMs digitally, providing SIM-to-eSIM replacement within seconds.

Its creative and youthful approach underpinned by value creation has also set it apart in a highly competitive market. In just one year Vodafone changed the advertising and marketing landscape in Oman.

From its campaigns and creatives, to its collaborations with partners and influencers, and social media presence and community building initiatives, it continuously challenged the limits to bring a digitally differentiated experience to everything it did. Looking back over 2022 year, having recorded 2.2 billion impressions and over 240 million views, Vodafone not only pulled off an incredibly successful launch in the market, but also brought the best marketing innovations to Oman in a way that touches the hearts and minds of all Omanis.

The Stevie Awards, the world's premier business awards, were created in 2002 to honour and generate public recognition of the achievements and positive contributions of organisations and working professionals worldwide.

Al Mouj Muscat wins most trusted brand award in ITC sector

MUSCAT: Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's premium lifestyle and leisure destination, is celebrating the news that it has once again been voted the Most Trusted Brand in the Integrated Tourism Complex (ITC) sector of Oman's Most Trusted Brands Awards.

The annual awards programme is in its sixth year and by inviting members of the public to vote for their favourite brands it shines a spotlight on the Sultanate of Oman's best loved organisations, companies and products.

This year there were 45 different categories from banks and supermarkets to dental practices and paint suppliers and over 911,000 votes were received with Al Mouj Muscat coming out on top as winner of the nation's best ITC having won the award previously.

Set along 6 km of beautiful coastline, Al Mouj Muscat launched in 2006 as Oman's first ever ITC and today 4.9 million people visit it every year.

A joint venture between Majid Al Futtaim Properties, Omran and Tanmia, it has earned world-wide



recognition and multiple awards for its vibrant mix of dining, leisure, entertainment and retail options and is home to 8,000 people from 85 different countries.

Within its playground of leisure and lifestyle opportunities are 85 cafés, restaurants and stores, a World 100 championship golf course, an elegant 400-berth marina, 5-Star hotels, pristine beaches, parks, landscaped boulevards and cycle tracks.

Commenting on the repeat

win Nasser bin Masoud al Sheibani, CEO of Al Mouj Muscat said: “Al Mouj Muscat works tirelessly to create a unique and exceptional customer experience and winning this award once more is a true reflection of our lasting appeal.

Now, with the highly successful launch of Al Mouj Business Park, the first in the region to be located oceanside and within a golf course, our community offers an unparalleled destination for

people and companies seeking the most exemplary way to live, work and play.

“Our visitor numbers grow year on year, further driving forward opportunities for success for the many retail and hospitality business partners located here. Al Mouj Muscat continues to attract significant and sustained tourism revenue both now and we remain committed to maintaining our place as Oman's most trusted ITC.”

UES wins awards from Cummins

MUSCAT: Universal Engineering Services (UES) has won the long-term association award for being with Cummins for over 40 years at a ceremonial event held at Sofitel Obelisk Hotel, Dubai, UAE.

UES also bagged the best performer award for service business for the year 2022. The awards were handed over by Thierry Penni, Vice President, Africa Middle east ABO.

Founded in 1919, Cummins Inc, with its headdquarters in Columbus, Indianapolis, USA, has remained a global leader in diesel and gas engines and gensets for its initial 100 years.

It has actively taken lead in the global clean energy transition and has a vision to be the leader in the clean energy domain for the next 100 years.

It has already moved in



fuel cell and electrolyzers to cater to the world of hydrogen production and hydrogen to power production.

Universal Engineering Services (UES), established in 1980 as a distributor of Cummins and Cummins Power generation in Oman, is part of Bahwan Engineering Group.

Consistently over the years, Universal Engineering has been

bestowed with many awards including a ‘Gold’ in 2017 for distributor excellence. UES is also the authorised distributor of ‘FleetGuard,’ a brand well known worldwide as one of the best in filtration business.

Universal Engineering Services conveyed their gratitude to all its clients without whom this journey would not have been possible.

Lexus unveils exclusive benefits across range this season



MUSCAT: Own a Lexus and welcome amazing experiences with exclusive benefits. Service from 3 years / 30,000 kms up to 6 years / 60,000 kms (Whichever is earlier), 1 year free registration and scratch and win 70 battery operated ride-on toy Lexus SUVs. (Conditions apply. For details visit any Saud Bahwan Automotive showroom).

In Oman, Lexus has a wide range of vehicles including sedans, SUVs and HEVs. The models include the UX, NX, RX, GX, IS, ES, LS and LX.

The UX reflects the “Yet Philosophy,” in many ways, but especially in terms of design, performance and utility. The front wheel drive Lexus UX is powered by a high-efficiency 2.0 litre, four-cylinder engine, which is coupled with a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (DCVT).

The NX SUV is equipped with two powertrain options. An inline 4-cylinder, 2.4L turbocharged engine that produces 275 hp and 6,000 RPM and is paired to an 8-speed Direct-Shift automatic transmission (8AT). The NX is also available with hybrid-electric system that combines two power sources consisting of a 2.5-litre petrol engine and two electric motors producing 240 hp. The hybrid-electric system is paired to a Direct Shift Continuously Variable Transmission (CVT).

For further details and to ascertain availability of stocks, please visit your nearest Saud Bahwan Automotive Showroom.

Geely launches ‘Season To Explore’ in Oman with exclusive Ramadhan benefits

MUSCAT: Now is the perfect time to treat yourself to the latest Geely car models in Oman and get the benefits of some very exciting offers. This Ramadhan, Geely launches its ‘Season To Explore’ Ramadhan benefits with a range of attractive benefits on two newly launched Geely models — the all-new Emgrand and the all-new Azkarra.

The offer, besides an unbelievable price, also includes cash gifts ranging from RO 1,801 to RO 2,701, free 3 years of AAA roadside assistance, and a manufacturer's warranty for 5 years or 150,000 kilometres.

Prospective buyers may be advised that the benefits vary between model variants, model year and manufacturing year. Conditions apply. Visit the



showroom for exact details).

So, it is much more than great cash benefits! Owning a Geely vehicle also offers you many years of peace of mind, be it a quick trip or a long drive. All these advantages are available at an exciting price, making Geely vehicles a wise choice.

Geely cars have gained immense

popularity worldwide. Now, the people of Oman can experience the exceptional all-new Emgrand and all-new Azkarra models.

Customers can visit our showrooms to book a test drive with these two models.

All-new Emgrand, a visually stunning sedan, is crafted using the B-segment Modular Architecture

(BMA) and is engineered to exceed the 5-star NCAP safety ratings. Its 1.5-litre engine offers excellent performance and fuel efficiency.

Key features include a 17-inch alloy wheel size, special suede imitation leather seats, 6-way electric adjustment for the driver's comfort, side and curtain airbags, and a sunroof for added style. Its advanced safety and technical features such as ABS with EBD, Electronic Stability Program, traction Control, Uphill Auxiliary Control, electric parking brake with Auto hold, six airbags, and Intelligent Seating Monitoring System are sure to assure you a safe ride.

All-new Azkarra, a lifestyle-inspired premium SUV, has a dynamic appearance and is power packed with advanced features

making it the perfect vehicle for families and adventure-seekers. Its advanced 1.5-litre turbocharged engine and direct fuel injection help it deliver a powerful driving experience. The 48V Electric Motor Synergy mild hybrid system helps save the environment.

Inside the stylish cockpit, we have Nappa leather seats, a 7-inch LCD dashboard, an Entertainment system with 12.3-inch screen, and wireless smartphone charging to entertain you during long journeys.

In Oman, Geely vehicles are brought you by Towell Auto Centre LLC. To know more about the products or to book a test drive and get unbelievable Ramadhan offers, visit the nearest Geely showroom or www.geelyoman.com.

East Asia set to win scramble for wind power dominance by 2030

GAVIN MAGUIRE

East Asia is set to remain the top wind power production region thanks to a project development pipeline that will expand current wind power capacity by 65% by the end of 2030, according to data from Global Energy Monitor (GEM).

Wind is the largest and fastest-growing source of renewable power globally, and is expanding by a record pace in every major economy as part of global efforts to transition energy systems away from fossil fuels and reduce harmful emissions.

Wind power generated roughly 7.8% of the world's electricity in 2022, but must expand by enough to produce 21% of global electricity by 2030 if net-zero emissions goals are to be achieved, according to think tank Ember.

Such aggressive expansion targets mean that the recent breakneck development pace must be maintained or surpassed annually for the rest of the decade, and be distributed throughout the world's largest power consuming regions.

China will remain the largest wind producer and top wind capacity developer, but South Korea, Japan and Taiwan will all post faster growth rates than China through 2030, according to GEM.

China's current wind generation capacity of 278,876 megawatts (MW) will balloon by 41% to nearly 400,000 MW once projects that are currently under construction or planned by 2030 come online.

While no other country will match the sheer scale of China's wind power additions, many will dwarf its growth rate as they play catch up with the world's

green power leader.

South Korea, which currently ranks 38th on the global list of wind power by capacity, will vault to 6th place by the end of 2030 once all 40,869 MW of planned and under-construction projects come on stream — a 3,275% swell from current capacity.

Taiwan is set to grow its current wind capacity by 823% to 16,460 MW, while Japan's is set to grow by 440% or by roughly 15,000 MW to nearly 19,000 MW in total by 2030.

Combined, these East Asian countries are set to account for 36.2% of world wind capacity by 2030, GEM data shows, with the region remaining the largest hub for wind power.

Europe will be the second largest wind power developer over the remainder of this decade, boosting capacity by 68% from current levels.

Germany, Spain, France and Sweden plan to boost their collective capacity by nearly 40,000 MW by 2030, and will all rank among the top 10 global wind producers.

Other large capacity increases are planned in Poland, Finland and the United Kingdom, ensuring that the region's largest economies will all benefit from double-digit growth in green energy supply capacity within the coming decade.

Steep wind power growth will also be seen across the Americas, with the United States set to cement its position as the second largest wind producer via a 53% swell in current capacity to 212,133 MW by 2030.

Brazil looks set to more than treble its current wind capacity and jump to third in global rankings from 7th place currently, while Canada and Mexico also look primed for notable growth. — Reuters

ACQUIRING AND RETAINING CUSTOMERS

The key to sustainable business growth in the modern era



KAMLA SAID
AL RAHBIYAH
kamlaa2040@gmail.com

The author is a renowned coach, trainer and consultant

Customer acquisition is a critical component of business growth in today's modern era.

The ability to attract and retain customers is essential to the long-term success of any organisation.

Whether you are an entrepreneur, small business owner, or operating a large enterprise, you must understand the importance of customer acquisition and develop strategies to build and maintain customer relationships.

In this article, we will explore the key principles of customer acquisition, and offer a comprehensive guide to acquiring and retaining customers for entrepreneurs, SMEs, and business owners. The first step in customer acquisition is to understand your target audience. This involves developing a clear understanding of who your customers are, what they need, and what they value. You must have a deep understanding of your customer's pain points and develop a solution that addresses these needs effectively. Additionally, you must understand their buying habits and preferences, as this information will help you to tailor your messaging and marketing efforts to resonate with your



target audience.

Once you have a clear understanding of your target audience, it's time to start building relationships. The key to customer acquisition is to provide value to your customers. This can be done through various means, such as offering high-quality products and services, providing excellent customer service, or by providing valuable resources and information. In addition, it is important to offer a great customer experience that is both consistent and memorable.

This includes everything from the way you answer the phone to the way you handle customer complaints. To attract customers, you need to have a strong marketing strategy in place. In the modern era, digital marketing is an essential tool for reaching your target audience and building relationships. From social media marketing to search engine optimisation, there are numerous channels

and techniques you can use to reach your customers and build brand awareness. It is important to choose the right channels and techniques based on your target audience and business goals.

Once you have attracted customers, it's time to focus on retaining them. Customer retention is critical to sustainable business growth, as it is more cost-effective to retain existing customers than to acquire new ones. To retain customers, you need to continue to provide value and build strong relationships. This can be achieved through various means, such as loyalty programmes, regular communications, and personalised experiences.

Additionally, it is important to actively listen to customer feedback and make changes to improve the customer experience. In conclusion, customer acquisition is a critical component of business growth in the modern era. Whether you are

an entrepreneur, small business owner, or operating a large enterprise, you must understand the importance of customer acquisition and develop strategies to build and maintain customer relationships. By understanding your target audience, providing value, building relationships, and continuously improving the customer experience, you can acquire and retain customers, driving sustainable business growth. We hope you have enjoyed this article on customer acquisition.

As a closing enthusiasm question, are you ready to bring your ideas to life and take your business to the next level with a guide to product development in the modern entrepreneurial landscape?

Stay tuned for our next article on Product Development: "Bringing Your Ideas to Life: A Guide to Product Development in the Modern Entrepreneurial Landscape."

Lessons from the Silicon Valley Bank's collapse



LUCREZIA REICHLIN

The author, a former director of research at the European Central Bank, is Professor of Economics at the London Business School and a trustee of the International Financial Reporting Standards Foundation.

Does Silicon Valley Bank's collapse reveal a fundamental weakness in the current financial-stability framework, or does it merely point to a localised failure of supervision? By jeopardising many prominent, high-growth companies in the tech sector, the bank's failure certainly put significant political pressure

on the US Federal Reserve. But the Fed's emergency weekend intervention – when it provided a comprehensive deposit guarantee and extended loans to other banks, valuing their collateral of US Treasury bonds at par – suggests that it was genuinely concerned about financial contagion, too.

And now, the recent scare around Credit Suisse has forced European banking regulators to mull the same questions.

Obviously, there was a failure of supervision. SVB's insolvency came about because of its entirely foreseeable exposure to rising interest rates. It had used customer deposits to fund investments in a portfolio of US Treasuries that were poised to decline in value when the Fed started tightening its monetary policy a year ago. The problem was neither credit risk nor liquidity risk; rather, it was an obvious form of market risk.

The Fed's usual stress tests might have spared supervisors the embarrassment, except that SVB was exempted from this requirement, owing to a 2018

legislative change that increased the threshold for participation from \$50 billion in assets to \$250 billion.

SVB had \$209 billion in assets when it failed. This gap suggests that there may indeed be a deeper problem with the financial-stability framework.

Since the 2008 global financial crisis, regulators on both sides of the Atlantic have attempted to strengthen financial-sector regulation and supervision within the confines of a broadly consistent framework.

The two key features are enhanced supervisory powers and capabilities, with a particular focus on institutions identified as being "systemically significant" and partial deposit-insurance schemes, which are designed to protect deposits up to a certain amount per depositor.

SVB was not deemed systemically important. Yet not only was the Fed forced to mount an extraordinary emergency intervention to head off systemic risks introduced by its collapse.

It also effectively acknowledged that the FDIC's partial deposit insurance regime (alongside new rules on bank resolution) was inadequate for reassuring depositors; nothing less than comprehensive deposit insurance would do. Given that these conclusions were reached after the fact, it is worth asking whether we ever would have come to them in the absence of a sudden crisis.

Of course, the "systemic importance" logic of the post-2008 regime may have had more to do with the difficulty of unwinding massive institutions like Lehman Brothers than with concerns about their greater propensity to cause crises.

After all, financial crises can start with institutions of all sizes, and one of the areas where there has been the most progress since the financial crisis has been in establishing more detailed and robust rules for bank resolution.

But the SVB saga suggests that the post-2008 reforms – strengthening capital-adequacy requirements, establishing rules for bank resolution (with bail-

ins for bondholders), drawing up "living wills" for banks – were not enough.

Comprehensive deposit insurance must also be part of the picture, and it is clearly better to have such a system in place before the fact. To be sure, it looks as though the Fed's intervention was primarily motivated by a concern about financial contagion, rather than by the need to protect corporate depositors in a strategically important sector.

But in the case of SVB's subsidiary in the United Kingdom, the reverse appears to be true. Although no taxpayer money was spent to rescue depositors (SVB UK was purchased by HSBC for £1), one still might ask whether this is the best way to implement an industrial policy or to protect a critical sector.

In the case of the United States, we have witnessed yet another episode in which the central bank has been called upon to use its balance sheet to protect the financial system.

Although the crises of the last

decade may have had different origins, the central bank fix has been similar. In all cases, the government is effectively acting as the insurer of last resort.

This may be inevitable, and even desirable, in the sense that it provides the public good of financial stability. But the government's expanded role forces us to ask whether it would not be more efficient to bypass the banks altogether by allowing depositors – both retail and corporate – to keep their funds at the central bank, through the issuance of a central bank digital currency.

That would be a comprehensive form of deposit insurance ex ante. More broadly, if some sectors of the economy are going to be protected no matter what, we should establish a framework for doing that ahead of time, rather than bailing out uninsured depositors after the fact.

These are among the most important lessons that policymakers should take from this latest crisis.

© Project Syndicate, 2023

WJ Towell Group Company



Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp
 <your name> to
96473232


Observer Classified Section

MONDAY
 MARCH 20, 2023 SHAABAN 27, 1444 AH

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

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

Saada al Rashdi
 95919344

94501166
 24649593
 24649595


النماني للشحن
AL NAMANI CARGO
 DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO


 INDIA BANGLADESH NEPAL PHILIPPINES UAE INDONESIA EUROPE UK CANADA USA

WHATSAPP
96353654
 Follow us: f i n t w

TOLL FREE NUMBER
80066766
 www.alnamanicargo.com

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة
SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS

VALVES

DRAINS

INTERCEPTORS

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

Position: BARMAN
 Required for Ras Al Hamra Club

SITUATION VACANT

Job Requirements: Serve and Billing. Work on shifts.
Qualification: Secondary School Certificate. Good communication skills. Fluent in spoken & written English. Young & Energetic.
Experience: 3 - 5 years in reputed Restaurant & Bar. Candidates to attend interviews and test.

Please email CV to: oceanint@omantel.net.om

FOR RENT

FLAT for rent, in Darsait, 4 bedrooms, kitchen with small sea view near RO 240 monthly, Contact: 99315986.

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

FLATS 2BHK and 1 bhk in Mumtaz. Contact 99341138 and 90991079.

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

Please Contact our Team

95210257

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTANT and audit assistant, Indian male, 27 years, M. Com and competed 3 years of CA articleship, have more than 5 years of experience in this fields in India. Seeking a position in accounts/ audit fields. Contact Mobile: 78052900, email: ranjithdevan24@gmail.com

ENGINEERING Management Professional with a total 30 years of experience in Oman; 12 years of Management experience in Manufacturing of Pressure vessels and tanks, construction of bulk storage tanks, steel structures, bridges, etc. Looking for a suitable position in Muscat region. Mob# +968 79069717

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

SIT. WANTED

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

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

SENIOR accountant, Indian male, 39 years, 15 years experience in accounts & finance at Oman. With Oman D/L, Seeking a senior position in accounts. Available to join immediately. Contact: +968 97921596.

ELECTRONIC Engineer, seeking job Experienced Electronic and Instrumentation Engineer (male) with BE and Diploma seeking job. Skills: plant engineering, electronics maintenance, SMT operation, control systems, software (C++, C, PLC). Contact: 92929736. Email: farookjhalal5@gmail.com

EAGLE FREIGHT EXPRESS
 DOOR TO DOOR COURIER SERVICES
 INDIA | NEPAL | BANGLADESH

25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FAST DELIVERY EXCELLENT SERVICES

WORLD WIDE CARGO SERVICE Tel.: 99432926, 78211708, 92319472, 93350126
 Head Office (H.O.) Room No.: 218, 1st Floor, Aircargo Complex, Branch Al-Hail, Email: eaglefreightexpress@gmail.com

AIR & SEA CARGO FREE PICKUP 24/7 SERVICE

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: **97239696 95355638**

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

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

SIT. WANTED

31 YEARS old Indian Male, MBA Finance Marketing, 6 years of wide experience in Finance and accounts in international company on visit visa, please call 79582329.

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN Male, B.Tech (Civil Engineer). Total 8 years experience included 4 years in Oman. Valid Oman D/L. Experience in Government and Private Projects. Looking for suitable positions in reputed firms. Valid visa/NOC available. Join Immediately. Contact: 96354303.

RENT A CAR

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

FOR SALE

For sale a salon and spa management company. Owns 3 distinct branches in Muscat. Receives about 3 thousand customers per month. Well respected brand. For more information, please contact us with number: 94838177.

SERVICES

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


OMAN OMAN DAILY Observer

For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office
 Mohd Al Rashdi
 99841230
 m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office
 Bakhit Al Shihri
 92998577
 bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Ali Al Maashari
 99639264
 wadialmeeh@yahoo.com

Nizwa Office
 Abdullah Al Abri
 99429094
 nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office
 Musalam Al Saidi
 99429192
 sohardaily@outlook.com





THIS OMANI PILOT WANTS TO INSPIRE OTHERS TO GET A CAREER IN AVIATION

I came from a small village and strived to be a pilot. I never imagined my dreams would come true because, usually, this wouldn't happen for a village boy... **P20**

Brazilian researchers find 'terrifying' plastic rocks on remote island

THE GEOLOGY OF Brazil's volcanic Trindade Island has fascinated scientists for years, but the discovery of rocks made from plastic debris in this remote turtle refuge is sparking alarm.

Melted plastic has become intertwined with rocks on the island, located 1,140 km (708 miles) from the southeastern state of Espirito Santo, which researchers say is evidence of humans' growing influence over the earth's geological cycles.

"This is new and terrifying at the same time, because pollution has reached

geology," said Fernanda Avelar Santos, a geologist at the Federal University of Parana.

Santos and her team ran chemical tests to find out what kind of plastics are in the rocks called "plastiglomerates" because they are made of a mixture of sedimentary granules and other debris held together by plastic.

"We identified (the pollution) mainly comes from fishing nets, which is very common debris on Trindade Island's beaches," Santos said. "The (nets) are dragged by the

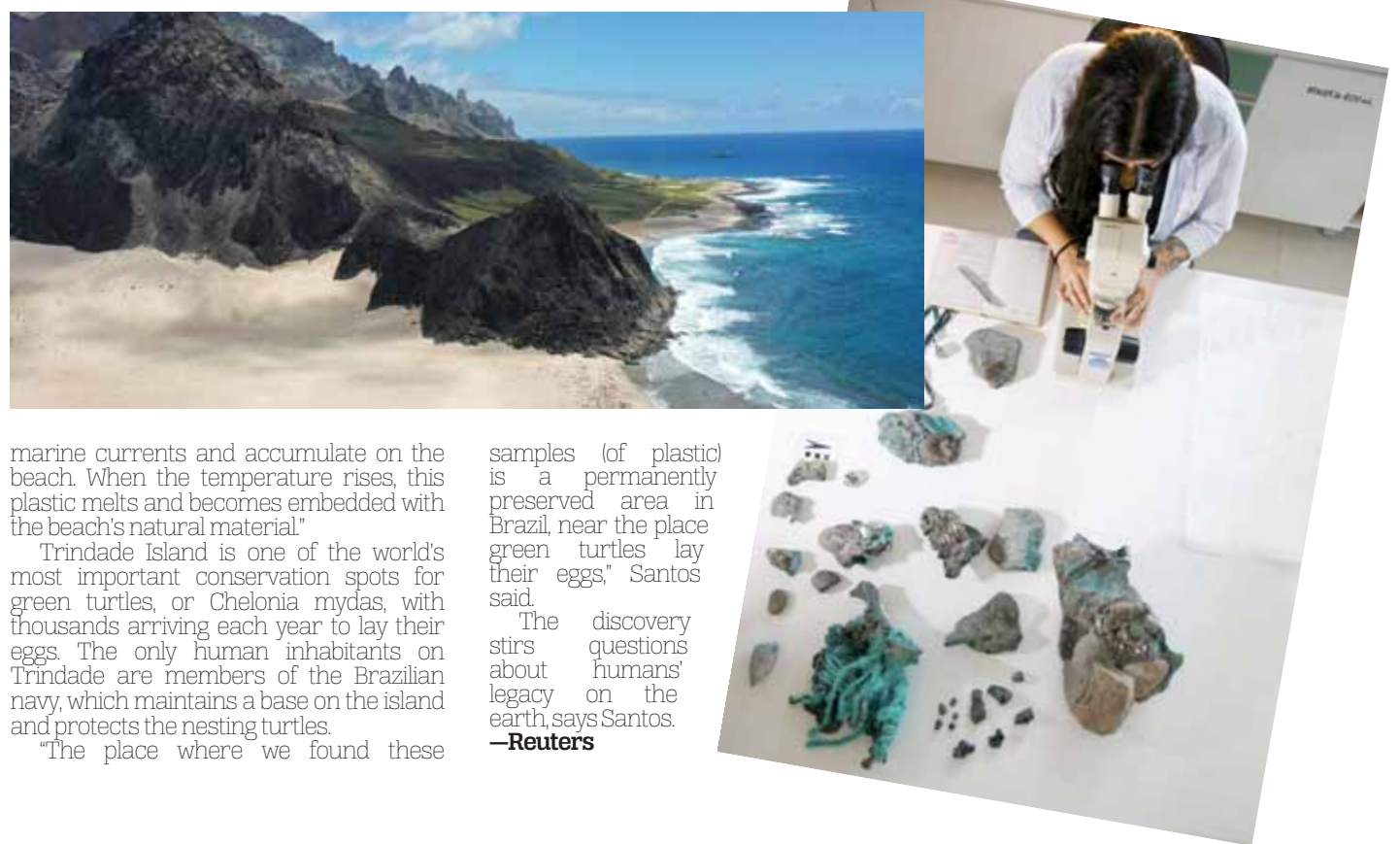
marine currents and accumulate on the beach. When the temperature rises, this plastic melts and becomes embedded with the beach's natural material."

Trindade Island is one of the world's most important conservation spots for green turtles, or *Chelonia mydas*, with thousands arriving each year to lay their eggs. The only human inhabitants on Trindade are members of the Brazilian navy, which maintains a base on the island and protects the nesting turtles.

"The place where we found these

samples (of plastic) is a permanently preserved area in Brazil, near the place green turtles lay their eggs," Santos said.

The discovery stirs questions about humans' legacy on the earth, says Santos. —Reuters

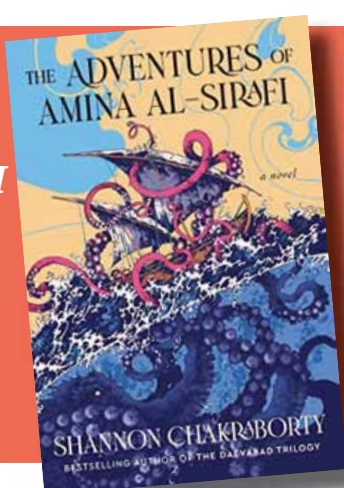


READ

THE ADVENTURES OF AMINA AL-SIRAFI

BY SHANNON CHAKRABORTY
HARPER VOYAGER

A former pirate on the Indian Ocean is asked to retrieve her comrade's kidnapped daughter.



LIFESTYLE

Puppeteer Marion Mayer works on a puppet prior to the Snow White fairy tale puppet show at the Unesco recognised Salzburg Marionette Theatre in Salzburg, Austria. — AFP



DANCE

People gather at a market in Sanaa on March 18, 2023, ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. — AFP





Student musicians from 25 countries join honour choir festival in Muscat

THE AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL School of Muscat (TAISM) hosted the AMIS International High School Choir Festival from 1-5 March. Students from 25 schools all around the world came to Oman to sing, learn, collaborate, and perform in a gala performance for members of the TAISM community and special guests.

The Association for Music in International Schools (AMIS) is dedicated to the promotion of excellence at all levels of music education in international schools. The mission of AMIS is to advance the education of students and teachers throughout the world by developing their understanding, knowledge and appreciation of music, promote high standards of musical performance by all international school students, to advance the education of students and their teachers in global issues and cultural diversity through the performance and study of music, and to promote furtherance of educationally valuable music repertoire.

Guest Conductors Michael Barrett, Melanie Brink, and Jason Drahos joined students representing 37 nationalities over the three day event. 16 TAISM students took part in the festival, performing for their own family and friends in the international Gala Event on Saturday evening.

"This is the biggest international AMIS High School Honour Choir event happening in the world this



year," says Mira Boyadzhieva, Choir Director at TAISM and organiser of the festival. "The theme of the festival is 'Beauty Everywhere'. We chose this theme because if people open their eyes, ears, minds and senses, they'll see that there truly is beauty everywhere. We will explore that during the festival through beautiful singing, music-making, and friendship-building."

"At this event, students will perform the world premiere of two songs that were commissioned for the festival," says Keith Montgomery, Executive Director of AMIS. "Both of these pieces by award-winning composer Kyle Pederson, were to be performed in the Bosch Center specifically, when this event was scheduled to take place in spring 2020. After the cancellation of that festival due to the pandemic, I have had many requests to perform those pieces, but I've declined every request because it wasn't the right time. And now is the right time to perform these two commissions, created for AMIS students to sing here in Oman."

"TAISM is honoured to be hosting this prestigious international choral music event on our campus," says Kevin Schafer, School Director at TAISM. "Additionally, we are proud to have 16 TAISM High School Choir students selected to participate in the three ensembles."

"Our exceptional music facilities, including the Bosch Center for the Performing Arts, create the optimal environment for music performance. At TAISM, a broad-based education is a core aspect for our programme, as this assists our students' understanding of humankind's intellectual traditions and accomplishments, and strengthens powers of thought, judgment, and aesthetic appreciation."

The American International School of Muscat (TAISM) pursues academic excellence for students in the international community through an American-based education that develops ethical, responsible, and globally conscious life-long learners. For more information about the student experience at TAISM, please visit www.taism.com.

FOOD

'Omurice', comfort food for Japanese and Koreans, a symbol of warmer ties



NEARLY EVERYTHING ABOUT South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol's first summit with Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida in Tokyo will be scrutinised for signs of warmer bilateral ties, including a shared meal of a Tokyo classic called omurice.

The dish, whose name is a mash-up of omelette and rice, has become the talk of the town since Japan's Fuji TV reported on Monday of a hushed plan for Kishida to treat Yoon at Rengatei, the storied but no-frills restaurant that invented it.

Yoon, a self-described foodie and avid cook, reportedly had "unforgettable" memories of the omurice he ate in his youth at the 128-year-old establishment in Tokyo's Ginza district. He made frequent trips to the Japanese capital in 1966 while his father, a university professor, spent a year there, he told the Yomiuri daily.

Japanese and South Korean officials have declined to confirm the plan or venue, while Rengatei, famed as the birthplace of omurice in 1900, declined to comment.

Although many foreigners might associate Japanese cuisine with sushi or tempura, "yoshoku", or Western-influenced dishes such as omurice and tonkatsu (deep-fried pork cutlet), are more common fare on Japanese dinner tables.

Yoshoku is a genre of Japanese cuisine established more than a century ago, and some made its way to South Korea in the 1960s as ethnic Koreans travelled between the two countries, said Motoo Kawabata, a professor at Kwansei Gakuin University who specialises in Japanese restaurants' global strategy.

Kishida and Yoon will reportedly share a more formal dinner of sukiyaki beforehand, but the real ice-breaker could be when they sit down for omurice, Kawabata said. Japan and South Korea are holding a summit for the first time in 12 years, seeking to mend relations that had deteriorated severely.

"It could be an effort to foster a laid-back mood, through a casual dish that both Japanese and Koreans consider comfort food," he said. Rengatei's price for its omurice: 2,600 yen (\$19.57).

Kawabata said the omurice in South Korea typically has a thinner and firmer layer of eggs, while the image of a perfectly crafted one in Japan has a fluffy, runny, almond-shaped covering of eggs that blanket the ketchup-fried rice.

"Yoon may have been impressed with the softness of Japanese-style omurice," Kawabata said.

Although Rengatei's original dish mixed the egg batter in with the rice, the omurice as Japanese people know it today was conceived for and popularised in the 1985 Juzo Itami film "Tampopo", a critically acclaimed meditation on food and one of Japan's best known movies.

Hiroshi Modegi, the third-generation owner chef of Taimeiken, which appears in the film, said he was disappointed that his restaurant was not the president's choice, but welcomed the renewed attention on omurice.

"I hope the world discovers that Japanese food culture also has a dish like this," he said.

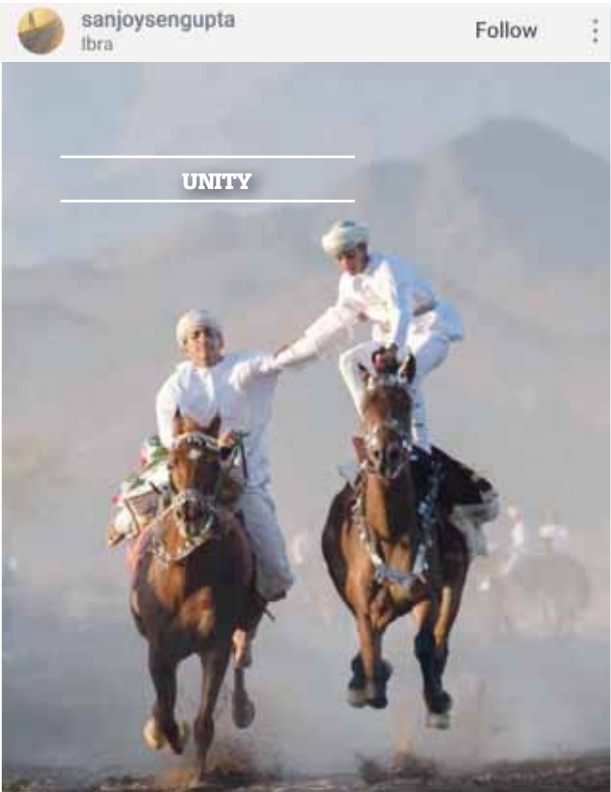
— Reuters





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

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



AROUND THE WORLD

LOCAL TALENT

France's music hotspots, boosted by Brad Pitt



THEY ARE LITTLE corners of French paradise that draw British and American rockstars to record their masterpieces — with a little help from Brad Pitt.

France has long had its share of famous music studios that have attracted not just local talent, but foreign bands hoping some of the country's artistic heritage will rub off on them.

Some have fallen into disrepair, such as the famed Herouville chateau where Elton John, Iggy Pop and David Bowie recorded in the 1970s.

Super Bear Studios welcomed Paul McCartney, Queen and Kate Bush before it was destroyed by fire in the 1980s.

But others are getting a new lease of life. Miraval, a villa in the sun-kissed southern region of Provence, opened its studio in 1977 and saw Pink Floyd record part of "The Wall", as well as albums by AC/DC, The Cure and Muse.

Largely abandoned, it was bought by Pitt and then-wife Angelina Jolie in 2008.

Despite a bitter divorce wrangle, Pitt oversaw a renovation of its music studio with the help of French sound engineer Damien Quintard.

"One day, I got a message from Brad Pitt, who wanted to see me the following week — I thought it was a joke," said Quintard.

Pitt, an amateur guitarist himself, told Billboard: "It was pretty dank in there. It hadn't been touched since the 1970s, maybe the 80s. It needed a cuddle." The first artist to use the revamped, ultra-swish studio after its reopening last summer was Sade, who recorded her first and third albums there in the 1980s. "My goal is that magnificent creations come out of here, so judging the result will take time, like making wine," said Quintard.

ARCTIC MONKEYS TO ROSALIA

Just outside Paris, famed recording location La Frette has a very different vibe — a 19th century manor that feels more like a home crammed haphazardly with equipment.

Its cosy atmosphere has attracted many stars over its 40 years, including Nick Cave, Arctic Monkeys and Marianne Faithfull.

Luke Pritchard, singer with British pop-rockers The Kooks, was busy on a drumkit in its front-room, alongside his wife and child, during a visit by AFP. British punks Idles recently passed through, but their aggressive sound did not translate into problems for owner Olivier Bloch-Laine.

"Their music is furious, but they are adorable," he said. "Punks make you think of destruction, but their rooms were very tidy."

Paris has also been an international recording hub, of course, with historic places such as Davout graced by jazz greats such as Nina Simone, Keith Jarrett and Chet Baker. — AFP

BOOKS

4 Books That Reflect on Faces, Fragments and Torments



CALLING attention to commonplace accessories, humdrum crafts, misplaced masterpieces and blithe inequities is a focus of much contemporary design scholarship. We see it on a global scale in several new books.

In "The Full-Length Mirror: A Global Visual History" (Reaktion/University of Chicago Press, \$35, 271 pages), Wu Hung, a professor at the University of Chicago, recounts how reflective glass did more than cater to vanity over the millenniums.

An ancient Chinese ruler known as the Muddle-Headed Marquis was buried with a bronze mirror trimmed in paintings of fierce beasts, which he was convinced would bring prosperity and "dispel evil and inauspiciousness." Mirrors enabled wealthy ancient Romans to observe their bodily functions in bathrooms and bedrooms. Louis XIV's henchmen used industrial espionage to steal Venetian mirror-making formulas, which called for toxic layers of mercury. And American abolitionist photographers posed formerly enslaved people alongside mirrors. The simultaneous face and profile views made for emotionally powerful photos, which were sold for the benefit of schools for Black children.

As the book suggests, there was anxiety over reflections, too, which long predated vampire novels and starlets; an emperor in seventh-century China once ripped out his mirrors after a government minister warned that the ruler's images "scattered everywhere" in the halls of power posed a risk of offending the gods.

Fabric remnants that are recycled for furnishings and clothing are believed to ward off evil and store memories, as the textiles expert Catherine Legrand explains in "Patchwork: A World Tour" (Thames & Hudson, \$50, 208 pages).

Pieced-together bedding has demonstrated thriftiness, whether for contemporary Japanese householders enveloping futons in plaid fragments, or Gilded Age wives making coverlets out of golden silk ribbons from their husbands' cigar packages. Cloth stars and helping hands are stitched onto applique hats in Benin and Vietnam. And Dutch survivors of Nazi persecution have fashioned "liberation skirts" out of bits of fabric owned by lost loved ones.

In "Uncrating the Japanese House: Junzo Yoshimura, Antonin and Noémi Raymond and George Nakashima" (August Editions/Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, \$45, 160 pages), scholars Yuka Yokoyama, William Whitaker and Ken Tadashi Oshima and photographer Elizabeth Felicella give readers a look inside one portable building's precedents, journeys and influence.

In the 1950s, Japanese officials paid handsomely to export a teahouse for display in the courtyard of the Museum of Modern Art in New York. The goal for this venture was cultural diplomacy. With movable paper walls, a wraparound veranda and curved roof planes covered in cypress bark, it drew hundreds of thousands of visitors and then was shipped westward to Fairmount Park in Philadelphia.

The MoMA attraction's architect, Yoshimura, had worked in the United States before World War II and befriended American designers and architects living in Japan, including Nakashima and the Raymonds. In wartime, the Raymonds settled in New Hope, Pennsylvania, and rescued the Nakashima family from the Minidoka internment camp in rural Idaho. The two families built adjacent compounds in New Hope that were inspired by Japanese design, which have been preserved. But the prewar teahouse that Yoshimura and the Raymonds installed at a Japanese institute's headquarters at Rockefeller Center in New York was dismantled in 1942 and has vanished.

Elizabeth Tunstall, the dean of the design faculty at OCAD University in Toronto, gives step-by-step instructions for reducing bigotry's impact on the built environment in "Decolonizing Design: A Cultural Justice Guidebook" (MIT Press, \$22.95, 136 pages).

She describes her own visceral reactions to signs of racism, such as documentation of 17th-century Virginia colonists' crippling legal restrictions on nonwhite people, and the thousands of unmarked graves of Indigenous children at North American residential schools.

She widely encounters forms of design that suggest "I don't belong," she writes, such as eyeglasses unfitted to the bridge of her nose and "medical adhesives not in my flesh colour." At OCAD and elsewhere, she has campaigned to broaden faculty hiring practices and inspire more objects that, she writes, "transmit liberatory joy to the body and community."

— NYT

TOURISM

Rome's Pantheon to charge for tourist entry



ONE OF ROME'S oldest and best-loved monuments, the Pantheon, will soon start charging for entrance, officials said on Thursday — drawing a mixed reaction from tourists.

The price for entry, which is currently free, has yet to be fixed but would not exceed five euros (\$5), while minors and Rome residents would be exempt.

The change was "based on common sense", Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano said, and the price "modest" for Italy's most visited cultural site.

The 2,000-year-old building is currently a consecrated church and part of the proceeds from ticket sales will go towards the diocese of Rome.

Most of the money — 70 per cent — will go to the culture ministry, which will bear the costs of cleaning and maintenance.

Among the tourists visiting the Pantheon on Thursday, reaction to the news was mixed.

"It makes sense. Conservation requires money, and it doesn't shock me to make tourists contribute," said Gustavo Rojas, a 37-year-old from Chile.

'OPEN TO EVERYONE'

Alessandra Mezzasalma, a 46-year-old Italian tour guide, however, told AFP, it was "shameful".

"The Pantheon, and historical monuments in general, are collective assets and they should remain open to everyone. Culture must be as inclusive as possible," she said.

"If I had to pay, we wouldn't have gone in," said French tourist Clara Dupond, 21.

The other major churches in Rome, including St Peter's Basilica, are free to visit, but museums and monuments such as the Colosseum are ticketed.

One of the best-preserved relics of ancient Rome, the Pantheon is famed for its extraordinary dome, which measures 43 metres (140 feet) in diameter and includes a circular opening through which light and occasionally rain fall. — AFP



art & life

Local Scene

f t i y p v @omanobserver

MONDAY | MARCH 20 | 2023

This Omani pilot wants to inspire others to get a career in aviation

ERIN COYLE

“I came from a small village and strived to be a pilot. I never imagined my dreams would come true because, usually, this wouldn’t happen for a village boy.”

While Nasser al Habsi from Al AKhdhar village in Samad Ashan may have had doubts that this would happen, not only has he been successful in the aviation field, but he published a book in Arabic, titled “The Pilot,” and signed copies at the International Book Fair in Muscat.

Watching groups and individuals, both females and males, stand in line for a picture and signature with the pilot, it was clear how much people admired, respected, and felt like their dreams could also come true.

Some said they wanted to learn more about aviation, while others said this book could help them get a better job for those already in the field.

One boy in grade 10 wants to be a pilot and found the book on Al Habsi’s Instagram @pilot_habsi. Since fourth grade, this boy has wanted to pursue flying and, at one point, feared flying. But, thanks to the book and the information about aviation, he’s ready to pursue his dream. A few others indicated that they bought the book for inspiration and to understand that it is possible to pursue your passions, no matter where you grew up.

Al Habsi’s passion for flying started in grade three or four. His older brother was an aviation maintenance technician for the Air Force. His brother would give him information on aeroplane types, how they work, and tips for pilots to stay healthy. The brother would refer to a younger Al Habsi as a future pilot. He was hooked immediately and focused on this field.

A humbling Al Habsi wants to encourage other Omanis that an aviation career is possible. He has published this book, highlighting his journey and offering tips for others. Al Habsi has a YouTube Channel, @glimpse_aviation. He constantly uploads knowledge and asks engaging questions on his Instagram @pilot_habsi about plane types, equipment, and highest altitude questions.

Al Habsi has 11 years of experience flying in civil aviation. It took him two years to complete his license. It was seven months of ground school; the rest was

practical training. His journey was challenging because there was no information about aviation and no websites talking about it. Another obstacle he faced was that he was not encouraged enough because of the common idea that a boy from a small village could not become a pilot. Out of these struggles, he wanted to make it easier for others.

He started sharing his knowledge in his first year in the foundation program at the university by creating a website focusing on topics such as aviation and cabin crews. Having left the university in the second year to start his aviation training with an airline, he still wanted to continue providing information in this field. Several years later, he got the idea from a friend to start posting updates on Instagram. People began reaching out to him for advice. Teachers from his village invited Al Habsi and other boys to return and talk to the students as part of their success stories. Al Habsi indicated that the feedback from teachers and students was encouraging, as they started messaging him with more questions.

“The Pilot,” first written in 2018, has been updated with new additions and new sketches. The nine chapters include ones on growing up in Al AKhdhar, aviation options for students, and how he found his passion, among other topics.

Some advice he has for future Omanis wanting to get into aviation is to first ask why they want to be a pilot. For example, are they looking for prestige, respect, money, or a chance to travel? Al Habsi also points out that working as an employee for an airline is one

thing, while flying is entirely different. And second, try to find a scholarship from an airline. Or, if this isn’t possible, study for a bachelor’s degree while looking for opportunities. As for Al Habsi, he will continue updating his aviation knowledge on his platforms while pursuing his dream of flying an Airbus 350. Al Habsi says it has all the technological advances and sees the Airbus as the future of aeroplanes. The plan is for the book to be on Amazon. However, those wanting to purchase the book now can message Al Habsi on Instagram at @pilot_habsi. Al Habsi intends to encourage and remind everyone that they can do anything they are passionate about.

