

The total output of refinery products in the Sultanate of Oman jumped by 40.4 per cent at the end of March 2023, compared to the same period in 2022, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). The statistics showed the production of motor fuel (91) increased by 61.5 per cent, to reach 4,626,600 barrels until end of March, compared to the same period in 2022. **DETAILS ON P13**



KING SUCCEEDED HIS MOTHER QUEEN ELIZABETH IN SEPTEMBER

CORONATION CEREMONY DATES BACK 1,000 YEARS

TENS OF THOUSANDS LINED STREETS TO WITNESS MOMENT OF HISTORY

360-YEAR-OLD ST EDWARD'S CROWN ON CHARLES' HEAD

4,000 MILITARY PERSONNEL FROM 39 NATIONS PARTICIPATED



THE OLDEST SOVEREIGN YET TO BE CROWNED AT LONDON'S WESTMINSTER ABBEY

CEREMONIAL FLY-PAST SCALED DOWN DUE TO WEATHER

SECOND TO BE TELEVISED, FIRST IN COLOUR AND STREAMED ONLINE

THE FIRST CORONATION OF A KING SINCE 1937

LONDON'S METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPLOYED 11,500 OFFICERS

CORONATION BILL ESTIMATED TO BE OVER £100 MILLION

Charles III crowned King

LONDON: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said took part in the coronation ceremony of King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and Head of the Commonwealth, which took place at Westminster Abbey in London, on Saturday.

HH Sayyid Theyazin was accompanied during the coronation ceremony by Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister.

Charles III was crowned monarch of the United Kingdom and 14 Commonwealth realms on Saturday at Britain's first coronation for 70 years, during a ceremony steeped in a millennium of ritual and spectacle.

After a lifetime as heir to his late mother Queen Elizabeth II, Charles, 74, became the oldest sovereign yet to be crowned at London's Westminster Abbey.

At 12:02 pm (1102 GMT), Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby placed the solid-gold St Edward's Crown on Charles's head as a sacred and ancient symbol of the monarch's authority.

Welby also crowned Charles's wife, Queen Camilla, 75.

Cries of "God Save the King" rang out from the 2,300-member congregation, which included foreign royalty and political leaders.

US President Joe Biden, represented at the Abbey by First Lady Jill Biden, tweeted his congratulations and paid tribute to the "enduring friendship" between the United States and Britain.

Trumpet fanfares sounded along with gun



Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said took part in the coronation ceremony in London. – ONA

salutes across Britain and beyond.

Returning to Buckingham Palace in the day's second horse-drawn parade, the royal family appeared on the balcony to applause and more chants of approbation from tens of thousands of

well-wishers braving a spring downpour.

Some had camped out for days. A ceremonial fly-past was scaled down due to the weather.

Much of the Anglican service, in which Charles pledged "I come not to be served but to serve", would

have been recognisable to the 39 other monarchs crowned at Westminster Abbey since William the Conqueror in 1066.

But while many of the intricate rituals and ceremony to recognise Charles as his people's "undoubted king" remained, the sovereign sought to bring other aspects of the service up to date.

Female bishops and choristers participated for the first time, as did leaders of Britain's non-Christian faiths, while its Celtic languages — Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Irish Gaelic — featured prominently.

A gospel choir sang for the first time at a coronation while a Greek choir intoned a psalm in tribute to Charles's late father, Prince Philip, who was born on the island of Corfu.

As king, Charles is supreme governor of the Protestant Church of England and has described himself as a "committed Anglican Christian".

As such, he sought to make the congregation more reflective of British society, inviting ordinary members of the public to sit alongside the VIPs.

In another change, the coronation themes mirrored his lifelong interest in biodiversity and sustainability.

Seasonal flowers and foliage were brought from the wind-battered Isle of Skye in northwest Scotland to Cornwall at the tip of England's southwest coast to fill the Abbey. Ceremonial vestments from previous coronations were reused, and the anointing oil — created from olives on groves on the Mount of Olives and perfumed with essential oils — was vegan.

SEE ALSO P6 and 7



HH SAYYID THEYAZIN PARTAKES IN CORONATION OF KING CHARLES III



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On Friday, HH Sayyid Theyazin participated in the official reception held by King Charles III of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the President of the Commonwealth on Friday evening at Buckingham Palace in London. The reception was held in honour of the official delegations participating in the coronation ceremony of the King of the United Kingdom.

During his meeting with King Charles III, His Highness conveyed the congratulations of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and his good wishes to His Majesty the King for health, wellness, and lasting success, and for the friendly British people's progress and prosperity.

His Majesty King Charles III entrusted His Highness Sayyid Theyazin to convey his deep greetings and appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan and his sincere wishes to His Majesty for good health and long life, and for the Omani people for further progress and development.

Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Minister of Foreign Affairs, also attended the reception.

— ONA

كُن جزءاً من الإرث.
BE PART OF THE LEGACY.

Duqm Refinery and Petrochemical Industries OQ8 is a Joint Venture between Oman and Kuwait.

The company seeks to be recognized as a world-class refinery business, delivering quality oil products across the world while driving Duqm's growth and Oman's prosperity.

Duqm refinery is offering the following career opportunities:

- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Operation Officer

These roles were posted on 7 May 2023 on OQ8 careers page.

Applications deadline submission is 21 May 2023.

To apply and know more about the opportunity, please visit the careers page at : www.oq8.om/careers

مصفاة الدقم والصناعات البتروكيماوية OQ8 هي مشروع مشترك بين سلطنة عمان ودولة الكويت.

تسعى الشركة بأن تصبح شركة تكرير عالمية المستوى، ملتزمة بتوفير منتجات نفطية فائقة الجودة لعملائها في جميع أنحاء العالم إلى جانب إثراء النمو الاقتصادي في منطقة الدقم والمساهمة في بناء مستقبل أكثر ازدهاراً لعمان.

مصفاة الدقم تقدم فرصاً للإلتحاق بالوظائف التالية:

- رئيس الشؤون المالية
- رئيس العمليات التشغيلية

تم نشر الشواغر في الموافق ٧ مايو ٢٠٢٣ في صفحة وظائف الدقم

مع العلم بأن آخر موعد لتلقي الطلبات هو ٢١ مايو ٢٠٢٣

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صنع رخاء. بنى إرثاً.
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Tender

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Mada'ayn) announces the following Tender:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Type of Work	Register Degree	Fee (R.O)
2/2023/PEIE/HQ-2	Design and Build of Box Culvert at Sur Industrial City	21-05-2023	15-06-2023	Construction	First, Excellent	150
3/2023/PEIE/HQ-3	Development of Security Fencing System at Sur Industrial City	21-05-2023	15-06-2023	Construction	Third and Above	50
4/2023/PEIE/HQ-4	Consultancy Services for Design of a New Administration Building for Sohar Industrial City, Combining of The Old Building After Redesigning to Form a Fully Integrated Building	21-05-2023	20-06-2023	Consultancy Offices	First	100
5/2023/PEIE/HQ-5	Consultancy Services for Design and Supervision of Multi-Story Office Building at Sur Industrial City	21-05-2023	06-06-2023	Consultancy Offices	First	100

Interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain the Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted on line on given website. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the Tender value validity for (90) days, and addressed to The Chairman of Tender Committee mentioned in above tenders.

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at eTendering System.

2. eTendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the eTendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om and +968 24402200

Note: Bid Submission will be online only.

No Document can be accepted as Manual except Original Tender Bond. Scan Copy of Tender Bond needs to be attached in system and original needs to be deposited before Bid Opening.

Mada'ayn is not bound to accept the lowest or any other Offer and has the right to cancel these tenders and the tenderers have no right to claim for any compensations.

@madaynoman

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3

British Embassy marks coronation of King Charles



VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The coronation of King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla, which took place at Westminster Abbey, London, on Saturday, was screened for the invited guests at Al Bustan Palace Hotel. The event was organised by the British Embassy in Muscat.

“This is an important event for the United Kingdom and Commonwealth,” said James Goldman.

In tribute to the King’s lifetime of public service, the



British Embassy staff members will also be volunteering their time to support local communities in Muscat.

The British Embassy, in a statement, said that a host of events to bring the UK together in the celebration would be held over a special bank holiday on the weekend to mark the historic milestone, with activities also taking place overseas.

The ceremony is a solemn religious service that has been held at Westminster Abbey for the last 900 years.

The coronation will reflect the Monarch’s role and look towards the future while being rooted in long-standing traditions and pageantry.

On Sunday, the Coronation Concert at Windsor Castle will bring global music icons and contemporary stars together in celebration of the historic occasion.

Thousands of events are expected to take place in every corner of the United Kingdom as people take to their streets, gardens, parks and community spaces to join the coronation celebrations and mark this historic occasion.

GCC health ministers to strengthen health cooperation, improve efficiency



AL ULA: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Health, took part in the consultative meeting of the GCC ministers of health which was held in Al Ula in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health and chairman of the current session.

In his speech, Dr Al Sabti pointed out the importance of continuing to strengthen the health cooperation and upgrading coordination between the health ministries of the GCC countries to improve the level of efficiency of health systems and enable the peoples of the GCC countries to access quality health services.

The minister added that the meeting’s agenda includes various axes that are closely related to the developments taking place in the region whether in the health field and the importance of coordination between the GCC countries in international health forums or those related to the developments in the health and humanitarian situation in some countries of the region.

The meeting also discussed ways of developing and upgrading the GCC health system and the health and humanitarian developments in the Republic of the Sudan.

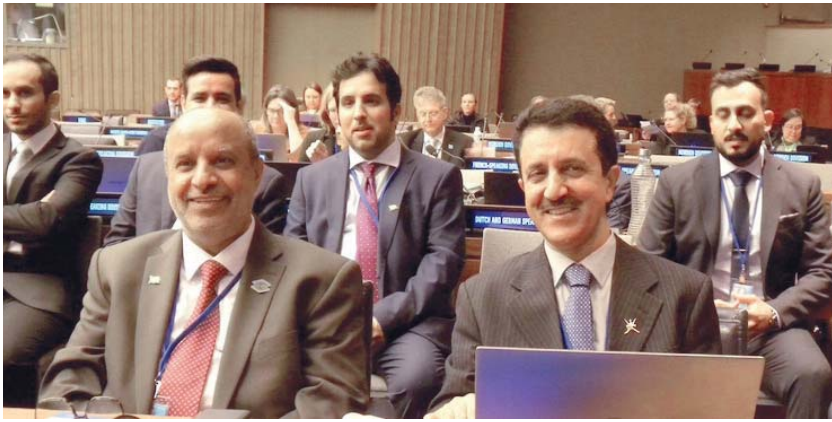
— ONA

Oman at 3rd UNGEGN session

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the National Survey Authority (NSA) at the Ministry of Defence, took part in the third session of the United Nations Group of Foreign Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN), which was held at the United Nations headquarters in New York, USA.

The Sultanate of Oman headed the delegation of the Arab Division of Experts on Geographical Names participating in the third session of the Group of Foreign Experts on Geographical Names in its capacity as the First Vice-President.

The session focused on the importance of these names as a culture, heritage and identity, in addition to standardising their spelling at both the national and international levels and discussed the methods of collecting geographical names and the role of authorities and committees concerned with geographical names in preserving and unifying them.



The Sultanate of Oman also presented a report on its activities and achievements in the field of geographical names during the period from 2021 to 2023. — ONA

NSA obtains mobile mapping system

MUSCAT: The National Survey Authority (NSA) at the Ministry of Defence has obtained a mobile mapping system, which will enable it to effectively provide geospatial data for public and private entities.

The mobile mapping system is a vehicle-mounted multi-component device equipped with a radar or laser and remote sensors.

The unit takes pictures at a 360-degree angle and assembles laser/cloud points of coordinates and height information at a high



density of up to two million points per second by using a laser scanner.

At the same time, the device monitors GNSS data to obtain a centimetre-accurate location. The primary outputs from these systems include GIS data, digital maps, geo-referenced images,

and cloud points.

The system provides the NSA with a rapid mechanism for capturing data with high accuracy.

Besides, it can be used in many applications related to 3-D city modelling, asset management, situation assessment, land use, detailed and topographic surveying, volume calculations, disaster management, construction control, housing and infrastructure mapping, mine surveying, among others.

— ONA

Tender Announcement

Request for Pre-Qualification For Consultancy Services for (Updating the Feasibility Study for National Veterinary Vaccine Company)

National Veterinary Vaccines Company seeking for a consultant to update the feasibility study. The consultant for the project may be part of a single organization or consortium.

Scope of the study: Updating Feasibility Study

Qualification No.	PQ-FS-2023/1
Tender Fee	100 OMR
Last Date for Collection Pre-Qualification	14 May 2023
Last Date for Clarifications	17 May 2023
Last Date for Submissions	21 May 2023

Companies with relevant experience in executing similar projects within the same domain are invited to purchase this tender.

For inquiries or to request pre-qualification documents, Please contact us by email:

Aziza.alrawahi@nvco.om +968 92431881



DEALING WITH PERINATAL DEPRESSION

MAI AL ABRI

Perinatal depression, also called postpartum depression, is a serious mental health condition with potential consequences for both the mother and the child. It affects a large number of women during pregnancy. This type of depression usually manifests either during pregnancy or in the first year following childbirth. The Ministry of Health launched

a campaign to inform mothers about the treatment of perinatal depression, which requires all mothers experiencing depressive symptoms to seek professional psychological assistance. Dr Lamy al Waeli says some signs can indicate that a mother is depressed and that those around her should be aware of her emotional and mental health. The symptoms include persistent feelings of melancholy or hopelessness, loss of interest

in or enjoyment from previously pleasurable activities, trouble falling asleep or oversleeping, a sense of guilt or unworthiness, and some physical symptoms like headaches, stomachaches, or muscle pain. Women must seek assistance if they show depressive symptoms either during pregnancy or right after giving birth. Most perinatal depressed women can recover and enjoy healthy and happy motherhood with the right care and early diagnosis. According to Dr Lamy, the course

of treatment for perinatal depression is determined by how severe the condition is. Exercise, self-help groups and counselling are examples of supportive interventions that can be used to manage mild cases of depression. A combination of therapy and medication may be required for mild to severe cases. Regular exercise, such as swimming, yoga, or walking, can help elevate mood and lessen depressive symptoms. The circadian rhythms of the body can be regulated, and mood

can be improved by exposure to bright light. Daily exposure to a light box, which mimics natural sunlight, can help women with perinatal depression. It is crucial to remember that choosing whether to take medication during pregnancy or while breastfeeding requires consulting a healthcare professional. Given that some medications may have potential side effects on the developing fetus or newborn, the advantages and risks of medication must be carefully weighed.



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5

UTAS-Nizwa to hold three-day Students' Forum from May 8

BADRIYA AL BALUSHI
NIZWA, MAY 6

University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS-Nizwa) is fully geared up to launch the activities of 20th Students' Forum from tomorrow, May 8-10, at the Oman Across Ages Museum in Manah.

The opening ceremony of the forum with the slogan "Digital Horizons" will take place under the auspices of Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy,



and the Vice-Chancellor of UTAS Dr Said al Rubaie along with delegates, faculty and administrative members from both branches of UTAS-Nizwa. A number of sessions will be held on the opening

day while the second day will witness lectures besides the main competition 'Hackathon.'

On May 10, the final day of the forum, sessions for wrapping up the event will take place. The results of the

whole forum will be displayed to attendees and rewarding the outstanding performers in various competitions will take place.

It is worth mentioning that the participation of students' projects and works from different branches of UTAS will be evaluated and presented in the Exhibition Hall of Oman Across Ages Museum during the three-day event. Extensive preparations have been made by the organisers for this long-awaited event.

South Al Batinah celebrates Teacher's Day



RUSTAQ: The Directorate-General of Education in the Governorate of South Al Batinah celebrated the Omani Teacher's Day on Thursday, under the auspices of Nasr bin Hamoud al Kindi, Secretary-General of Royal Court Affairs.

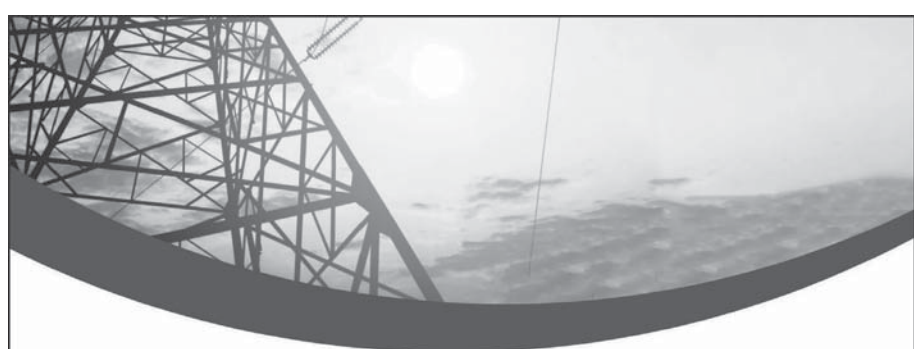
Dr Nasser bin Salem

al Ghanbousi, Director-General of Education in South Al Batinah Governorate, in his speech spoke about the efforts made to advance the educational process and the role played by the teachers.

The celebration included plays and a visual presentation of 47

educational initiatives from among the various educational schools of the governorates.

The sponsors also honoured 261 teachers, administrators, supervisors, specialists, technicians and winners of educational events for the 2022/2023 academic year. — ONA



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/ 2023/068	UNE – LOT 02F - 2023	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/072	11KV & LV NETWORK IMPROVEMENT WORK OF 2023 IN ZONE-3 (LOT-5)	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/074	UNE – LOT 04B - 2023	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/075	UNE – LOT 04C - 2023	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 52.500
DISC/ 2023/077	REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING 33KV CRP, RTU, CAPACITOR BANKS, 110V DC BATTERY BANK, 48V DC BATTERY BANK AND 30V DC BATTERY BANK AT QAIROON HAIRITY PSS	21/05/2023	06/06/2023	RO. 105.000
DISC/ 2023/078	UNE – LOT 04E - 2023	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 105.000
DISC/ 2023/079	UNE – LOT 04D - 2023	21/05/2023	29/05/2023	RO. 52.500

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on:
Tel No. 23232554
email: purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om



Nama Dhofar Services
P.O.Box: 2609, P.C.: 211, Salalah, Sultanate of Oman
Phone Number: +968 23232523 - Fax: 23201183
www.dhofarservices.nama.om



World Autism Day celebrated

AL MUDHAIBI:

The Al Wafa Centre for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in the Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi, North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, celebrated World Autism Day, by holding an event called 'Transformation towards an inclusive world.'

Khawla bint Ahmed al Harthiyah, the Centre Director, in her speech said: "Celebrating this occasion comes with the aim of introducing the community to the efforts made by the Ministry of Social Development represented by the Al Wafa Centre to rehabilitate persons with disabilities in Oman, and to strengthen the relationship with disabilities and the different groups of society."

The event included a visual presentation

introducing the treatment programmes and the centre's efforts in caring for people with disabilities towards autism programme, and introducing the centre's equipment and specialised devices that assist in treatment programmes. — ONA



الجامعة الوطنية
National University
Science & Technology للمعلوم والتكنولوجيا

Disposal of Retired University Assets. Invitation for Bids

The National University invites sealed bids for the disposal of various retired assets such as classroom and office furniture, computer equipment and miscellaneous items.

Interested parties may contact Mr. Juma Saleh Juma al Mukhaini: GSM 99355270 for inspection of assets. Bids should reach the University's Administrative Office on or before 14th May 2023.



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

إعلان مزايمة استثمارية Investment Announcement

Investment Announcement No. 3/2023 Bidding for the Development and Management of Shelter Yards for Land Transport

The Internal Investment Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology announces the launch of the following bid for local companies and investors to **submit investment offers for the Development and Management of Land Transport Shelters in the Lands** owned by the Ministry in accordance with the conditions contained in this announcement and according to the details and attachments mentioned in the bidding document.

NUMBER	LAND DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT FEES	DEADLINE FOR PURCHASING BIDDING DOCUMENT	DEADLINE FOR INQUIRES SUBMISSION	CLOSING DATE
3.1/2023	Plot of land in Al-Malda area in the Wilayat of Mussanah (18380 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)	04/06/2023	18/06/2023	09/07/2023 12:00 PM
3.2/2023	Plot of land in Khamila area in the Wilayat of Bahla (75000 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			
3.3/2023	Plot of land in Al-Haima area in the Wilayat of Ibra (9636 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			
3.4/2023	Plot of land in Al-Mawaleh area in the Wilayat of Seeb (25001 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			
3.5/2023	Plot of land in Misfah area in the Wilayat of Bawshar (4358 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			
3.6/2023	Plot of land in Al-Nawa area in the Wilayat of Mahdah (30334 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			
3.7/2023	Plot of land in Al-Khashda area in the Wilayat of Saham (9385 m ²)	100 Omani Rials (non-refundable)			

- Document fee should be paid by bank transfer only to the Ministry's account number **0325001361300017** Bank Muscat
- The payment receipt must be sent to investment@mtcit.gov.om
- The bidding document will be shared via email
- The Investment proposals must include all the requirements mentioned in the Bidding document
- The Investment proposal must be valid for at least 12 months and should be signed and stamped
- All investment proposals should be sent as PDF to investment@mtcit.gov.om
- For any other inquiries, you can reach us via the following contact details:

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

INTERNAL INVESTMENT COMMITTEE

@mtcitoman

www.mtcit.gov.om

جامعة الشرقية
A' SHARQIYAH UNIVERSITY



TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

A'Sharqiyah University (ASU) is a private higher education institution located in Ibra, North of A'Sharqiyah Governorate of the Sultanate of Oman, about 150 km from Muscat. It was established in 2009 by Ministerial Decision (78/2009) issued by the Ministry of Higher Education.

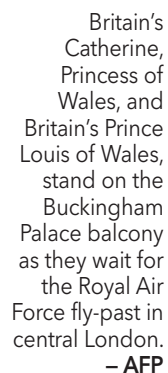
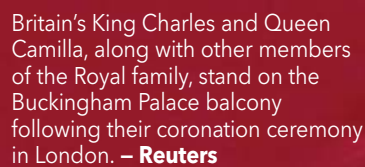
Tender details:

ASU's Tender Committee has the pleasure to invite the companies who are experienced in providing IP Telephone System:

Tender No.	Description	Document Collection Deadline	Bids Submission Deadline	Document Fees
ASU/10/2023	IP Telephone System for A'Sharqiyah University (ASU/10/2023)	11/05/2023	25/05/2023	100 OMR

- The specialized companies of the above assignment can obtain the tender document from Procurement and Contracts Department at A'Sharqiyah University, Ibra, during the working days from 9:00 am to 03:00 pm.
- All bids must be submitted in sealed envelopes, addressed to the Tender Committee at A' Sharqiyah University in Ibra, and must bear the Tender Number and Tender Title. The envelope must be sealed with red wax and contain no indication of the name of the Tenderer.
- The submitting of the main envelope should contain the following:
 - Separate sealed envelope contains technical proposal (1 original copy + 2 copies). Apart from hard copy, a SOFT COPY of the technical proposal should be included in the envelope on a virus-free USB flash drive.
 - Separate sealed envelope contains commercial proposal (1 original copy + 2 copies). Apart from hard copy, a SOFT COPY of the commercial proposal should be included in the envelope on a virus-free USB flash drive.
 - Separate sealed envelope contains tender bond.
- ASU general terms and conditions of tenders shall apply on all submitted bids.
http://www.asu.edu.om/downloads/purchase_terms_conditions.pdf
- ASU is not bound to accept the lowest bid.
- For more details, please don't hesitate to contact us on: (+968) 25401115/25401116.

CHARLES III CF
AT FIRST UK CORON



**BRITISH MONARCHY:
THE CROWN
JEWELS**

IMPERIAL STATE CROWN
Used for formal events like opening of parliament
2,868 diamonds, 269 pearls, 17 sapphires, 11 emeralds
Weight: 1.06 kg
Height: 31.5 cm

Second largest stone cut from Cullinan diamond, the largest ever mined

SOVEREIGN'S ORB
Represents the monarch's power and the Christian world
Surrounded by diamonds, rubies emeralds, sapphire and pearls

AMPULLA AND CORONATION SPOON
Used for anointing the monarch with holy oil

CORONATION RING
Dates back to 1831

S' EDWARD'S CROWN
Placed on the monarch's head at the actual moment of crowning (modified for coronation of King Charles III)
Made of gold, rubies, silver and sapphires
Weight: 2.23 kg

STONE OF SCONE
Ancient symbol of Scotland's monarchy. The 152-kg stone is now kept in Scotland but returns to Westminster Abbey for coronations

PURPLE ROBE OF ESTATE
Made of silk and embroidered with the monarch's cypher, wheat ears and olive branches.
Took 3,500 hours to make

Cullinan I
Largest colourless cut diamond in the world
Weight: 106 g

SOVEREIGN'S SCEPTER WITH CROSS
Represents the monarch's temporal power and good governance

Stone was originally encased under the coronation chair

Sources: Historic Royal Palaces | Sizes are not to scale

APFP





CROWNED KING

INATION IN 70 YEARS



The Coronation Procession travels along The Mall following the coronation ceremony of King Charles III and Queen Camilla in central London. Thousands of members of the armed forces from across the Commonwealth and British Overseas Territories, members of the UK armed forces, and the Sovereign's Bodyguard and Royal Watermen, are taking part in the celebrations through central London in the largest military operation in 70 years. — Reuters



Britain's King Charles III and Britain's Queen Camilla travel in the Gold State Coach back to Buckingham Palace from Westminster Abbey after their coronations. — AFP

Coronation draws tens of thousands braving rain to cheer monarch

LONDON: Tens of thousands of people of all ages, from Britain and across the globe, braved the rain for a glimpse of the newly crowned King Charles in the streets of London and on Buckingham Palace's famous balcony on Saturday.

From the early hours, people dressed in red, white and blue and clutching union flags and umbrellas lined the streets for the first coronation in Britain for 70 years, seeking to share a historic occasion and what many viewed as a moment of national unity.

In crowns and regal robes, Charles and Queen Camilla appeared on the balcony with heir to the throne Prince William and other senior royals to watch a fly-past, scaled down due to the cloud and rain.

"It was a brilliant way to end what was already a brilliant day," said Katie Mitchell, 25, who had made it close to the Palace.

Many in the crowd had brought stools or steps, to be able to see over the crowds, and wore elaborate fancy dress including paper crowns and plastic tiaras.

While the service took place within Westminster Abbey strangers huddled together under umbrellas to see the ceremony on phones and iPads, or watched on big screens in parks.

Following on his phone in St James's Park, Mick Windebank, 60, a builder from Surrey, said the moment the crown was placed on Charles' head was "very emotional".

Toward the end of the two-hour service, crowds lining the procession route and listening on loud speakers joined in when "God Save the King", the national anthem, was played.

For many spectators, the sight of eight horses pulling the 260-year-old Gold State Coach carrying Charles and Camilla back to Buckingham Palace brought home the sense of history unfolding. — Reuters



Jocelyn Walker and Maggie Colvin sit for a portrait as they watch Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla's coronation ceremony, in Hyde Park. — Reuters



Kim and Ryan Addison stand for a portrait as they watch Britain's King Charles and Queen Camilla's coronation ceremony, in Hyde Park. — Reuters



The British Royal Air Force's (RAF) aerobatic team, the "Red Arrows", perform a fly-past over Admiralty Arch after the coronations. — AFP

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

The coronation was a magnificent occasion with thousands of people lining the streets of London to catch a glimpse of the King and witness this historical event which was also broadcast on television and watched by millions of people

The couple enjoyed visiting historical places and villages in Oman and had great photos. This was followed by visits in 1992,

He was kind and humble,
shaking hands with all students,
and asking them what they learned

This gesture fits well with twentieth-century England what is embraces different religious beliefs.

"What I like here is that they still play in the street, they still go to the park. Children here are still children and this makes me think of when I was a child, when I would go out and play until it got dark." — **AFP**

The writer is a
correspondent on the
International Desk in
London

"I just don't think it really resonates with a lot of people here anymore," said



Children at a tea and cake stall during a King Charles III coronation celebration in Shirehampton, a part of northwestern Bristol.

A RECENT POLL CONDUCTED BY YOUNGOV AND THE BBC INDICATED THAT 32 PER CENT OF 18- TO 24-YEAR-OLDS BELIEVED THAT BRITAIN SHOULD CONTINUE TO HAVE A MONARCHY, COMPARED WITH 78 PER CENT OF PEOPLE OLDER THAN 65 WHO SUPPORTED A MONARCHY

The generational divide is particularly stark in Bristol, which has a median age of 34, younger than

The city docks, just steps away, played a major role in the trans-Atlantic trade of enslaved African people, and Caribbean products such as sugar, rum, indigo and cocoa produced by the enslaved were brought to Bristol and fuelled local industries, enriching British merchants from this port city.

— The New York Times

To comment & email: opinion@omanobserver.om

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Charles: A King in waiting no longer

Throughout all his 74 years, Charles Phillip Arthur George has been the heir apparent, dignified, resilient, and remarkably tolerant of a media, and sometimes a society that has painted him as the almost unwelcome son of a much beloved Queen Elizabeth II.

We should have known better... if only because he always had his astute ‘Mama’s’ confidence and support. Even if we had reservations about Charles as the uncrowned King, we should have had faith in her unswerving support throughout the sometimes testing chapters of his life, as, like episodes of a soap opera, he was often unfairly lampooned simply because he maintained the silence, no, the dignity, of an institution that, while it may well be derided in the Republican nations, is supported, sustained, and as this coronation will demonstrate, appreciated by the majority of the United Kingdom.

A scholarly young man, Charles played football at Hill House School, as his old Headmaster said once, because he needed to be able to “stand up for himself.” Cheam and Gordonstoun Schools saw him tested, another word for bullied, and despite his father, the Duke of Edinburgh’s disregard for his woes, as always throughout his life, Charles perpetually demonstrated his determination, dignity, and stoicism. He was to reflect later that this often cold, inhospitable environment where he learnt much about himself, and “taught me to respond to challenges,” and in his inimitable manner gilding every ill-met experience with a silver lining, absolutely committed to the Queen’s vision of the monarchy, and his dedication to the path, the life, and the office that lay ahead of him.

A time spent at the Timbertop campus of the Geelong Grammar School in Victoria, Australia, allowed Charles to ‘grow,’ to mature somewhat, away from the media frenzy of home, and to “enjoy” learning, according to a report in the Canberra Times of 1973, but higher education at the prestigious Trinity College, the University



Ray Petersen
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

A SCHOLARLY YOUNG MAN, CHARLES PLAYED FOOTBALL AT HILL HOUSE SCHOOL, AS HIS OLD HEADMASTER SAID ONCE, BECAUSE HE NEEDED TO BE ABLE TO ‘STAND UP FOR HIMSELF’

College of Wales, and the University of Cambridge. In all, his academic achievements are impressive. Six GCSE ‘O’ Levels, two GCSE ‘A’s, a BA, and an MA, saw him become the first-ever heir to the throne to achieve graduate qualifications.

He married Diana Spencer in 1981, in a spectacle that thrust the young couple onto every front page in the world, which made its failure a mere five years later, polarising global opinion, as everyone was either blaming one, or the other for their eventual separation and 1996 divorce. We, the public, were no better just a year later as we lauded Diana as a saintly loss, while caricaturing Charles as a pantomime villain who had conspired towards her end, which surely says more about our frustrations at the ‘fairy tale’ not working out as it should have, than our ability to reason, reasonably.

Fast forward to 2022, and the passing of Elizabeth II, a time of sadness, yet it seemed, a recognition that her anointed son and heir Charles was the right man to assume the throne, despite the youthful, immature clamour by some commentators for Charles to make way for his eldest son William. It was never a prospect. If the late Queen didn’t think Charles capable of ruling, she would have acted accordingly, and that she never, and acknowledging his unstinting support, she prepared him so well. How do we know? Charles III, King in waiting will be crowned, and in his short time at the head of the realm, with Queen Camilla at his side, William, and Kate staunch, and Harry and Meghan distanced, that realm has never looked in safer hands.

And what, you may well ask, does the future hold for the Anglo-Omani relationship under the new monarch? Like Elizabeth before him, Charles has been a frequent visitor to the Sultanate of Oman, first in 1986 as part of a Middle Eastern sojourn, in 1999, 2003, 2016, and 2020, and the respective royal families clearly have an appreciative relationship, as do the military, educational, and commercial sectors of the two dynasties.

THE FIRST IN BRITAIN IN 70 YEARS



Britain’s King Charles III wearing the Imperial state Crown carrying the Sovereign’s Orb and Sceptre leaves Westminster Abbey after the Coronation Ceremonies in central London on Saturday. The set-piece coronation is the first in Britain in 70 years, and only the second in history to be televised. Charles will be the 40th reigning monarch to be crowned at the central London church since King William I in 1066. – AFP

Camilla: Who is King Charles’ wife and Britain’s new Queen?

MICHAEL HOLDEN
AND SARAH MILLS

Camilla, the second wife of King Charles, was crowned queen on Saturday, capping a remarkable turnaround in public acceptance few would have thought possible.

When Charles’ divorced first wife, the popular, glamorous Princess Diana, died in a car crash in Paris in 1997, Camilla bore the brunt of media hostility. Some declared the couple could never wed.

But marry they did eight years later, and since then she has come to be recognised, albeit still grudgingly by some, as a key member of the royal family, as someone on whom the new king heavily relies, and as the nation’s Queen Camilla.

“She is his sort of soul mate,” said Robert Hardman, a long-time royal correspondent and author of ‘Queen of our Times’, pointing out she had been married to Charles longer than Diana.

“They’re a team. And you’ve got to be a team.”

Born Camilla Shand in 1947 into an affluent family — her father was an army major and wine merchant who married an aristocrat — she moved in

FROM BEING ABLE TO APPEAR IN PUBLIC TOGETHER, TO MARRIAGE AND LAST YEAR’S APPROVAL FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH TO CAMILLA TAKING THE TITLE QUEEN CONSORT, THEIR SUCCESS IS COMPLETE

social circles that brought her into contact with Charles, who she met on a windswept polo field in the early 1970s.

The pair dated for a time and Charles had contemplated marriage, but felt too young to take such a major step.

As he dedicated himself to his naval career, Camilla went on to marry a cavalry officer, Brigadier Andrew Parker Bowles. The couple had two children, Tom and Laura. They divorced in 1995.

Charles himself married 20-year-old Diana in a wedding in 1981 that enchanted not just Britain but the world. After having two children, William and Harry, the relationship turned sour and they divorced in 1996 after he rekindled his romance with his former lover.

The depth of that relationship was exposed to a shocked public in 1993 when a transcript of a secretly recorded private conversation with details was published in newspapers.

“I’d suffer anything for you. That’s love. That’s the strength of love,” Camilla told Charles in the secretly recorded telephone conversation publicised in 1993.

In a TV interview the

following year, Charles admitted he had resumed their affair, but said it was only after his marriage had irretrievably broken down.

“There were three of us in this marriage — so it was a bit crowded,” Diana, who dubbed Camilla “the Rottweiler”, famously remarked in her own TV interview in 1995.

While Diana brought glamour to the stuffy House of Windsor with her glittering gowns, many Britons could not understand why Charles would prefer the country-loving Camilla, usually pictured wearing a scarf and green waterproof riding coat.



Britain’s Queen Camilla travels from Westminster Abbey in the Gold State Coach, following her coronation ceremony, in London, on Saturday. – Reuters

“I cannot imagine anyone in their right mind leaving you for Camilla,” Prince Philip, Charles’ father and the late Queen Elizabeth’s husband, said in a letter to Diana.

Amid a public outpouring of grief and anger after Diana’s death, Camilla was singled out for harsh criticism. But in subsequent years, royal aides, tasked with rebuilding the tarnished reputation of the royal family as a whole, also slowly began to integrate Camilla into a more public role.

From being able to appear in public together, to marriage and

last year’s approval from Queen Elizabeth to Camilla taking the title Queen Consort, their success is complete.

Public relations experts say it was the result of much hard and careful work, although aides said it was mainly due to Camilla’s own personality and great sense of humour. “She is resilient, she was brought up with this extraordinary sense of duty where you got on with it, don’t whinge, put your best face on and keep going, and it has stood her in very good stead,” Fiona Shelburne, the Marchioness of Lansdowne, a close confidante of Camilla, now 75, told the *Sunday Times* last month.

Polls also suggest she has not won widespread public affection either. A YouGov poll this week found while 48 per cent had a positive view of her, 39 per cent held a negative opinion, putting her among the least popular in the royal family. Other surveys have also indicated only a minority thought she should be Queen Camilla.

“I think Diana... will be hurling thunderbolts on coronation day, that’s for sure,” royal author Tina Brown said. — Reuters

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Bausher club emerge champions of Oman Open Water Swimming

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAY 6

Bausher club's swimmers delivered a dominating performance to lift the title of the 15th edition of Oman Open Water Swimming Championship which was held in Qurum on Friday noon. The final ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng Ahmed bin Hassan al Dheeb, Vice-Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones in presence of Taha bin Suleiman al Kishry, Chairman of Oman Aquatics Federation (OAF) and Fina board member and other invitees. Oman Club were positioned as runners-up of the event.

As many as 75 swimmers representing 13 clubs took part in the domestic Open Water Swimming event. The championship featured different categories including senior category for above of 18 years old, youth category for between 14 to 17 years old and both categories were for a distance of 3 kilometres. Another category was dedicated for masters with 500 metres distance.

In the senior category, Al Amerat club swimmer Ayman al Qasmi bagged the gold medal and first place trophy after clearing the distance as first swimmer. Abdulrahman al Kulaibi from Salalah club ended in second place while Naif al Qasmi from Bausher club finished third.

Mohammed al Habsi clinched the

title of masters category while Hassan al Habsi came as runner-up. In the youth category, Mashal al Kulaibi from Al Amerat snatched the winner's trophy and gold medal while Ibrahim al Wahaibi from Bausher club took second and silver medal while Salalah's Hilal al Mashari got the bronze.

In another category for private entities, swimmers from Royal Navy Oman (RNO) claimed the title as Ibrahim al Kulaibi got the first place award while Al Waleed al Maskari claimed the silver medal and Ahmed al Falahi received the bronze medal. Later, the chief guest awarded the medals and trophies to the top winners from different categories besides honouring the government and

private sectors representatives for their support to OAF.

BIG SUCCESS

Taha bin Suleiman al Kishry, Chairman of OAF, said that the main targets of the event are to boost the sport and involve the domestic clubs to take part in the game. "We are very glad with the number of the swimmers who took part in this edition of the championship and looking for more in our national competitions and events. Moreover, it is great opportunity to have a competition for different categories in one event. Sultanate of Oman has a very wide coastal area in the wilayats and governorates and it is great to have this event across the Sultanate of Oman every

year. Thanks for all the participants and clubs for their cooperation to accomplish the success of the tournament," he ended.

The winner of senior category, Ayman al Qasmi, expressed his satisfaction on winning the title. "I am very glad with this accomplishment. In the beginning of the swimming race, the competition was still in its initial stages. In the following second and third kilometres of the race, I focused and worked hard to end the competition in the first place," he added.

The championship was headed by the Secretary-General of OAF, Malallah al Busaidy, while international referee Said Khairallah was the main umpire and Abdulmoneim al Alawi, Fina open water referee, was the technical director.



Al Nahda front runners for OL title

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MAY 6

The Omantel League enters its final stages, with only three rounds left. The competition for the title and survival intensifies among the clubs. The 23rd round saw some significant results that narrowed down the contenders for the title and those facing relegation to the First Division.

The top two teams in the league, Al Nahda, and Al Suwaiq, remain the only title contenders. Al Nahda, who are currently the league leaders, are the strongest candidates for the title with only two rounds left to play. Meanwhile, Al Suwaiq are still holding on to their hope for the title and need to win their next matches to stay in the competition.

On the other hand, Al Bashayer are the first club in danger of relegation, needing a win in the upcoming match to avoid being relegated to the First Division. The remaining three clubs that are in danger of relegation are Al Oruba, Al Ittihad and Sur.

Three clubs will be relegated to the first

OMANTEL LEAGUE POINTS TABLE						
TEAM, PLAYED, WON, DRAW, LOST, GD, POINTS						
Al Nahda	23	15	7	1	24	52
Al Suwaiq	23	15	3	5	12	48
Al Seeb	23	11	9	3	17	42
Al Rustaq	22	11	7	5	5	40
Oman Club	22	9	8	5	4	35
Dhofar	23	10	6	7	7	36
Oman Club	23	9	8	6	3	35
Bahla	23	9	6	8	2	33
Sohar	23	10	3	10	1	33
Al Musannah	23	5	12	6	-1	27
Al Nasr	23	6	9	8	-2	27
Sur	23	6	3	14	-10	21
Al Ittihad	23	4	5	14	-17	17
Al Oruba	23	3	7	13	-18	16
Al Bashayer	23	3	3	17	-23	12

division league out of these four clubs.

During the 23rd round, Al Nahda and Al Suwaiq served themselves well for the title, with both teams securing victories. Al Oruba also secured a vital win over Bahla Club, increasing their hopes for survival.

The draw between Al Seeb and Al Ittihad had implications for both teams, with Al Ittihad still holding on to the hope of survival while Al Seeb lost their chance to compete for the title officially. Meanwhile, the draw between Al Rustaq and Sur ended the hopes of Al Rustaq to competing for the title, but Sur gained a valuable point for survival.

24TH ROUND

The next round's summit will be between Al Nahda and Al Seeb, which could see Al Nahda officially crowned champions if they secure a win and Al Suwaiq lose their match against Al Musannah.

At the bottom, all eyes will be on the match between Sur and Al Bashayer match which could determine the first to be relegated to the First Division. Al Bashayer need a must-win to avoid relegation as a defeat or draw will put them out. If Al Oruba lose against Sohar and Bahla beat Al Ittihad the three teams that will be relegated to the First Division will be Al Bashayer, Al Oruba and Al Ittihad.



Rashid, Noor lead Gujarat to nine-wicket Rajasthan rout

JAIPUR, India: Afghanistan spinners Rashid Khan and rookie Noor Ahmad ran through the Rajasthan Royals as Gujarat Titans sealed an easy nine-wicket win in the IPL on Friday.

Khan and Ahmad took five wickets between them as Rajasthan were bowled out for just 118 in the 18th over of their innings after Rajasthan captain Sanju Samson won the toss and decided to bat first.

Royals were rocked early and lost both openers — England's Jos Buttler (eight) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (14) — by the sixth over.

Samson, who hit a fluent 20-ball 30, was their top scorer and his dismissal in the seventh over left Rajasthan reeling at 60-3.

Khan took three wickets to remove Ravichandran Ashwin (two), Riyan Parag (four) and West Indian Shimron Hetmyer

(seven) to finish with an impressive 3-14 in his four-over spell.

He was ably supported by 18-year-old wrist spinner Ahmad who dismissed Devdutt Padikkal (12) and Dhruv Jurel (nine), to finish with 2-25 in three overs.

"I let Rashid handle the business of dealing with the spinners, with Noor. They speak the same language (Pashtun), and nobody is better than Rashid," said Gujarat skipper Hardik Pandya.

Khan now has 18 wickets in the tournament this season and he admitted he was happy to be back on form having gone wicketless for 54 runs against Kolkata last week.

"I just went back, and talked with the video analyst. I pitched it a little bit fuller," said the star leg spinner. — AFP

‘Baby Malinga’ leads Chennai to big win over Mumbai

CHENNAI, India: Sri Lanka's Matheesha Pathirana led an inspired pace attack to help Chennai Super Kings hammer Mumbai Indians by six wickets in a clash of IPL heavyweights on Saturday.

Pathirana, who is called 'Baby Malinga' for his slinging action similar to former Sri Lankan pace ace Lasith Malinga, returned figures of 3-15 to limit five-time winners Mumbai to 139-8 in Chennai.

New Zealand opener Devon Conway made 44 as MS Dhoni's Chennai — four-time IPL champions — romped home with 14 balls to spare.

Dhoni praised Pathirana, saying, "People who don't have any clean action, batsmen have a difficult time picking it. But his consistency, pace makes him special."

Dhoni advised the youngster to stay away from Test cricket and concentrate on playing "only ICC tournaments with ODIs".

The left-handed Conway put on a strong opening stand of 46 with Ruturaj Gaikwad and moved second in the batting chart with 458 runs behind Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Faf du Plessis (466).

The 41-year-old Dhoni hit the winning run at Chennai's MA Chidambaram Stadium as fans, who are coming in numbers to cheer the superstar cricketer in what it is expected to be his last IPL season as player, went wild.

Shivam Dube hit an unbeaten 26 off 18 balls as Chennai jumped a spot to second behind table-toppers Gujarat Titans in the 10-team table.

Chennai's bowlers set up victory after they rattled the Mumbai top-order including the key wickets of Cameron Green, out for six after opening the batting, and skipper Rohit Sharma, dismissed for a second successive duck after coming at number three.

The opening pace duo of Deepak Chahar and Tushar



Chennai Super Kings' Matheesha Pathirana in action. — AFP

Deshpande reduced Mumbai to 3-14 inside three overs before Nehal Wadhwa (64) and Suryakumar Yadav (26) attempted to rebuild in their stand of 55.

Left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja sent back Suryakumar and the 20-year-old Pathirana, who

has played one T20 for Sri Lanka, bowled Wadhwa with a yorker — his main weapon — to take the steam out of the Mumbai batting.

Pathirana with a unique celebration of his hands in front of his chest and eyes in meditation said, "I'm a die-hard

fan of Cristiano Ronaldo and have modelled my celebration after him."

Wickets kept tumbling as the dangerous Tim David fell for two off Deshpande and Pathirana got South African batsman Tristan Stubbs for 20. — AFP

Revenge week brings nail-biting encounters



It's the rivalry week that's going on and as we all know, "revenge is a dish which is best served cold!". In the afternoon, you would see the Pandya brothers going against each other and in the evening, it will be a game between two sides that have always been almost even on their head-to-head counter and Sunrisers Hyderabad will have to opportunity to once again even the scale.

With just 20 games left in the league stage, it is almost a must win for everyone. As per the stats, this year's IPL has been the most competitive of all and the points table indicates just that. As of now, no team has qualified and no team is out of contention.

The best part of this year's IPL is that, every team is looking to pull the stronger team down, in the process of helping itself rise. Hence, the points table are so close.

GT VS LSG AT AHMEDABAD

PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER - The last time both these teams clashed at Lucknow, it was a low scoring encounter, which went against LSG.

Winning the toss, GT opted to bat first and put on a patient 135/6 in 20 overs. Lucknow were cruising throughout and it looked as if they would finish by the 18th over, when suddenly KL Rahul went into the shell and that cost the match to LSG, as they fell short by 7 runs.

TEAM INFO - Gujarat are on top with 14 points from 10 games, while Lucknow are next with 11 points from 10 games. Gujarat have won 4 out of the last 5 games and have the momentum with that massive win against Rajasthan. On the other hand, it's Lucknow that look a little shaky.

They have 2 wins, 2 losses and a no result in the last 5 games. The momentum is completely away from Lucknow, first they lost a low-scoring chase against RCB and then they were in trouble against CSK, which fortunately got washed out and now they are going up against a team that they have never beaten.

Head-to-Head - Played - 3; Won by GT - 3; Won by LSG - 0

GT possible 12 - W Saha, H Pandya, V Sankar, D Miller, A Manohar, R Tewatia, R Khan, M Sharma, N Ahmad, M Shami, A Joseph, S Gill

LSG possible 12 - Q De Kock, M Vohra, K Nair, K Pandya, M Stoinis, N Pooran, A Badoni, K Gowtham, N Ul Haq, R Bishnoi, M Khan, D Hooda

Pitch & Weather Report - The previous match at this venue saw a hard-fought contest between bat and ball. While the slower bowlers are expected to get a fair bit of

assistance from the surface in Ahmedabad, the batters will also chance their arm with relatively shorter boundaries on offer at the venue.

On a warm afternoon with temperatures ranging between 28 and 41 degrees Celsius with no chances of rain, it will be an exhausting afternoon of cricket.

Match Prediction - Gujarat Titans are in an incredible form and their major strength has been their entire unit contributing and they don't rely on individual contributions. All the resources are also extremely well managed by the duo of Ashish Nehra and Hardik Pandya. Lucknow Super Giants have a lot of concerns to address and I feel that at the moment this is a big challenge for them. So, it's 'Gujarati Daboli and Fafda' in Ahmedabad.

RR VS SRH AT JAIPUR

PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER - When both these sides clashed previously, it was Hyderabad that just didn't turn up to the challenge of Rajasthan. Winning the toss, Hyderabad chose to bowl and their bowlers were hit all-around with Rajasthan top 3 getting a 50+ score each. Coming in to chase 204 for a win, Hyderabad got stuck in the spin web of Rajasthan and they just didn't have any chance against that massive score and later succumbed to a mere 131/8, hence losing by a massive 72-run margin.

TEAM INFO - Two teams that have similar results in their last 5 games are going up against each other. Both teams have lost 4 out of their last 5 encounters and they are in some

serious trouble, if they don't get back to the winning momentum almost immediately. Both these teams are also going to be walking into this game with a losing momentum.

Head-to-Head - Played - 17; Won by SRH- 8; Won by RR - 9

RR possible 12 - Y Jaiswal, J Buttler, S Samson, D Padikkal, S Hetmyer, D Jurel, R Ashwin, T Bourt, J Holder, S Sharma, Y Chahal, R Parag

SRH possible 12 - M Agarwal, A Sharma, A Markram, H Klaasen, G Philips, A Samad, M Jansen, M Markhande, B Kumar, K Tyagi, T Natarajan, R Tripathi

Pitch & Weather Report - The pitch at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium is a balanced track. Batters will have to be patient early on. They will have to spend some time in the middle to get used to the conditions. Spinners are expected to play a key role. The conditions should be ideal for a game of cricket, with the temperature expected to be between 27 and 38 degrees Celsius and no chances of rain.

Match Prediction - Sunrisers Hyderabad have a line-up on paper that can trouble any side of the IPL on its day, but the question is that, whether they will turn up on the ground with their right foot forward? Rajasthan are just losing momentum and they would want to get back on the way. I feel that tomorrow it's going to be a 'Hyderabad Biryani Day' for some reason.

FAN COMMENTS (Omani Women Special) "I don't really follow the sport of cricket, but being a business woman, this column has

been attracting my attention for a while and hence I am writing. I never knew of cricket being such a popular sport in Oman and more should be done towards its growth. We Omanis are always welcoming and our kids would love some diversity. Thank you, *Oman Observer*, for educating us of this option." - **Salma al Bussaidi, Businesswoman, Omani**

"I have been pushing my daughters to read the newspaper and they follow the e-paper of *Oman Observer*, where they started following this column about a new sport. Later we found Oman has a national women's team for this sport and now they are learning this sport at an academy." - **Fatima al Mashari, Banking Industry, Omani**

"I am writing this comment with a lot of pride and a little inspiration from my son. After my husband's death before some months, my son would always stay in the room and avoid going out. Some of his friends read this page about development of new sports in Oman and now he goes for training and learning this game with all his friends. I am very thankful to *Oman Observer* for this." - **Asma al Mamari, Branch Manager, Omani**

"My husband and full family are always watching this game of cricket at home, but I don't understand anything in it. My sons also go to ground in Al Amerat for playing and learning cricket. I learn a lot from this 'IPL Strokes' column by Pranav Mehta. I have read that many Omanis follow this and for all of us, you should explain this game in more detail." - **Aisha al Balushi, Cashier, Omani**



Urawa Red Diamonds players celebrate with the trophy after their victory against Al Hilal in the second leg of the AFC Champions League final at Saitama Stadium in Saitama on Saturday. — AFP

Urawa claim title to finish ACL odyssey

SAITAMA, JAPAN: Urawa Red Diamonds coach Maciej Skorza said the wait was worth it after the Japanese side won the Asian Champions League (ACL) on Saturday -- almost nine months after reaching the final.

Urawa lifted the trophy for a third time after beating Saudi Arabia's defending champions Al Hilal 1-0 at home in the second leg of the final, giving them a 2-1 aggregate win one week after drawing the opener 1-1 in Riyadh. The final marked the end of a 2022 competition that began in March last year and was delayed by the winter World Cup in Qatar and travel complications arising from the pandemic.

Urawa beat South Korea's Jeonbuk

Motors in the semifinals in August last year but Skorza — who only arrived at the club in January — was happy to finally finish the job.

"From the beginning of our preparation at our training camp, I was thinking about it and trying to prepare the team for this very difficult stage," said the Pole.

"It's just amazing -- it's difficult to find a way to describe this feeling."

An own goal by Al Hilal's Andre Carrillo early in the second half made the difference in front of almost 55,000 fans in Saitama, north of Tokyo.

Al Hilal dominated possession in the first half but Urawa held firm and forced the lead when Marius Hoiibraten's 48th-minute header forced Carrillo into

a mistake amid strong winds.

The final whistle sparked wild celebrations among a crowd known for being Japan's most boisterous supporters.

Urawa captain Hiroki Sakai, who was named player of the tournament, said the fans had created "a special atmosphere" and urged his team-mates to give them more to celebrate in the months to come.

"Whether they continue to support us is all up to us," said the defender.

"We still have league and cup games to come and if we keep winning then they will support us, but we can't take them for granted."

BUSY SCHEDULE

Al Hilal were looking to win a record fifth continental title and a third in four

seasons. The Saudi side were without injured captain Salman al Faraj and suspended star winger Salem al Dawsari, who was sent off late in the first leg for kicking out at Urawa's Ken Iwao.

Coach Ramon Diaz refused to blame his team's busy schedule, which saw them lose 5-3 to Real Madrid in the Club World Cup final in February.

"This is normal when you play for Al Hilal," said the Argentine, whose club have been linked with a multi-million dollar move for Lionel Messi.

"It was a tough game and we have played many tough games in a short space of time, but this is our destiny. We can't do anything about it."

The two teams were meeting in the final of Asia's premier club competition

for the third time in six years. Urawa won in 2017 but Al Hilal came out on top two years later.

The Saudis had early chances through Odion Ighalo and Michael but Urawa's Shinzo Koroki, who scored his team's goal in the first leg, hit the crossbar with a flying volley midway through the first half.

Urawa goalkeeper Shusaku Nishikawa kept his team in the game and the home team defended with calm assurance once they took the lead in the second half.

"As a defender you're trying to keep a clean sheet -- if you keep a clean sheet, you won't lose," said Sakai.

"I believed that my team-mates would score, and after we got the goal, all I had to do was do my job." — AFP

Azam takes Pakistan to top ODI ranking

KARACHI: Babar Azam scored a superb century on Friday to help lift Pakistan to the top of the one-day international rankings after a thumping 102-run victory in the fourth match against New Zealand in Karachi.

Azam stroked a 117-ball 107 and also became the fastest batter to reach 5,000 ODI runs, as his team made 334-6 in their 50 overs.

His 18th ODI hundred took him past the mark in his 97th innings in the format, beating former South Africa batter Hashim Amla's previous record of 101 innings.

New Zealand were bowled out for 232 in 43.4 overs with skipper Tom Latham (60), Mark Chapman (46) and Daryl Mitchell (34) offering some

resistance. Leg-spinner Usama Mir led Pakistan's bowling charge with a career-best 4-43 while pacers Mohammad Wasim (3-40) and Haris Rauf (2-37) also impressed.

The win gave Pakistan a 4-0 lead in the five-match series and took them to number one for the first time since the International Cricket Council officially recognised the rankings in 2005.

Pakistan's previous highest ODI ranking was third which they attained in January 2018 and again in June 2022.

"I will say that the credit goes to the entire team and support staff for becoming the number-one ranked ODI team," said Azam. "We built the momentum and worked towards this goal," he added. — AFP

Alcaraz sets up Struff final in Madrid



MADRID: Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz celebrated his 20th birthday on Friday by reaching the Madrid Open final, likening himself to "a bull" in his straight sets win over Borna Coric.

The world number two was at his best to defeat the Croatian 6-4, 6-3. He will face Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff, the world number 65, who had originally been knocked out in qualifying before winning a reprieve, in Sunday's final. He came from a set down to see off 121st-ranked Karatsev 4-6, 6-3, 6-4 and become the first 'lucky loser' to go all the way to a Masters final.

Alcaraz said he called upon some of the inner motivation which helped him triumph at the US Open in New York last year when he captured his maiden Grand Slam crown.

"There was a moment when I repeated what I repeated at the US Open, that I'm a bull, and that I could do it, and it helped me," he explained.

Alcaraz sealed the match with a break when Coric went long, ensuring he reached the final only dropping one set en route, against Emil Ruusuvuori.

The top seed was able to celebrate with a birthday cake, offered to him by the tournament organisers after his victory. The only dampener for Alcaraz was news that Spanish compatriot and 22-time major winner Rafael Nadal would miss next week's Italian Open through injury.

Nadal hasn't played since the Australian Open in January due to a hip injury and is now a serious doubt for the French Open in three weeks' time. — AFP



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MSX records best trading value



MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) recorded last April the best trading value during the current year with RO 122.4 million, benefiting from the increase in trading on a number of stocks and bonds, most notably Oman Cement, Abraaj Energy Services, Bank Muscat and Omantel.

The trading value increased last April by 30.7 per cent compared from its level in March, which amounted to RO 93.6 million. However, the listing of Abraaj Energy Services in mid-March, the approval of dividends by public joint-stock companies, and the announcement by a number of companies of positive developments in their operations share in the high turnover in the months of March and April.

Oman Cement Company topped the most traded companies with RO 75.3 million, representing 61.5 per cent of the total trading value.

In April, the sale of the Oman Investment Authority's stake in Oman Cement Company amounting to 59.58 per cent of the company's capital was executed to Huaxin Cement Company Limited, which is one of the top 10 manufacturers for cement in the world.

The capital of Oman Cement Company is about RO 33.1 million and according to the disclosure issued by the company, the initial value of the deal is about \$193.1 million.

The agreement allows the buyer the right to adjust the purchase price after the completion of the implementation of the deal to take into account the levels of net cash and working capital. As on the acquisition date, the two parties will compensate each other for any differences between the initial consideration and the actual consideration.

— ONA

Oman strengthens ties with Singapore

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 6

Oman's Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP) Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef led a recent high-level trade and investment delegation to Singapore.

As well as participating in extremely productive discussions with a number of government and commercial organisations including the Ministry of Trade and Industry, Singapore Economic Development Board and Enterprise Singapore, the delegation that included representatives from the Ministry of Energy and Minerals; Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources; Oman Investment Authority; the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones & Free Zones; ASYAD; OQ; and Fisheries Development Oman engaged with Singaporean investors looking to enter as well as expand their presence in the Middle East.

According to Faisal al Nabhani, MoCIIP's Director of International Cooperation and Trade Relations, the significant level of attention generated by the visit came as no surprise given the international accolades Oman's economy has recently received: "At the start of the



year FDI Intelligence ranked Oman fourth globally in its FDI Standouts Watchlist 2023 while just last month Oman was projected to be the fastest growing economy in the GCC in 2023 by the World Bank and the IMF predicted Oman will have the highest economic growth rate in the Arab World in 2024."

"This visit, when the world's attention is very much focused on us and our economy, presented an outstanding opportunity to build on the strong trade and investment relations we enjoy with Singapore.

We were able to showcase the impacts and ambitions of Oman Vision 2040, the enlightened economic strategy that is driving our development and progress. I should say that it is these impacts — the differences Oman Vision 2040 has already made — that have earned us this international recognition," remarked Al Nabhani. Amongst the most notable differences made possible by Oman Vision 2040, in the MoCIIP Director's opinion, are the pro-enterprise enhancements to Oman's commercial regulatory

and legislative framework and the range of business-friendly initiatives introduced.

"The new Invest Oman Lounge, designed to support investors as they set up operations, is a good example of this and, of course, there is the hugely successful Invest Easy, the government's portal for registering new businesses which since the launch of the new licensing service in April 2021 has issued more than 351,000 licenses — over 69,000 of them to international investors."

Oman and Singapore already

enjoy strong trade relations with Oman's non-oil exports to Singapore increasing from \$152 million in 2021 to \$214 million in 2022. A significant rise of 40 per cent.

"As the figures show, Singapore is a key market for Omani goods, particularly chemicals, iron, steel, machinery, plastics and cosmetics.

Singaporean consumers are known for their high standards of quality, and Omani companies are well-positioned to meet these standards. There is considerable potential for growth."

Al Nabhani added: "While Singapore is a relatively small island nation of almost 6 million, it is an ideal launching pad for Omani companies to enter the lucrative trading bloc of Southeast Asia — Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia and Indonesia — home to over 685 million people."

The delegation's visit to Singapore is part of a broader effort to enhance economic ties between Oman and countries around the world as the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion works to attract foreign investment and promote non-oil exports, supporting economic diversification and creating new opportunities for growth.

Oman's refinery products output jumps by 40.4%

MUSCAT: The total refinery products in the Sultanate of Oman jump by 40.4 per cent at the end of March 2023, compared to the same period in 2022, according to preliminary statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The statistics showed the production of motor fuel (91) increased by 61.5 per cent, to reach 4,626,600 barrels until end of March, compared to the same period in 2022, which witnessed the production of 2,865,100 barrels. Its sales, on the other hand reached 3,456,400 barrels.

Meanwhile, its exports increased by 191.2 per cent, to reach 1,585,000 barrels. The production of motor fuel (95) amounted to 2,633,700 barrels, with a decrease of 7.8 per cent, compared to the same period in 2022, which amounted to 2,855,400 barrels. Its sales decreased by 3.1

per cent to reach 2,856,500 barrels, while exports amounted to 35,000 barrels, down by 95.8 per cent.

The production of gas oil (diesel) until the end of last March increased by 40.1 per cent to reach 8,310,400 barrels.

TURN TO PAGE 15

PDO to diversify into carbon capture, blue hydrogen in Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MAY 6

Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), the biggest oil and gas producer of the Sultanate of Oman, has announced a landmark foray into Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) — an emerging multibillion dollar global industry billed as critical to achieving a zero carbon economy for Oman and the wider world.

At the same time, the majority state-owned energy company also plans to diversify into the production of blue hydrogen, a commercially valuable low-carbon commodity closely associated with the deployment of CCUS technologies.

Blue hydrogen is also seen as a transition fuel before zero-carbon green hydrogen becomes available



NEW REVENUE STREAMS: UNDER AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH SHELL LAST MAY, PDO IS JOINTLY COLLABORATING ON CCUS FOR BLUE HYDROGEN PRODUCTION ON BLOCK 10

starting from 2030.

According to PDO Managing Director Steve Phimister (pictured), the twin initiatives will help unlock new revenue streams for the company. "PDO has a strategy pillar to diversify its revenue stream as a part of



diversifying the Omani economy per Oman Vision 2040.

By leveraging our existing skills and asset base, the aim is to move first and foremost into carbon capture, utilisation and storage," Phimister said.

"Within this field, the scope is to be a user of CO2 — principally for EOR (enhanced oil recovery) and EGR (enhanced gas recovery) purposes — and in May 2022 we signed an agreement with Shell

Development Oman to jointly study and collaborate on CCUS for blue hydrogen production on Block 10 given the natural adjacency between CCUS and blue hydrogen," the Managing Director stated in an interview featured in The Energy Year, a London-based energy-centric news portal.

The announcement is set to further buoy a nascent bid, led largely by a handful of climate-tech startups, to kindle the growth of a

CCUS industry in Oman. Through Direct Air Capture (DAC), carbon mineralisation and other such initiatives, the rudiments of a future CCUS industry are being laid.

By scaling these technologies to capture, for example, CO2 emissions from large energy-intensive industries, CCUS advocates see the potential for either the utilisation of CO2 for various oilfield or industrial applications, or its sequestration underground. For PDO, however, the focus is currently on the 'utilisation' part of CCUS.

"That means building up the infrastructure and the capabilities to use that CO2, mainly for EOR practices," the Managing Director explained in the interview.

"Our strategy then goes on to look at the sequestration aspect

— the process of capturing and storing atmospheric carbon dioxide — as we have a number of sites in which we can provide sequestration not only for our own emissions but also in the service of third parties in their efforts to decarbonise their businesses.

These include aquifer-based sites or depleted reservoirs."

Significantly, PDO will also support the carbon capture and decarbonisation goals of the industrial, transport, housing and other economic sectors that are emitters of planet-warming CO2, he said.

"In short, CCUS will become pivotal, with PDO strongly positioned to provide additional services to the country in the segment while playing a major role in blue hydrogen developments too," Phimister added.

Bank Muscat honoured by Visa for providing customers with highest number of Fifa World Cup 2022 hospitality packages globally

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, was recently commended by Visa for providing the highest number of Fifa World Cup hospitality packages by any bank globally to its customers.

Congratulating the bank for bringing joy to its customers by continuously implementing a customer-centric vision, Visa officials handed over Fifa World Cup 2022 memorabilia, a corner flag used at Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, to Abdulnasir N al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking, Bank Muscat.

Speaking on the occasion, Abdulnasir N al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking, Bank Muscat said: “We thank Fifa and Visa for their valuable efforts in facilitating this unique opportunity in Oman, which has brought great joy to our customers.

This joint campaign was a great success and we thank all our customers who participated enthusiastically in it.

The organisation of this



promotion reflects the importance attached by the bank to society's overall progress and development including the many benefits of participating in sports.

The bank is proud to elevate the experience associated with all the thrilling action at the Fifa

World Cup, courtesy of Visa. We also thank all our customers for their strong trust and confidence in the bank and its best-in-class products and services.”

Manish Gautam, Visa's Country Manager for Oman, said, “As the Official Payment Technology

Partner of Fifa, Visa is in a unique position to join our partners in creating exciting experiences for Visa cardholders.

Bank Muscat's Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 related initiatives did not only reward and delight their Visa cardholders but also contributed to the growth of digital commerce in the country.

We are therefore delighted to recognise our longstanding partner, Bank Muscat, for their efforts in bringing the magic of Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 to their Visa cardholders with this exciting, once in a lifetime promotion that also helped drive business for merchants in Oman.”

Thanks to the partnership between Bank Muscat and Visa, football enthusiasts in the Sultanate of Oman had a unique opportunity to experience the thrills and excitement of the crowning glory of world football at the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa.

As many as 102 people enjoyed a ‘once in a lifetime’ chance to enjoy matches in Doha thanks to all inclusive hospitality packages

which included airline tickets, hotel accommodation and match tickets for selected matches.

The winners were chosen by raffle draws in September after Bank Muscat launched the campaign earlier in 2022, wherein all Bank Muscat Visa Credit and Prepaid Cardholders were automatically entered into the draws when they used their cards to make a minimum cumulative spend of RO 50 or more during the promotional period, which ran from May till end-August 2022. Every additional spending of RO 50 ensured additional chances of participation in the draws.

In 2022, Bank Muscat also launched a special limited-edition Visa Prepaid Card to celebrate the Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022, courtesy of Visa.

Bank Muscat's contactless cards are being used by customers to make secure payments online and at millions of PoS terminals in Oman and around the world as well as for ATM withdrawals. They feature the latest security standards and state-of-the-art technology.

Sohar International is platinum sponsor at AFCM



MUSCAT: With a strong aspiration to serve as a significant catalyst in propelling the economy of the Sultanate of Oman, Sohar International is delighted to be a part of the upcoming Arab Federation of Capital Markets (AFCM) conference as a Platinum sponsor.

This prestigious event is the largest gathering of stock exchanges and capital markets in the Arab world and is being hosted by the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX). Held under the auspices of Nasser bin Khamis bin Ali al Jashmi, the Secretary General of Ministry of Finance, the conference will take place on May 9-10, 2023, at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel, Muscat.

Ahmed al Musalmi stated, “We are honoured to join this esteemed platform, which convenes distinguished leaders from across the Arab capital markets industry at an opportune moment for exchanging insights and perspectives. The Sultanate of Oman's steadfast commitment to economic diversification and the recent drive to expedite public offerings have resulted in a growing inflow of foreign investments into the country.

This conference aims to promote greater integration and liquidity among exchanges throughout the region, while also catalysing collaboration and aligning efforts to fortify the Arab capital markets on all fronts. By doing so, we aim to inspire and empower businesses, ultimately elevating the region's capital markets to new heights.”

Representing Sohar International at the conference will be Ahmed al Musalmi, CEO of Sohar International, who will deliver an insightful presentation on the key global and regional economic drivers, and Oman's position in this context. Al Musalmi will also touch upon local trends, the business and economic landscape, highlight the banking scene in Oman, and how Sohar International is positioned to play a positive catalyst role and its commitment to positioning Oman as an attractive investment destination.

Also in attendance will be Manish Dhameja, Chief Wholesale Banking Officer, and Hanife Ymer, SVP and Head of Environment, Social and Governance, who will participate in the panel discussions. During the two-day conference, Manish Dhameja will explore ESG regulations and the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures reporting, while Hanife will discuss reducing carbon emissions and transitioning to climate leadership in the panel discussions.

ahlibank Q1 2023 net profit rises 11.1 per cent

MUSCAT: ahlibank marked the first quarter of 2023 on a high note, powered by an extensive network of branches and a selection of innovative products & services and showcasing its strategic growth in the country as one of the most favoured banks.

ahlibank built upon its robust 2022 growth phase by reinforcing its operations with the inauguration of a new headquarters and signalling its intent to strengthen its 15-year presence in the market with equally impressive first quarter results for 2023.

According to financial indicators, ahlibank's customer deposits grew by 7.3%, reaching RO 2,339.7 million during the first quarter, compared to the same period in 2022. Loans, advances, and financing expanded by 5.6%, amounting to RO 2,571.7 million.

The bank's operating income increased by 4.6% (RO 23.3 million), and its operating expenses rose by 4.5% (RO 10.2 million).

In line with its overall performance, profit during the period reached RO 8.4 million increasing by 11.1%, in the first quarter of 2023 compared to the same period in 2022.

Announcing the first quarter results, Said bin Abdullah al Hatmi (pictured), CEO of ahlibank, stated, “2023 started on a very



THE BANK'S OPERATING INCOME INCREASED BY 4.6% (RO 23.3 MILLION), AND ITS OPERATING EXPENSES ROSE BY 4.5% (RO 10.2 MILLION).

positive note for ahlibank, with its new head office symbolising its strategic growth over the past decade and a half.

This set the stage for successive milestones that bolstered our deposits and profits. The coming months promise to enhance this sustained growth with new products and services that will reaffirm our commitment to accelerating digitalisation, partnering with the government in its economic development plans, and empowering customers with exceptional banking experiences.”

As the coming months reveal exciting plans and offers, it is worth highlighting some of the bank's recent accomplishments. Of particular significance is the comprehensive Systematic Investment Plan (SIP) for Private Banking and Wealth Management clients, designed to assist

and support customers in achieving their long-term financial goals.

Additionally, ahlibank launched A'maali, the SME Value Plus Account, catering to small and medium enterprises by offering financial solutions that enhance business potential and support new ventures.

Al Hatmi praised the bank's executive management and team members for their tireless efforts in shaping the fortunes of the bank and upholding its vision to be a dynamic and innovative centre of banking. “Our shared vision and values will ensure that we remain focused on customer service. We will now carve our niche as the most preferred bank for customers from all walks of life,” he added.

As ahlibank forges ahead, it remains committed to providing outstanding banking experiences by continually adapting to the evolving needs of its customers. Its dedication to exceptional customer service, combined with its strong financial performance and innovative solutions, reinforces its reputation as a leading banking institution in the region.

As the bank continues to break new ground and expand its offerings, it remains steadfast in its mission to create value for its stakeholders and contribute to the nation's economic development.

Positive response on KR Eshraqa's participation in MoSD's first forum for people with disabilities



MUSCAT: Dedicated to advancing its pioneering role in social responsibility, community development and service, KR (Khimji Ramdas) Eshraqa recently participated in the first forum for people with disabilities that took place at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

The three-day forum was organised by the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and sought to promote and empower people with disabilities, by exploring ways to utilise their capabilities and skills with the aim of integrating them into society.

KR Eshraqa's stall at the forum received a remarkable response from visitors across age-groups, who were oriented with its various social initiatives, and current projects in education, health, community well-being and training.

Highlighting the importance of integrating people of determination into society, within the framework of Oman's Vision 2040, Nailish Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas Group mentioned: “At Eshraqa we have a long-standing commitment to promoting inclusivity for people of determination. We firmly believe in supporting initiatives that

enhance their wellbeing and promote their integration into society. Our participation in the Ministry of Social Development's (MoSD) inaugural forum for people with disabilities aligns perfectly with this vision. Through our involvement in such events, we aim to empower people of determination and create an equitable society for all, so that they can realise their full potential and participate actively in shaping their own future and that of the nation.”

Shaikh Rashid bin Ahmed al Shamsi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Social Development stated: “Akin to private sector companies such as the KR Group, the MoSD firmly believes that every individual, regardless of ability, should have equal opportunities to thrive and succeed.

We recognise the potential of people with disabilities and seek to promote their participation in various aspects of society. Through forums of this nature, we aim to build a platform to enhance social protection for persons with disabilities and encourage their active involvement in society, leading to their contribution to the sustainable development of our nation in the time to come.”



MEDRC announces winners of Omani Young Water Researchers Award

MUSCAT: MEDRC has announced the winners of the 'Omani Young Water Researchers Award 2022' at an official ceremony held under the auspices of Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Oman.

Established by MEDRC and sponsored by the Omar Zawawi Establishment, the Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Oman, the Omani Young Water Researchers Award highlights the exceptional work of young water researchers at undergraduate and postgraduate level in Oman.

Stella Kloth, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Oman, said: "Although the Omani Young Research Award will be awarded to the winners, all your research in the water sector is



crucial to support the sustainable future we are all striving towards.

"Therefore it is important for the Netherlands to promote research in the field of water to continuously improve water efficiency and protection from water, thereby contributing to SDG 6 (clean water and sanitation). The changing context of our climate requires adaptation for all countries to come up with innovative ways for protection and using water resources in efficient ways.

"The research of the Young Omani Water Research Award showed me the awareness and the high potential of Omani researchers in water management and a promising future for the country."

Speaking at the award ceremony, MEDRC Centre Director, Ciarán Ó Cuinn, said: "This initiative celebrates the great achievements of the next generation of Omani water scientists. All applicants and research projects were world-class, focusing on issues of environmental

and economic importance. The future is bright for Omani water research!"

He added: "We are particularly proud to partner with the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on this Award. The Netherlands is such a world leader in the water sector and we are delighted to work with them to support excellence in water research. I want to recognise the long partnership with Omar Zawawi Establishment, Oman Water and Wastewater Services

Company for their ongoing support and guidance in this wonderful initiative and the development of Omani excellence in water research."

The winners announced this year are as follows:

Postgraduate Category:

1st Place: Abdullah bin Sulaiman al Fazari, Florida Atlantic University, USA, for the research paper titled "Detection of Water Leaks in Water Distribution Networks Using Synthetic Aperture Radar Satellite Data in Muscat, Oman".

2nd Place: Shahad bint Mattar al Yaqoubi, Sultan Qaboos University, for the research paper titled "Fresh-Saline Water Dynamics in Coastal Aquifers: Sand Tank Experiments with MAR-wells Injecting at Intermittent Regimes".

Undergraduate Category:

1st Place: Najwa bint Abdulwahid al Balushi, Sultan

Qaboos University, for the research paper titled "Functionalized Graphene-based Carbon Nitride 2D Nanosheets for the Effective Separation of Oil and Water from Oil Contaminated Wastewater".

2nd Place: Buthaina bint Mohammed al Moqbali, International Maritime College Oman, for the research paper titled "Water Treatment by Graphene/g-C₃N₄ Material Under Solar Light".

Wastewater Research Category:

1st Place: Said bin Humaid al Saeedi, Sultan Qaboos University, for the research paper titled "Amoxicillin Removal from Medical Wastewater Using an Eco-friendly Aqueous Two-phase Extraction System".

2nd Place: Zainab bint Khalfan al Haji, Sultan Qaboos University, for the research paper titled "Arsenic and Bromate Removal from Water Using Date Palm and Mesquite Biochar".

Oman's refinery products output jumps by 40.4%

FROM PAGE 13

Its sales increased by 5.9 per cent, to reach 3,479,700 barrels while its exports also increased by 70.7 per cent, compared to the same period in 2022 with 4,635,000 barrels.

Meanwhile, the production of jet fuel jumped to 2,694,500 barrels, an increase of 98.7 per cent. Liquefied petroleum gas production increased by 40.5 per cent, to reach 1,848,700 barrels, and its sales increased by 11.3 per cent to 1,919,200 barrels.

As for petrochemicals, gasoline production also increased by 302.6 per cent until end of March to reach 34,700 metric tonnes, compared to the same period in 2022. Its exports jumped to 39,900 metric tonnes, an increase of 365.1 per cent.

The production of paraxylene reached 115,500 metric tonnes, while its exports were reached 114 500 metric tonnes.

Polypropylene production increased by 53.2 per cent with 67,600 metric tonnes, and its sales increased by 37.4 per cent, to reach 6,900 metric tonnes, while its exports increased by 56.3 per cent to reach 63,300 metric tonnes. — ONA

Satoshi Nakamoto's journey: Unveiling the ascendance of cryptocurrency

SAIF AL ABRI

Movies and TV series offer an escape from the monotony of our world, but occasionally reality presents us with remarkable surprises. One such example is the story of Satoshi Nakamoto and the birth of Bitcoin, the first decentralised currency.

In today's financial landscape, the service sector reigns as one of the most profitable industries, comprising 8.5 per cent of the US economy.

This raises the question of how a sector devoid of physical products manages to outperform manufacturing and agriculture.

The answer is simple: there is a vast amount of easily accessible money, approximately \$35.2 trillion, circulating. The financial sector acts as a bottleneck, skimming profits by facilitating the smooth circulation of this money.

The concept of a decentralised transaction system that bypasses bank fees and surveillance holds great appeal. However, the challenge lies in enabling peer-to-peer value transfers without relying



on a trusted central authority. This puzzle was finally solved with the arrival of Satoshi Nakamoto.

On October 31, 2008, at 14:10:00 EDT, an enigmatic figure named Satoshi Nakamoto sent an e-mail introducing a new, fully peer-to-peer electronic cash system.

Attached was the Bitcoin white paper, a groundbreaking work that explained the system's functioning. Satoshi Nakamoto's humble approach concealed the revolutionary potential of

blockchain technology.

By November 26, 2021, the total value of all bitcoins surpassed \$1.03 trillion, representing around 2.9 per cent of the narrow money supply.

However, the debate about whether cryptocurrencies will replace traditional currencies remains contentious.

Scepticism comes from notable figures like Warren Buffet and Paul Krugman, who question cryptocurrencies' ability to function as a medium of exchange and a

store of value due to their limited acceptance and volatile prices. Scalability, energy consumption, and legal and regulatory concerns also impeded their widespread adoption.

On the other hand, billions of dollars have been invested in crypto projects, and influential figures like Elon Musk and Jack Dorsey believe in the potential of cryptocurrencies to become the currency of the future.

They argue that the current

IN TODAY'S FINANCIAL LANDSCAPE, THE SERVICE SECTOR REIGNS AS ONE OF THE MOST PROFITABLE INDUSTRIES, COMPRISING 8.5 PER CENT OF THE US ECONOMY. THIS RAISES THE QUESTION OF HOW A SECTOR DEVOID OF PHYSICAL PRODUCTS MANAGES TO OUTPERFORM MANUFACTURING AND AGRICULTURE.

monetary system suffers from crises, instability, high fees and excessive centralisation.

Throughout history, currencies have evolved in response to economic and ecological conditions. In today's digital age, where convenience drives most transactions, a transition to a crypto-dominated system seems plausible.

The Bank of England even contemplates the possibility of introducing a digital currency known as "Bitcoin".

The real question is not whether the money will become crypto but whether it will remain centralised or shift towards decentralisation.

Making definitive predictions at this stage is premature; only time will reveal the true outcome.

Ten tips to accelerate your entrepreneurship path



STEFANO VIRGILLI
stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member of the International Press Association

In the world of entrepreneurship, there are countless strategies and tactics that can help you achieve success. From

marketing to finance to product development, the options are endless. However, there are some tried and true principles that have proven to be effective time and time again.

1. As a founder, it's important to show the path forward and be confident in your vision. By being opinionated and having a firm handshake, you can build trust with your customers and investors and create a strong brand identity.

2. As an entrepreneur, you are not defined by your resume or your past experiences. You are a free human being with unique talents and skills.

Don't be afraid to take risks and pursue your passions, even

if they don't fit neatly into a traditional career path.

3. One of the keys to creating a successful start-up is finding something that is fringe but ultimately right. By going against conventional wisdom and finding a unique angle, you can differentiate yourself from the competition.

However, it's not enough to just be different. You must also be able to justify your crazy idea and pitch it in a truly compelling way.

4. As a founder, you start off with 100 per cent of the pie. If you manage to get to product market fit, you could have a company with an exit in the tens or hundreds of millions or even billions of dollars.

The key is to constantly be learning and adapting as you grow.

This will help you stay ahead of the curve and create a company that can scale quickly.

5. Design is more than just aesthetics. It's about empathising with users, illuminating what's important, minimising what's not, and creating great UIs and layouts. By focusing on design, you can create a product that stands out and resonates with users.

6. Money is a finite resource, and wasting it on ineffective marketing or unnecessary expenses can sink your start-up.

If you have to cut, do it once and do it deeply so that you can

avoid doing it again. Figure out a realistic and attainable plan to get to the next station, and be disciplined in your spending.

7. Time is your most valuable resource, and it's important to use it wisely. Make a product that can make money for you while you sleep, and focus on creating systems that can scale without requiring constant input from you.

8. In the fast-paced world of start-ups, it's easy to get caught up in the chaos and lose sight of your goals.

Meditation can help you act calmly even in the face of uncertainty and stress. By breaking apart what you truly want versus your modeling of

others, you can reach a life that is truly authored by you.

9. Consider search engine marketing, such as Google Ads, to gain traction and visibility for your business.

By investing in targeted advertising, you can reach the right audience and build a loyal customer base.

10. Ultimately, the goal of any start-up should be to create something that has a positive impact on the world.

Use these lessons to create a great business and maybe even a start-up that touches a billion people. By staying true to your vision and focusing on what matters, you can create something truly remarkable.

Classifieds



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A close-up of a hand on a black steering wheel. In the background, a white car with red and black stripes is visible.

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An advertisement for property rental services. It features a 3D orange figure holding a blue and white megaphone. The text "HAVE A PROPERTY" is in a grey box, "FOR RENT?" is in a red banner, and "Advertise with us." is in black text. At the bottom, it says "Contact us on: 99639264" in yellow text on a red background.

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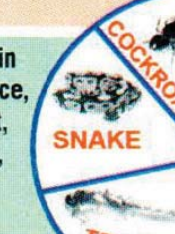
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A graphic of a smartphone screen with a light yellow background featuring faint social media icons. At the top, the text "Now get news on the go" is displayed in blue. Below this is the WhatsApp logo. The text "To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER," is centered. Below that, "WhatsApp" is written in blue, followed by "<your name> to" in black. The large blue number "96473232" is prominently displayed. At the bottom of the screen, a dark blue bar contains the website "www.omanobserver.om", social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, and the handle "@omanobserver".

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Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
992998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

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Musalam Al Saidi
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HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER



MUSCAT: Before His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq, Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries (Dr. Abdulhadi bin Ahmed al-Tajer), Chairman of the Supreme Court (Sayed bin Shabib al-Busaidi), Chairman of the Judiciary (Sayed bin Shabib al-Busaidi), and the members of the Council of Ministers, His Majesty administered the oath to the new Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dr. Abdulhadi bin Ahmed al-Tajer, in the Throne Room.

NEW YORK: António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations, has commended the role of the Sultan in supporting international efforts to establish security and peace in Yemen.

Guterres said that the international community is grateful to the Sultan for his role in supporting efforts aimed at establishing peace and security in Yemen.

"The United Nations values this role and continues to work with the Sultan to support the Yemeni people," Guterres added.

Guterres also welcomed the Sultan's role in the Middle East for his role in supporting efforts aimed at establishing peace and security in the region.

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Health has announced that the number of COVID-19 cases in Oman has increased to 10, with 10 new cases reported today.

The Ministry of Health has also announced that the number of recoveries has increased to 10, with 10 new recoveries reported today.

The Ministry of Health has also announced that the number of deaths has increased to 10, with 10 new deaths reported today.

STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN

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The Ministry of Finance has also announced that the number of recoveries has increased to 10, with 10 new recoveries reported today.

The Ministry of Finance has also announced that the number of deaths has increased to 10, with 10 new deaths reported today.

SOVEREIGN PEOPLE NOT FOLLOWING SOCIAL DISTANCING

The Ministry of Health has announced that the number of COVID-19 cases in Oman has increased to 10, with 10 new cases reported today.

The Ministry of Health has also announced that the number of recoveries has increased to 10, with 10 new recoveries reported today.

The Ministry of Health has also announced that the number of deaths has increased to 10, with 10 new deaths reported today.

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Planning a hiking trip in Wadi Al Sahtan? Make sure to remember these

Oman's mountain trails are not just popular among locals and tourists, but they are also gaining popularity internationally. The country has worked tirelessly to create and maintain hiking trails suitable for all levels of hikers. These are a few things to remember... **P20**



Looted Monastery Manuscripts Rediscovered During Office Renovation

IN 2008, SWANN AUCTION Galleries in Manhattan sold three Greek-language manuscripts from the 16th and 17th centuries to an antiquities dealer who returned them two years later after concluding they might have been looted. The dealer was reimbursed, but the auction house, its officials said, was unable to reach the person who had consigned the items. So, they sat on a shelf for more than a decade, all but lost in the shuffle of daily operations. Three months ago, though, the manuscripts resurfaced when Swann's chief financial officer went through his office before a renovation. There on a shelf in a long-forgotten plastic bag were

the manuscripts, which are believed to have been stolen from a Greek monastery in the midst of World War I. They are thought to have been lost in 1917 when Bulgarian combatants are said to have plundered nearly 900 items from the Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa Patriarchal and Stavropegial Monastery, often called Kosinitza, in northern Greece. The manuscripts will be sent back to the monastery, and their return was commemorated on Friday in a repatriation ceremony in lower Manhattan. After the ceremony, arranged by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America was planning



to travel to Constantinople to deliver the manuscripts to Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, leader of the Eastern Orthodox Church. From there, the items will go back to Kosinitza. "It is a blessing for the monastic sisterhood at the monastery of Theotokos Eikosiphoinissa to see the contents of their former library slowly

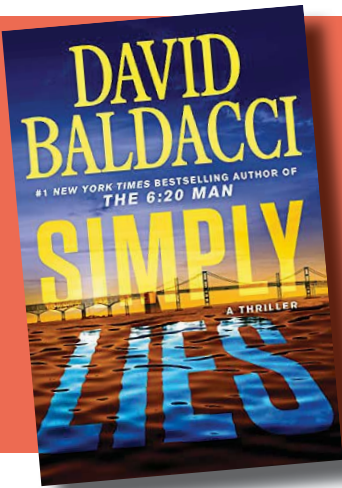
being returned to them," Elpidophoros said in a statement. He said the church hopes that other organisations with manuscripts stolen from the monastery would also return them. The sweeping scale of systematic looting during World War II by Nazi forces tends to overshadow the fact that artworks were routinely plundered

during other conflicts. Roman generals, Alexander the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte were known to have looted artworks during military campaigns, said Leila Amineddoleh, a lawyer who specialises in art and cultural heritage law and who has been serving as a consultant for lawyers seeking the return of documents they say were taken from the monastery. But although some looting efforts are carried out in an organised fashion on behalf of an empire and its aspirations, Amineddoleh said the turmoil of war also provides cover for thefts by fighters who act on their own, not on orders. "Sometimes, looting is done nation to nation," she said. "Sometimes, it's done by individuals as a crime of opportunity." The plundering of Kosinitza would appear to fall into the second category. The monastery was founded in about the fifth century and, by the 18th century, was said to have a collection of about 1,300 volumes, an Eastern Orthodox Church official wrote in a letter in 2015. The official added that the monastery was attacked in 1917 by "marauding Bulgarian guerilla forces" who sacked its library. — **NYT**

READ

SIMPLY LIES BY DAVID BALDACCI

A former detective becomes the prime suspect in a murder case involving a man with mob ties who was in witness protection.



TRAVEL TALES

The treasury site of the ancient city of Petra is illuminated during a 3D mapping show, in Petra, Jordan. — **Reuters**



LIFESTYLE

Founder of Museum of Brands, Robert Opie, poses with a scrap book from 1953 to mark the coronation of Britain's Queen Elizabeth II, which forms part of his huge collection of artefacts, consumer items and souvenirs on display at the museum in London, Britain. — **Reuters**





Is Tom Ford Saying Farewell to Fashion With His Surprise ‘Final Collection’?

Well, that was anticlimactic. Almost 30 years after he transformed Gucci, seemingly overnight, from a bourgeois leather brand to the hottest thing in fashion, ultimately making it into the cornerstone of the luxury group PPR (now Kering); about 20 years after he shocked the industry by walking away from that job, as well as from his post at the top of Yves Saint Laurent, and announced he was going to make movies (and then made a critical hit); 13 years after he returned to fashion, this time under his own name; and about five months after he and his business partner, Domenico De Sole, sold that brand to Estée Lauder for almost \$3 billion, Tom Ford may be finally saying farewell to fashion. This time, most likely, for real.

Wednesday, he dropped a surprise “final collection” (according to a news release) in the form of three short videos by photographer Steven Klein. They feature a bevy of supermodels (Amber Valletta, Karlie Kloss, Karen Elson, Joan Smalls) wearing archive designs from Ford’s last 13 years and variously writhing, strutting and otherwise emoting while trapped in a series of glass boxes. Outside, the designer himself, in signature dark suit, white shirt and dark glasses, walks by alone, barely visible in the dimness, occasionally pausing to lift a hand and direct.

The videos came unaccompanied by any statement, and Ford declined requests for comment. Neither Estée Lauder nor Zegna, which has the licence for Tom Ford fashion, could be reached for comment.

Still, the collection answered the question that had been hanging over the brand since its sale in November: Would Ford stay or go? And it cleared the way for a new designer. Rumour has it that Peter Hawkins, Ford’s longtime menswear designer, is getting the job.

But the final collection reveal also offered a marked contrast to Ford’s last grand goodbye, when he left Gucci in 2004. That one took place before a live audience, some

of its members in tears, as Ford took a bow, rose petals fell from the sky (OK, the ceiling) and a standing ovation filled the room.

And it made for an oddly subdued exit for a man who once stood astride fashion like a stubbled colossus, and who did more than anyone else to mothball the old idea of a designer and shepherd in the

Still, as a closing statement on style, the final collection seemed less like a collection than a metaphor.

The clothes themselves were the least of the matter. They were a tour through Ford’s favourite Tom Fordisms: the white, jersey goddess gown; the leopard, sequined lounge suit; the lace-and-velvet LBD; the smoking; the crystal pasties. There

athleisure — to make them relevant to a social media, pandemic world. TF-the-brand was powered more by beauty and fragrance than fashion (that’s why Lauder bought it, as opposed to, say, Kering) and the strength of Ford’s ability to sell the vaporous promise contained within.

From the vantage point of now, it looks as if Ford were Don Quixote,



era of the creative director — who really created the whole concept of creative director in the first place.

To a certain extent, it makes sense that Ford would want to stage-manage his own leaving imagery. Why not, when you can control every detail? Why let others have the final word (or look) on your career? He has nothing left to prove in fashion — building a billion-dollar brand in just over a decade on the strength of a name is an unprecedented feat. He doesn’t have to feed the beast anymore. And he is a filmmaker, after all, who now lives in Los Angeles.

was fringe and snakeskin and the occasional breastplate — the potent mix of sex and power and self-aware shtick that emerged from Halston and Saint Laurent antecedents and defined his aesthetic.

That’s OK, given that the clothes themselves (at least the womenswear) often seemed the least of the matter when it came to Tom Ford-the-brand. They were more like an epilogue to his Gucci-YSL years, cycling through some of the greatest hits, hitting them with a dose of Botox to iron out the wrinkles and then juicing them with glitz and athleisure — and glitzy

tilting at those windmills. That’s the message the final videos seem to convey, anyway: a cri de coeur about the changing fashion world and the status of women, with the designer at a remove, looking in at a scene playing out in a cage of its own making, no longer interested in the fight. The women behind the glass don’t look happy; they look pent-up and addled and upset.

Karen Elson sings an aria; Amber Valletta is in tears. The requiem seems not for Ford but for the end of the world as he knew it. Or dreamed it. He leaves it fading not into the sunset, but into the darkness. — NYT

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Is Arthritis Avoidable?



Q: WHAT CAN WE DO TO AVOID GETTING ARTHRITIS AS WE AGE?

A: What was once an easy run may feel tougher to complete. Or perhaps a challenging game of tennis might leave your hip or ankle sore for days.

Painful, stiff or swollen joints are a common complaint among older adults — and for many, they’re the first sign of what may feel like an unavoidable diagnosis: arthritis.

In a recent survey of more than 2,200 people between ages 50 and 80 in the United States, 60% said they had been told by a healthcare provider that they had some form of arthritis. And about three-quarters considered joint pain and arthritis a normal part of aging.

But arthritis is not inevitable as we age, said Kelli Dominick Allen, an exercise physiologist at the University of North Carolina School of Medicine.

“Sometimes people will start to get aches and pains in their joints and not do anything about it because they think everyone gets arthritis as they get older,” Allen said. “We shouldn’t think about arthritis as something that we just have to deal with passively.”

Arthritis is a catchall term for the more than 100 kinds of inflammatory joint conditions, each of which can arise for different reasons. Many of those causes have little to do with age, Allen said.

One form of degenerative joint disease, though, known as osteoarthritis, is somewhat more likely to occur as a person gets older, said Dr. Wayne McCormick, a geriatrician at the University of Washington School of Medicine. “It’s basically just worn-out joints,” he said.

Osteoarthritis is most commonly seen among people over 50, particularly women, Allen said.

Scientists don’t know precisely why some people are more prone to joint inflammation and pain with age than others. But about 12% of osteoarthritis cases are a result of joint injuries, such as meniscus or ligament tears, from when they were young.

Arthritis is also more common among people who have a family history of the condition, or who have certain chronic conditions such as obesity, heart disease or diabetes.

Some people may find that their joint pain limits their activities as they age. But others, whose X-rays may show significantly worn-out joints, may experience no pain, McCormick said. As a result, he added, “each person has to develop their own plan of how to stay healthy and functional with the help of their physician.”

For most people, Allen said, preventing arthritis later in life should begin many years before it is a concern — by taking steps to prevent joint injuries during sports or exercise, and recovering properly when they occur.

For those who are not at risk of developing sports-related injuries, staying physically active and maintaining a healthy weight can help to prevent excessive wear and tear of your joints and to reduce pain if arthritis sets in later in life, Allen said.

In a 2015 review of 44 clinical trials, for instance, researchers found that participants who exercised regularly had reduced knee pain related to osteoarthritis and improved physical function and quality of life.

“It actually does help if you can do low-impact exercise, like a stationary bicycle where your knees, hips and joints aren’t receiving so much impact,” McCormick said. Strengthening muscles such as the quadriceps and hamstrings helps to support the joints, he added.

In addition to regular exercise, supportive knee or ankle braces, over-the-counter pain medications such as ibuprofen or acetaminophen, or steroid injections into a problematic joint can all help relieve joint pain to varying degrees, McCormick said.

Not every option works for everyone, he added, so it’s important to explore and find what helps you to stay active.

Similarly, dietary supplements such as glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate — or herbal remedies such as boswellia (an herbal extract made from the bark of the boswellia tree) — may help relieve symptoms for some people. But there isn’t much scientific evidence to support their use, Allen said.

“There have been a fair number of clinical trials, but really mixed evidence on their effects,” she said.

But McCormick said that, in his experience, it’s “very unusual for these supplements to be harmful,” so they could be worth trying — or stopping if they don’t seem to help.

Ultimately, finding ways to live a pain-free, active and healthy lifestyle is the best way to reduce your risk of developing arthritis later in life, Allen said.

Many of the actions that reduce the risk for other chronic conditions such as diabetes or heart disease “are really powerful tools” for lowering age-related joint disease risk too, Allen said.

“Somebody who’s trying to maintain a healthy lifestyle will already be doing the things that are most important for reducing arthritis risk,” she said. — NYT



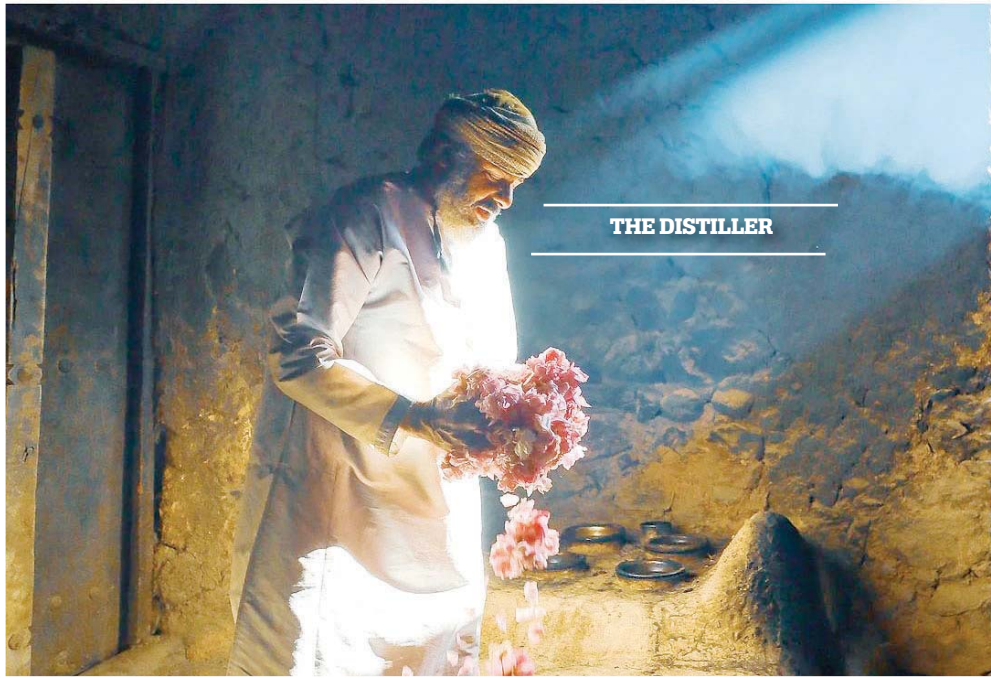
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AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Your Hair Is Going Gray. This Glitch May Explain Why.



GREY HAIR HAS long been considered a symbol of wisdom, experience, and maturity. Yet for many people, the appearance of grey hair can be a source of anxiety, prompting them to seek out various remedies and treatments to mask the natural signs of aging. While some may view grey hair as a nuisance, others see it as a badge of honour, a sign of a life well-lived. As society's attitudes towards aging continue to evolve, the debate surrounding grey hair and its place in our lives rages on. Is grey hair something to be celebrated or something to be hidden away? In this article, we'll explore the science behind grey hair, examine the cultural and social implications of its appearance, and consider what the future might hold for those of us sporting a head of silver.

Our hair turns gray when melanin-producing stem cells stop functioning properly. A new study in mice, but with implications for people, provides a clearer picture of the cellular glitches that turn hair gray. It was published last week in the journal *Nature*.

Unlike embryonic stem cells, which develop into all sorts of different organs, adult stem cells have a more set path. The melanocyte stem cells in our hair follicles are responsible for producing and maintaining the pigment in our hair.

Each hair follicle keeps immature melanocyte stem cells in storage. When needed, those cells travel from one part of the follicle to another, where proteins spur them to mature into pigment-producing cells, giving hair its hue.

The researchers tracked individual cells in mouse fur and found that the stem cells travelled back and forth within the hair follicle, transitioning into and out of their pigment-producing state. But eventually the stem cells stopped making their journey, and thus, stopped receiving protein signals to make pigment. From then on, the new hair growth didn't get its dose of melanin.

While the study was conducted with rodents, the researchers say their findings should be relevant to how human hair gets and loses its colour.

— KATE GOLEMBIEWSKI /NYT

LIFESTYLE

Last Week's Tiniest Social Media Drama Is About Olive Oil



IMITATION MAY BE the sincerest form of flattery, but not in the world of startups.

There was drama this past week in the olive oil business — and it unfolded on LinkedIn, the online haven of startup feuds, oversharing and self-mythologising odes to #founder culture.

An angry post by olive oil entrepreneur Andrew Benin caused a stir in a small corner of the Internet food world, in part because it raised a slippery question: Who owns the squeeze bottle?

Benin is CEO and co-founder of Graza, a direct-to-consumer startup launched in 2022 that sells olive oil in squeezable, forest-green plastic bottles designed for optimal drizzling and Instagramming. Whole Foods sells it, Bon Appétit gave it a rave and Food & Wine magazine called it a "cool kid olive oil." As *The Wall Street Journal* noted this year, Graza struck a "sweet spot" in the market with its two extra-virgin olive oil bottles, the Drizzle (\$20) and the Sizzle (\$15).

After quality and shipping issues last holiday season, Benin apologised to over 30,000 customers in an unusually heartfelt and detailed email. That gesture, along with posts on Graza's blog (the "Glog," as the company calls it), painted a picture of an enthusiastic founder.

Then, as he wrote this past week on LinkedIn, he faced what he called "a copycat culture." In the post, he singled out a competitor's new olive oil, which is also packaged in a squeeze bottle and marketed as something to be drizzled over pizza.

"While friendly competition was always welcome, I do view this as a blatant disrespect and am choosing to voice my discontent," Benin wrote. He tagged the company, Brightland, and its founder, Aishwarya Iyer, and included a photo of the squeeze bottle in question. "Founders know that this day will come," he wrote, adding, "Personally, I think it's ok to get miffed when folks rip you off."

Some Twitter users said Benin's post kicked off "the olive oil wars," but it should be noted that the spat was one-sided. Iyer and Brightland have not spoken publicly about the call-out. (Brightland declined to comment for this article. Graza did not respond to requests for comment.)

The reception of Benin's post seemed mixed, with many of the comments on LinkedIn chastising him for stirring up unnecessary drama. "With all due respect, you did not create the squeeze bottle," Alison Cayne, founder of Haven's Kitchen, wrote. "Chefs and home cooks have been using it for decades." The FAQ section of Graza's website even says as much.

"Get used to it," Ju Rhyu, CEO and co-founder of Hero Cosmetics, wrote in a tweet about what she called "olive oil copycat-gate." She attached four photos of products that appeared to mimic one of her own company's products, the Mighty Patch.

"I think it comes with the territory," Rhyu said. "It means you're achieving some level of success, if there are copycats out there. It's something that we try to definitely defend against, but it's not easy."

Rhyu said she first learned of the olive oil imbroglio on LinkedIn. "I did think it was poor form, calling out another founder who is an entrepreneur and really, in some ways, rekindled this category," she said of Benin's naming Iyer, who founded Brightland in 2018, in his post. She added that the post was, in her view, an "over-reaction."

Benin appeared to regret going after a rival. Hours after his original statement, he posted a follow-up on LinkedIn that included an apology to Iyer and his team at Graza. "I was heated, and reacted poorly, and have learned from the variety of comments that everyone has left today," he wrote.

For some online, the cold-pressed social media drama was a welcome distraction from the more pressing concerns outside the niche community of artisanal olive oil.

"Honestly god bless the olive oil war; this is exactly the kind of ludicrous startup-brain-worms low-stakes drama that the world needs more of right now," tweeted Helen Rosner, a New Yorker staff writer who covers food. "No villains, no victims, just top notch public ego dumbassery." — NYT

RECIPE

Crispy Baked Tofu With Sugar Snap Peas



ADDING GRATED Parmesan to a coating of cornstarch and oil makes for especially crispy tofu with a friclike crust. Here, the tofu is roasted on a sheet-pan alongside sugar snap peas and onions, which become tender and caramelised. It's a colourful spring dish that can be varied endlessly depending on the season. Try broccoli or mushrooms in winter, cherry tomatoes in summer or butternut squash in fall.

Yield: 2 to 3 servings
Total time: 1 hour 10 minutes

INGREDIENTS:
1 (14- to 16-ounce) package extra-firm or firm tofu, cut into 1-inch-thick slices
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal), plus more as needed
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper, plus more as needed
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon cornstarch
5 tablespoons grated Parmesan (see Tip; or use vegan Parmesan or nutritional yeast), plus more for serving
1 large red onion, cut into 1/4-inch wedges (about 2 cups)
12 ounces sugar snap peas, trimmed and halved crosswise
1 1/2 teaspoons fresh lemon juice, plus more for serving
1/3 cup chopped fresh mint, cilantro or dill (or a combination), for garnish

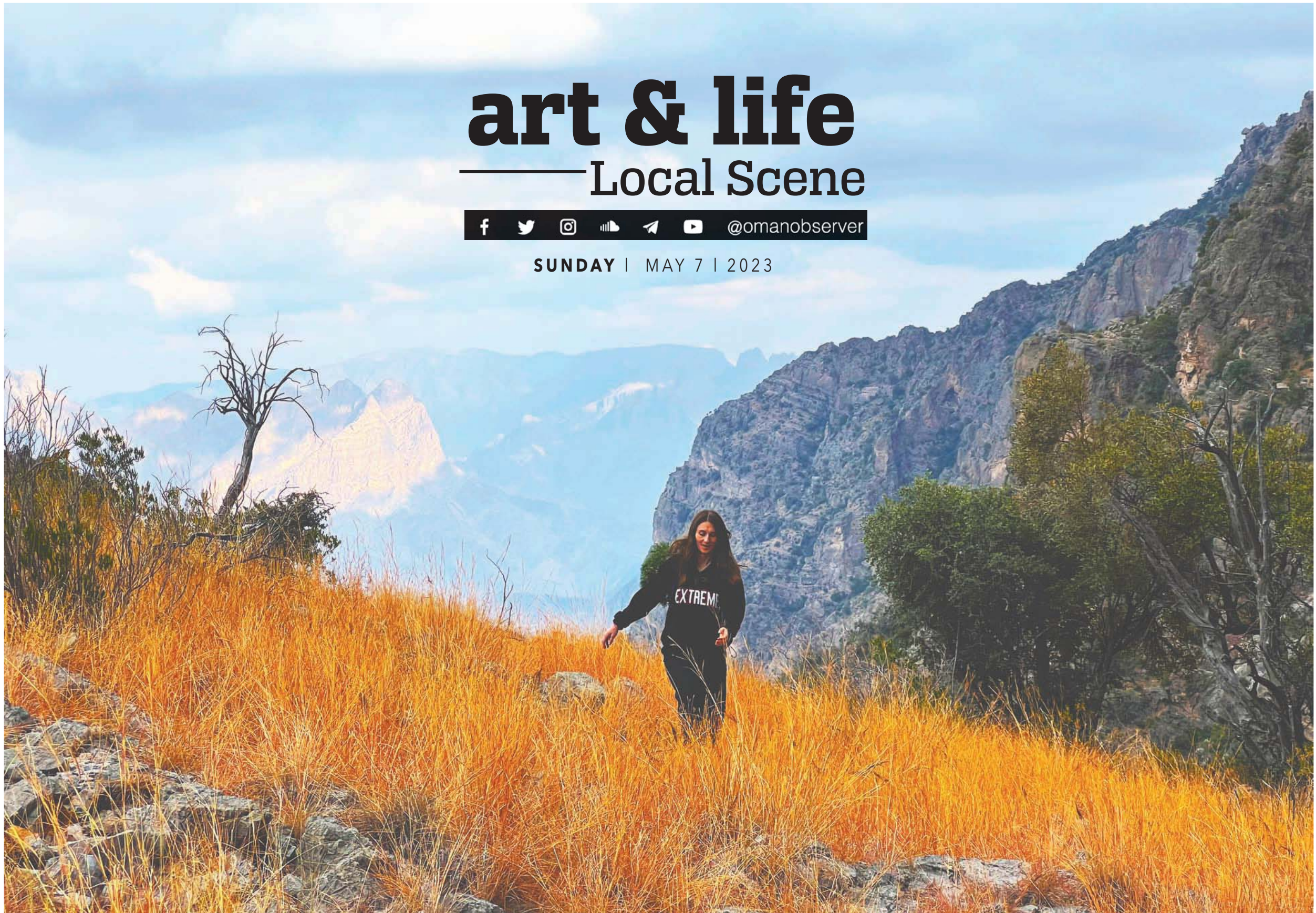
PREPARATION:
1. Arrange tofu slices on a clean kitchen towel or paper towels. Cover with another kitchen towel (or paper towels), and place a flat cutting board or baking pan on top. If your cutting board is lightweight, stack a few cans or a skillet on top to weigh it down (or use a tofu press if you have one). Let tofu drain for at least 15 minutes and up to 45 minutes.
2. Heat oven to 400 degrees and line a rimmed sheet pan with parchment paper.
3. Transfer tofu slices to a cutting board and cut into 1-inch cubes. Pat them dry with paper towels and season both sides with 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon black pepper.
4. In a medium bowl, whisk together 1 tablespoon oil and cornstarch. Add tofu to the mixture and gently toss until evenly coated. Place tofu on one side of the prepared sheet pan. Sprinkle with 4 tablespoons Parmesan.
5. In a large bowl, toss together the red onion wedges, sugar snap peas, lemon juice, remaining 3/4 teaspoon salt and 1/4 teaspoon pepper. Drizzle in remaining 2 tablespoons oil, tossing to combine.
6. Arrange vegetables on the empty side of the prepared sheet pan and sprinkle with remaining tablespoon Parmesan. Bake until tofu is crisp and golden brown and the vegetables are soft, 25 to 35 minutes. Halfway through baking, use a spatula to flip tofu and toss vegetables while keeping separate.
7. To serve, sprinkle with herbs and a little more Parmesan, and drizzle with more lemon juice and olive oil.
Tip: Most Parmesan is made with animal rennet in processing, but some are made with vegetarian enzymes. BelGioioso, a cheese brand available at major grocery stores across the United States, makes a vegetarian Parmesan that is labelled as such, and Organic Valley grated Parmesan lists vegetarian enzymes in its ingredients. — NYT

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Local Scene

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Planning a hiking trip in Wadi Al Sahtan? Make sure to remember these



Oman's rugged mountain terrain is quickly becoming the top destination for hikers in the Middle East, offering a unique combination of breathtaking scenery, a comfortable climate, and accessible trails suitable for all levels of hikers.

Nestled between the Arabian Sea and the desert sands, the mountainous terrain of Oman provides a stark contrast to the surrounding landscape. The mountain ranges offer a unique combination of steep cliffs, deep canyons, and lush valleys, making it an ideal destination for hiking enthusiasts seeking adventure.

Oman's mountain trails are not just popular among locals and tourists, but they are also gaining popularity internationally. The country has worked tirelessly to create and maintain hiking trails suitable for all levels of hikers, making it an accessible destination for adventurers from around the world.

One of the factors that make Oman's mountain trails the best in the Middle East is the sheer variety of trails available. Whether hikers are looking for a leisurely stroll or a challenging climb, Oman's mountains offer a range of trails suitable for all abilities. The trails vary in length and difficulty, allowing hikers to tailor their experience to their preferences.

Nestled within the breathtaking terrain of Batinah lies the stunning Wadi Al Sahtan. The rugged landscape of Wadi Sahtan features towering peaks and deep gorges, with lush vegetation scattered throughout. Hikers can expect to encounter a diverse range of wildlife, especially various bird species.

Different mountain peaks are also home to different villages, and lately, the abandoned village of Wajma has gained a lot of traffic due to its beautiful location. It is also a great start for exploring

the area.

Based on several guides who live in Wadi Sahtan, different trails connect the area to trails found in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, Wakan, among others.

It's important to note that the area is remote, with limited access to amenities and emergency services. Visitors should come prepared with plenty of water, food, and appropriate gear, including sturdy hiking boots and sun protection.

Furthermore, as with any outdoor activity in a foreign country, visitors need to be aware of local customs and laws. Respect for local traditions, such as dressing modestly and asking for permission before taking photographs, is highly recommended. Visitors should also stay up-to-date on any travel advisories and follow all safety guidelines to ensure a safe and enjoyable hiking experience in Wadi Al Sahtan.

When hiking around Oman in general, these are things to remember:

1. Always get the advice of local guides, as they have extensive knowledge of the area and can provide valuable insights.
 2. Prepare for the trails you are going to embark on. Make sure to know your level of fitness as well as the level of difficulty of the trail you are going to explore.
 3. Do not swim in wadis unless you are experienced and confident, as the water can be fast-moving and dangerous.
 4. Do not leave the trail and wander off into unexplored areas, as this can be dangerous and may damage the environment.
 5. And do not touch or disturb wildlife, as Wadi Sahtan is home to a variety of unique flora and fauna.
- Exploring Wadi Al Sahtan can be an enjoyable and rewarding experience, provided visitors take appropriate precautions and respect the local culture and environment.

