

# HIS MAJESTY AND RULER OF SHARJAH REVIEW BILATERAL RELATIONS

— HIS MAJESTY GIVES AUDIENCE TO RULER OF SHARJAH —

HM AND SHARJAH RULER EXCHANGE CORDIAL CONVERSATIONS

REVIEW MARCH OF BILATERAL TIES BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Tuesday gave an audience at Al Barakah Palace to Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, and his accompanying delegation.

During the audience, His Majesty the Sultan and Sharjah Ruler exchanged cordial conversations and reviewed march of the bilateral relations between the two countries, based on shared historical bonds. They also discussed other matters of common concern.

The audience was attended by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, and Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information.

It was attended from the UAE side by Shaikh Sultan bin Ahmed al Qasimi, Deputy



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik gave an audience at Al Barakah Palace to Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi.

LEADERS DISCUSS OTHER MATTERS OF COMMON CONCERN

HM HOSTS LUNCHEON IN HONOUR OF SHAIKH DR SULTAN AL QASIMI

Dr Sultan al Qasimi and his delegation, wishing them a pleasant stay in Oman.

On his turn, the Ruler of Sharjah expressed his deep thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality accorded to him, wishing His Majesty the Sultan good health, happiness and long life. He also wished the Omani people more progress under the wise leadership of His Majesty the Sultan.

Earlier, Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi arrived on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman during which he will had an audience with His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The Ruler of Sharjah and his delegation were received upon their arrival by Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Mohammed bin Nakhira al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to Oman, and some members of the UAE Embassy in Muscat.

— ONA

SEE ALSO P3&4

Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, Chairman of Sharjah Petroleum Council and Deputy Chairman of Sharjah Executive Council, Mohammed bin Nakhira al Dhaheri, UAE Ambassador to Oman, and Abdullah bin Mohammed

al Owais, Chairman of Department of Culture in Sharjah and Member of Sharjah Executive Council.

**LUNCHEON**  
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik hosted a luncheon in

honour of Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi and the delegation accompanying him. The luncheon was attended from the Omani side by HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, and Dr Abdullah

bin Nasser al Harrasi.

It was attended from the UAE side by Shaikh Sultan bin Ahmed al Qasimi, Mohammed bin Nakhira al Dhaheri, and Abdullah bin Mohammed al Owais. Later, His Majesty the Sultan bid farewell to Shaikh

## Oman claims first-ever Asian Games silver medal

**HANGZHOU:** Oman Sail's 49er team of Musab al Hadi and Walid al Kindi made history for the Sultanate of Oman by winning Oman's first-ever silver medal at the Asian Games.

The pair sailed excellently throughout the week in Ningbo, China, and kept their composure in the final intense races to take silver. This achievement means the team has secured automatic qualification to the Asian Qualification Regatta in Chon Buri, Thailand, in December where they will look to confirm their place at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Speaking about this historic



achievement, Hashim bin Hamad al Rashidi, Oman Sail's Head Coach Performance, said: "This achievement came as a result of the intense preparation and continuous training that preceded the tournament and

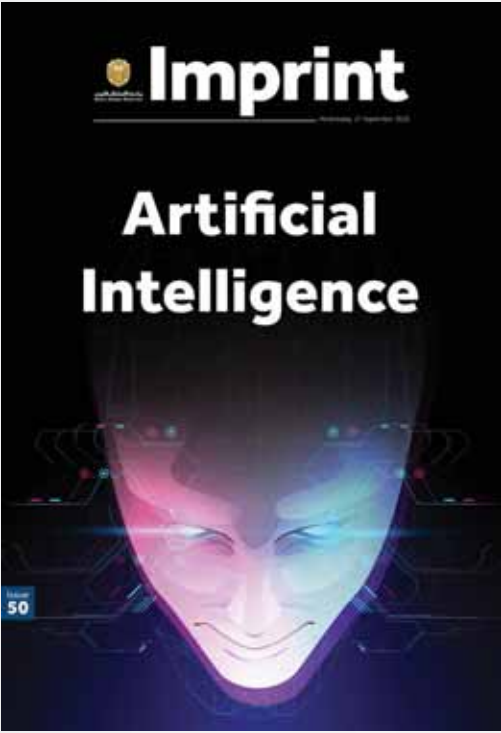
the effort through which the team was able to maintain focus and perform strongly throughout the competition. It was a strong test of the players' levels against the most prominent professionals from

across the Asian continent."

Al Rashidi added: "We have kept this participation in mind as the next step will be in the quest to obtain a seat in the Paris 2024 Olympic qualifiers, which will be held in December 2023."

After the end of the races, Musab al Hadi said: "We are very happy to represent the Sultanate of Oman in this major continental event, and we are delighted to win a silver medal for our nation. We dedicate this achievement to our dear homeland, and to all those who supported us on this journey, the technical staff and our colleagues at Oman Sail."

**DETAILS ON P12**



**Imprint**

**Artificial Intelligence**

50

IMPRINT, a magazine by Sultan Qaboos University, can be read online at [www.omanobserver.om](http://www.omanobserver.om)



MWASALAT  
ANNOUNCES  
MUSCAT-  
ABU DHABI  
BUS SERVICE



**MUSCAT:** The public transport operator, Mwasalat, has announced the launch of the Muscat-Abu Dhabi route on October 1.

The service will operate via Al Buraimi in the Sultanate of Oman and Al Ain in the UAE with a one-way ticket to cost RO 11.5, the company said on its booking website. The bus will leave Azaiba Bus Station at 6.30 am to reach Al Buraimi at 11 am, Al Ain at 1 pm, and Abu Dhabi Bus Station at 3.40 pm.

The bus from Abu Dubai will leave at 10.40 am to reach Muscat at 8.35 pm.

Earlier, Mwasalat operated a daily bus service to Dubai from Muscat.

Royal Office Minister receives  
ambassadors of Qatar, Yemen



Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office receives Dr Khalid Saleh Shoteif, Ambassador of the Yemeni Republic to the Sultanate of Oman



Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, receives Shaikh Jassim Abdulrahman Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty

**MUSCAT:** Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office, received on Tuesday Shaikh Jassim Abdulrahman Al Thani, Ambassador of the State of Qatar to the Sultanate of Oman to bid him farewell at the end of his tour of duty.

The ambassador expressed his appreciation for the cooperation extended to him during his tour of duty in Oman.

On his turn, Al Numani thanked the ambassador for his efforts in bolstering relations between the two countries, wishing him continuous success.

Gen Al Numani also received Dr Khalid Saleh Shoteif, Ambassador of the Yemeni Republic to the Sultanate of Oman. During the meeting, the two sides reviewed areas of bilateral cooperation.

They also touched on various matters of mutual interest and means of enhancing them, especially in regards to the Sultanate of Oman's efforts in resolving the Yemeni crisis in coordination with all related international parties. — ONA

للجمال اختر أبولو

هيدرا فيشل  
قناع الذهب والنانو  
الفيلر والبوتكس  
تقنية الميكرونيديل  
حقن البلازما الغنية بالصفائح الدهوية والهيروثيرابي  
ليزر ثاني أكسيد الكربون الجزي  
ليزر إزالة الشعر

APOLLO  
للجمال

عيادة التجميل  
الجدية | التجميل | اسنان  
٢٤٤٣ ٠٣٠٣

Smart insulin pen wins Injaz Oman award

AFRAH AL BALUSHI  
@afrahbalushia

A heat-insulated insulin pen, which is expected to go on sale in 2024, has won Injaz Oman award for innovation.

Abrar Fahad, CEO of PenSulin Company, said: "This heat-insulated smart insulin pen is the first of its kind in the Gulf and the Middle East. PenSulin's goal is to provide a seamless digital insulin pen that protects insulin from heat, which affects the quality of the insulin used." This insulin pen is made of eco-friendly insulating material and has a smart chip connected to a mobile application. The application assists patients, caregivers, or those responsible for patient care in scheduling and adjusting doses. Additionally, it features a small screen that allows the pen holder to review dosage-

related data and the surrounding conditions, such as temperature.

The pen also includes a GPS feature to find it in case the pen is misplaced.

Baraah al Hattali, the head of production at the company, said the pen can maintain the temperature of insulin for 24 hours. It is achieved through state-of-the-art technologies incorporated into the pen's structure.

Maisa al Rashdi, the finance manager, said the company in a study found that the insulin pen users in the Omani community account for 50 per cent of the total number of diabetes patients. She said the product is still under development and testing. The pen is expected to be available in the market towards the end of next year. Those interested can pre-book the insulin pen for RO 30.



The heat-insulated smart insulin pen is the first of its kind in the Gulf and the Middle East

ENTERTAINMENT  
ZONE AT RIYAM PARK  
TO BE REVAMPED



ZAKIYA AL HUSSAINI  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Muscat Municipality will soon undergo a major revamp of the Al Riyam Public Park entertainment area, considering its strategic seaside location for tourists and as a popular entertainment destination for domestic visitors.

The Municipality on Tuesday issued a clarification regarding the closure of the entertainment zone at Al Riyam Public Park as several family visitors have been seeking reasons for the closure of this landmark weekend family outdoor destination.

In an online statement, the municipality said the investment contract signed with the investor for the dedicated area, including recreational games, cafes, and shops, came to an end with the municipality, and the investor has cleared away all facilities. The site will be handed back to the municipality in the coming days.

The municipality said will reinvest in the site according to a plan taking into account optimal development of the area by covering various aspects of entertainment, tourism, economic, and social, which will not only serve visitors but achieve the financial feasibility.

The municipality said it has been constantly carrying out maintenance work on the largest part of the park, which is open to the public. The green Al Riyam Park lies at the eastern end of the Muttrah Seaside and offers views of the port.

Al Riyam Park comes along the path of a popular trail that once linked the Muttrah area with Muscat's old walled city.

Beat The Winter Blues  
With Milano  
Water Heater

3 LAYERS  
DURABLE  
TANK  
GLASS LINED

GC mark

5 STAR  
ENERGY  
RATING

For Product Enquiry Call  
+968 9364 0580

7 YEARS  
WARRANTY



Follow us on **facebook**:  
omanobserver

OMANDAILYOBSERVER  
WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 27 | 2023

oman

3



**SEND USD WORLDWIDE  
FOR BUSINESS, EDUCATION,  
FIXED DEPOSITS & MORE**

**OMR 4 SERVICE FEE**

SIMPLE | SECURE | SWIFT



**SEND MONEY TO ANY  
BANK ACCOUNT IN UAE FOR  
CORPORATES AND INDIVIDUALS**

**OMR 2.5 SERVICE FEE**



PURSHOTTAM KANJI  
EXCHANGE



OMAN'S  
1  
EXCHANGE



شركة برشوتم  
كانجي للمرافعة



www.pkanjiexchange.com

## RULER OF SHARJAH VISITS

# Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque and ROHM



**MUSCAT:** Dr Sultan bin Mohammad al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, and the delegation accompanying him on Tuesday visited Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, within the context of his current official visit to the Sultanate of Oman. During the visit, Dr Sultan was briefed on the mosque's history, and its Omani and Islamic architectural designs. He also went on tour of the mosque's facilities, such as Institute of Islamic

Sciences, Library and other facilities. Dr Sultan and the delegation accompanying him also visited the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) during which he was briefed on the House, its facilities and shows, as well as its year-long programme. He also viewed the ROHM unique architectural designs creatively combining Omani architectural and cultural legacy with the architectural cultures from different continents of the world. Dr Sultan also visited the House of Musical Arts

and viewed a musical show of Omani sung heritage and modern folklore. At the conclusion of his visit to ROHM, Dr Sultan signed the Senior Visitors' Register. In his word, he expressed his happiness at visiting ROHM and also lauded ROHM's efforts and role in portraying cultural and architectural heritage. During both the visits, Dr Sultan was accompanied by Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information and a number of senior officials. — ONA



**No.1  
in Outdoor  
Solutions**



**my  
Garden**

Think Outdoor, Think Danube Home

DESIGN SOLUTIONS | FROM START TO FINISH

250+  
GARDEN  
IDEAS

Design a  
Sustainable  
Garden

Our Reward Partner  
Shop, Collect and Redeem.





SCAN TO VIEW  
THE E-CATALOGUE



**DANUBE HOME**

DESTINATION FOR HOME

AL KHUWAIR | MABELLAH | SOHAR | NIZWA | SALALAH | BARKA | SUR

Toll Free: 800-88876 Shop Instore & Online [danubehome.com](https://danubehome.com) Follow us:    



# HM GIVES AUDIENCE TO RULER OF SHARJAH

**H**IS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK on Tuesday gave an audience at Al Barakah Palace to Shaikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, and his accompanying delegation. — ONA





MINISTRY OF JUSTICE SEMINAR  
FOCUSSES ON LABOUR LAW

The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs organised on Monday a seminar on the labour law, presented by legal experts from Trowers & Hamlins, and with the attendance of a number of advisors and legal specialists from the ministry, and from government and private entities.

The seminar was delivered by Thomas Wigley, Managing Partner at Trowers & Hamlins and Raya al Harithy, Senior Associate at Trowers & Hamlins, who outlined the key new provisions in the labour law in areas relating to leave, duration of contracts, termination, over-time pay, and other aspects.

The seminar also outlined the actions that employers need to take to comply with the provisions of the law before the end of the grace period specified by the law.

This seminar is part of a series of monthly lectures organised by the Ministry as part of its legal awareness programme, which aims to develop the skills and knowledge of legal professionals in cooperation with international and local expertise in the Sultanate of Oman.



The Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs seminar was presented by legal experts and attended by a number of advisors and legal specialists

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES  
MADE IN SAMAYIL



**SAMAYIL:** A team of experts from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is carrying out salvage archaeological excavations at an archaeological site in Faiha village in the Wilayat of Samayil that dates back to the first millennium BC. The archaeological excavations taking place from September 17 to 27, focus on the underground cemeteries that existed at that time. The cemeteries have oval- and rectangular-shaped chambers and stone-covered internal walls.

The excavations resulted in the discovery of pottery vessels such as jars, bowls, glazed pottery vessels, and utensils that belong to Sindh and the Parthian Empire in Iran. Also unearthed at the archaeological site were, of glass bottles, a chloride stone vessel, iron arrowheads, and jewellery (bracelets, earrings, rings and beads).

NCCHT REVIEWS EFFORTS TO  
COMBAT HUMAN TRAFFICKING



**MUSCAT:** The National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking (NCCHT) on Tuesday held its second meeting of the year (2023) under the auspices of Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, Chairman of the Committee.

The meeting reviewed the efforts made by all departments entrusted with combating human trafficking, as well as the progress made in the National Action Plan (2021-2023) on this issue.

The NCCHT discussed topics of relevance to boosting the Sultanate of Oman's efforts in addressing all aspects of human trafficking. — ONA



### NOTICE

This is to advise that **Mr. Mohammad Shalvir** Indian National holder of **Passport No: P0049529**, who used to occupy the position of **Senior Auditor at Bakertilly MKM Oman LLC** (the "company") has left the company **on 25th September 2023**. From that date onward, he no longer represents the company in any capacity. The company confirms there is no continuous relationship between the company and the aforementioned, and the company accepts no responsibility for any dealings or engagements concluded with him.





Heritage ministry inaugurates  
‘Meteorites in Oman’ exhibition

AMAL AL RIYAMI  
NIZWA, SEPT 26

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism on Tuesday inaugurated the ‘Meteorites in Oman’ exhibition at Nizwa Gate in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Hilal bin Said al Hajri, Governor of Al Dakhiliyah. The exhibition, in its 2nd edition, highlights the importance of meteorites and investing meteorites in a sustainable manner.

The ministry, through this exhibition, displays a rare selection of meteorites of scientific, global and unique importance. The exhibition, which will remain open for six months, reflects the ministry's commitment to raise awareness about the significance of meteorites, promoting sustainable utilisation, and diversifying the museum landscape, all contributing to enhancing heritage and tourist destinations across various governorates.

Raya bint Mohammed al Kindiyah, Director-General of Museums, stated: “The General Directorate of Museums has executed the Meteorites Exhibition in the Sultanate of Oman as one of its distinguished museum objectives. This exhibition is annually transported to various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. It is anticipated to witness significant interest from visitors who seek to explore the rare



The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, through this exhibition, displays a rare selection of meteorites of scientific, global and unique importance



meteorite specimens on display. The exhibition is scheduled to run until the end of March 2024, providing an opportunity for enthusiasts, researchers, school students, and university scholars to visit and expand their knowledge in the field of meteorites.”

In his statement, Hussain bin Ali al Ghafri, Director of the Geological Heritage Department, emphasised that the opening of this exhibition reflects the ministry's efforts and plans to highlight this significant aspect of

cultural heritage. This opening comes after completing the necessary studies and chemical analyses, providing the public with an opportunity to become acquainted with this unique type of heritage.

Al Ghafri added that there are other scientific projects in the field of meteorite research and study being conducted by the ministry, which have so far resulted in the documentation of more than 7,240 meteorite pieces with a total weight exceeding 6,300 kilogrammes.

Abdulumunim bin Abdullah al Zakwani, a geologist from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, said: “The meteorites displayed in this exhibition are different from those shown in the previous exhibition. We will change the meteorites exhibited from one exhibition to another based on the available samples. There will be two representatives from the Al Dakhiliyah Heritage and Tourism Department present daily at the exhibition, and security guards will be provided for the exhibition.”

Among the notable pieces exhibited in the exhibition is Jiddat Al Harasiss (JaH091), which is the largest meteorite fall ever, with a total of around 700 pieces. Additionally, the rare iron meteorite, which contains iron as part of its composition, was also displayed. Information about each meteorite in the exhibition was provided, including its name, location, and classification.

GCC workshop explores job localisation  
and economic integration

SIHAM AL SAIDI  
SUHAR, SEPT. 27

A two-day workshop titled ‘Job Localisation and Requirements of the Common Gulf Market’ is underway in the Wilayat of Suhar, reflecting the Gulf Cooperation Council's commitment to enhancing employment opportunities for its citizens and promoting economic integration among member states.

The workshop, organised in coordination with the Office of the Governor of Al Batinah North and the Ministry of Labour, commenced on Tuesday with an inaugural ceremony attended by dignitaries, government officials, and experts from the region and beyond.



A two-day workshop titled ‘Job Localisation and Requirements of the Common Gulf Market’ underway in Suhar

Shaikh Nasr bin Amer bin Shuwain al Hosni, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Labour for Labour, expressed his delight in hosting this significant event, emphasising its alignment with the GCC's efforts towards a unified Gulf labour market.

Job localisation is a key pillar of the

Common Gulf Market Agreement, established in December 2002, which underscores the principle of equal treatment for GCC citizens in the private sector.

Dr Amer bin Mohammed al Hajri, Director General of the Executive Office of the Council of Ministers of

Labour and the Council of Ministers of Social Affairs of the GCC countries, highlighted the workshop's significance.

He said that it addresses the challenges facing the Gulf region and its economies, seeking collaborative solutions that serve the implementation of GCC agreements and the aspirations of the region's leaders and people.

The second day of the workshop will centre on regional integration in labour markets, with a focus on international organisations' roles in promoting integration and employment policies. The European Union's experience in establishing a unified labour market will also be explored.



Military vehicles are seen before a parade to celebrate South Korea 75th Armed Forces Day in Seoul. — AFP

# South Korea stages military parade

SEOUL: South Korea staged its first military parade in a decade on Tuesday, showcasing its advanced arsenal in the face of plummeting ties with nuclear-armed North Korea.

Pyongyang regularly puts on huge military parades but such events in Seoul are traditionally arranged every five years to mark South Korea's Armed Forces Day.

The last parade was in 2013. Five years later, then-president Moon Jae-in chose to hold a celebratory ceremony instead of a military event, in line with his conciliatory approach to North Korea.

Around 4,000 troops marched through central Seoul on a rain-soaked afternoon, cheered by umbrella-bearing crowds who

waved South Korean flags. They were accompanied by 170 pieces of military equipment, including air and sea drones, tanks and missiles.

The number of troops and pieces of equipment taking part were revised down by officials from those originally planned.

A flight display by South Korean warplanes, including US-made F-35 stealth fighters, was also cancelled because of the poor weather.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol watched the parade from a platform, applauding troops as they marched past.

"To demonstrate the strong foundation" of Seoul's alliance with Washington, around 300 US military personnel also participated in the parade. Yoon, who was

elected last year, has pulled South Korea closer to the United States and the longstanding allies have ramped up defence cooperation, including large-scale drills, to counter growing threats from North Korea.

During an Armed Forces Day ceremony earlier at an air base south of Seoul, Yoon hailed the expansion of US-South Korea defence ties.

"If North Korea uses nuclear weapons, its regime will be brought to an end by an overwhelming response from the ROK-US alliance," he said at the base, repeating a warning the partners have issued in the past.

North Korea has conducted a series of weapons tests this year despite international

sanctions, including the launch of intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs).

Pyongyang has held three military parades this year alone, showing off a wide range of equipment including its largest Hwasong-17 ICBMs.

The parade in Seoul "is a not-so-subtle and visually provocative gesture on the part of the South Korean government of telling North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that Seoul will not be backing down or looking for ways to reconcile", LMI Consulting's Soo Kim said, a former CIA analyst. South Korea is a major weapons exporter but a longstanding domestic policy prohibits it from selling arms to countries. — AFP

## Ethiopian party leader arrested

ADDIS ABABA: An Ethiopian opposition leader has been arrested in the capital Addis Ababa and his home and office searched, his party said on Tuesday.

Ethiopian Citizens for Justice (Ezema) president Chane Kebede, an ethnic Amhara, was arrested on Sunday while sitting at a cafe with a friend and remains behind bars, the party's head of legal and organisational affairs Seyoum Mengesha said.

"We do not know exactly why he was arrested," Seyoum said. "There are rumours it may be related to the violence in the Amhara region and the current state of emergency."

The government of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed imposed a six-month state of emergency in Amhara in early August after fighting erupted between federal forces and a local group known as Fano.

The measure gives the authorities sweeping powers to arrest people, impose curfews and ban public gatherings.

Ethiopia's rights body has accused federal forces of carrying out extra-judicial killings in Amhara as well as mass arbitrary detentions under the state of emergency.

Seyoum said Chane's arrest did not comply with "constitutional procedures" and that he was taken away by unknown people in a vehicle without licence plates.

Security forces also searched



Chane's office and his apartment without presenting a search warrant, he added.

Chane remains in detention at a crime investigation centre in the capital more than 48 hours after his arrest but has not yet been questioned or brought before a judge, Seyoum said.

The federal government had announced on August 9 that fighters had retreated from major cities in Amhara, but the violence is continuing in several areas.

Fano launched an attack on Gondar, the most populous city in Amhara and Ethiopia's former imperial capital, mostly targeting police, a security source and residents said.

The federal army, which is in charge of security in Amhara under the state of emergency, said it had repelled the "attempted infiltration".

It is impossible to verify the situation on the ground in Amhara as media access to the region is heavily restricted.

Ezema was founded in 2019, a year after Abiy came to power, through the merger of several parties opposed to the EPRDF coalition that had ruled Ethiopia for several decades. — AFP

# US army chief and allies discuss Asia-Pacific in India

NEW DELHI: Army chiefs and senior officers from 30 countries including the United States met in India on Tuesday to discuss threats facing the Asia-Pacific region.

US Army chief Randy George said the region was "critically important", speaking to reporters alongside his Indian counterpart Manoj Pande, and vowed to boost cooperation to "maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific".

Generals from Japan and Australia, which make up the "Quad" defence cooperation forum alongside Washington and New Delhi, also took part, as did Britain and France.

As the generals met, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that Beijing would oppose the "wanton expansion of military alliances", the latest in a string of warnings as Washington deepens security ties in the Asia-Pacific.

Beijing has long said that any



Army chiefs from the Asia-Pacific region pose during the inaugural session of the 13th Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs' Conference (IPACC) in New Delhi. — AFP

effort to establish a Nato-like military alliance in the Asia-Pacific would provoke conflict.

Nations present at the two-day conference in New Delhi included Vietnam and the Philippines, both of which have longstanding pending territorial

disputes with China.

The conference, which launched in 1999, brings together army chiefs and top officers from 30 countries.

India's Pande said the region faced challenges on both land and at sea.

"These range from territorial disputes over land masses, or in some cases, even over artificially expanded islands to acquire real estate and establish military bases," Pande added.

India has also had to balance its traditional alliance with

Russia — the provider of most of its arms imports, and now a source of cut-price oil — with growing ties to Washington.

"The partnership between India and the US armies is vital for stability in the region, and the relationship between our armies

is strong and growing stronger," George said.

Meanwhile, China is willing to play a "constructive" role in the success of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in San Francisco, its top diplomat said on Tuesday.

"As the world's largest developing country and an important member of APEC, China is willing to comply with the expectations of the international community and play a constructive role in the success of APEC this year," said Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"Of course, we and all parties hope that the United States will recognise its responsibility as the host, demonstrate openness, fairness, inclusiveness, and responsibility, and create better conditions for the smooth holding of the meeting," Wang said at a news conference.

— Agencies

### TASHKENT

#### Uzbekistan hails growing defence ties with US

Uzbekistan on Tuesday praised its growing defence ties with Washington, as US officials visited the Central Asian country.

"Friendly relations between our two countries in the field of defence are strengthening every year," Uzbek Defence Minister Bakhodir Kurbanov said during a meeting with US defence officials.

He was welcoming a delegation that included US Armed Forces Central Command chief Michael Kirilla.



"During the meeting, the parties discussed achievements in the military sphere and opportunities to continue cooperation," the defence ministry said in a statement. — AFP

### CAPE TOWN

#### Eight electrocuted in rain-lashed areas

Eight people, including four children, died by electrocution in two slums after torrential rains lashed Cape Town, South African authorities said on Tuesday.

The deaths occurred on the outskirts of the southern port city, its disaster risk management unit said. Local media reports said the electrocutions were caused by illegal power connections. Many people in informal settlements around Cape Town live in makeshift homes built



with corrugated iron sheets. Record levels of rain fell on the Western Cape region, where Cape Town is located, between Sunday and Monday, Anton Breddell said. — AFP

### BEIRUT

#### 25 dead in clash with Kurdish-led forces

Fighters loyal to the Syrian government have clashed with Kurdish-led forces in a mainly Arab district of eastern Syria, leaving 25 people dead in two days, a war monitor said on Tuesday.

The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) said they had "driven out the regime gunmen who had infiltrated the Dheiban area" of Deir Ez-zor province in the gun battles. Earlier this month, the same area saw 10 days of fighting between the SDF and



armed Arab tribesmen in which 90 people were killed. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said the latest clashes erupted when pro-government fighters crossed. — AFP



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 27 | 2023

7

## In brief

■ LONDON



### 5 BULGARIANS APPEAR IN COURT ON SPY CHARGES

Five Bulgarian nationals were remanded in custody when they appeared before a London court, charged with spying for Russia.

They are alleged to have been part of a “network” conducting surveillance for Russia “with another person known as Jan Marsalek and others unknown”.

Marsalek is the Austrian former chief operating officer of payments firm Wirecard, a wanted man in Germany over fraud allegations.

They are each charged with “conspiring to collect information intended to be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy for a purpose prejudicial to the safety and interest of the state”. — AFP

■ MOSCOW



### RUSSIAN VILLAGES LOSE POWER AFTER STRIKE

Several villages in Russia’s Kursk region bordering Ukraine lost power on Tuesday morning after a Ukrainian drone dropped explosives on an electricity substation, the region’s governor said.

Russian regions bordering Ukraine have repeatedly accused Kyiv’s forces of attacking civilian infrastructure, including the power grid.

“In the morning, a Ukrainian drone dropped an explosive device on an electricity substation in the village of Snagost in Korenevsky District,” Kursk Governor Roman Starovoit said. — AFP

■ BUDAPEST



### CAPTAIN JAILED IN DEADLY BOAT DISASTER

A Hungarian court sentenced a Ukrainian ship captain to five-and-a-half years in prison on Tuesday over a collision on the Danube in 2019 that killed 25 South Korean tourists and two crew members.

The disaster was Hungary’s worst boating accident in more than half a century.

The Mermaid sightseeing boat carrying 33 South Korean tourists and two Hungarian crew members sank within seconds after colliding with the much larger Viking Sigyn river cruise vessel.

Yuri Chaplinsky — at the helm of the vessel belonging to the Basel-based Viking Cruises company — was found guilty of misconduct. — AFP

# Macron, Meloni meet in Rome amid tensions over migration

ROME: Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni held talks on Tuesday with French President Emmanuel Macron in Rome, against a backdrop of tensions between the two countries over migration.

The French leader was in the Italian capital to attend the state funeral of former president Giorgio Napolitano, who died on Friday aged 98.

A sharp rise in migrant landings to the Italian island of Lampedusa earlier this month reignited a bitter debate across the EU over who takes responsibility for asylum-seekers.

There has been particularly heated rhetoric in France, where political parties in the country’s hung parliament are wrangling over a draft law governing new arrivals.

“We cannot leave the Italians alone,” Macron said in a television interview on Sunday — an offer of help that Meloni immediately said she “welcomed with great interest”.

The two leaders last met in Paris in June, and are also both due at a summit of Mediterranean leaders in Malta.

Meloni has also clashed over migration with Germany.

The Italian premier wrote to Chancellor Olaf Scholz at the weekend to complain about Berlin’s funding of charity projects to help migrants either at sea or onshore in Italy.

Rome blames the NGO boats that conduct rescue missions in the central Mediterranean — the



France’s President Emmanuel Macron (L) shakes hands with Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni prior a meeting at the Palazzo Chigi in Rome. — AFP

world’s deadliest sea crossing for migrants — for encouraging arrivals from North Africa.

But data shows they do not work as a so-called pull factor, departures are based on the weather not the presence of NGO boats, and the vast majority of migrants are rescued by the Italian coastguard, according to the interior ministry.

Renowned for his moderation and statesmanship, he was regarded as a guarantor of

stability during a time of particular turbulence in Italian politics.

In office from 2006 to 2015, he was president during the premierships of Romano Prodi, Silvio Berlusconi, Mario Monti, Enrico Letta and Matteo Renzi.

Representatives from Albania, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Britain and the European Union were also announced among the guest list for the funeral.

Unusually for Italy, Napolitano

had asked to have a non-religious ceremony, which was held in the lower house of parliament, the Chamber of Deputies.

Meanwhile, a body of an Eritrean woman migrant was found on a beach near the French port city of Calais on Tuesday.

She was discovered at Bleriot-Plage, following a night when French maritime authorities reported multiple attempts to cross the Channel to Britain.

— AFP

# Azerbaijan seeks ‘war crime’ suspects in sea of Karabakh refugees

LACHIN CORRIDOR: Azerbaijani border guards on Tuesday sought out “war crime” suspects in a sea of Armenian refugees flooding out of Nagorno-Karabakh after Baku claimed control of the separatist statelet in a lightning offensive last week.

The number of people who entered Armenia along the so-called Lachin Corridor following the operation has now surpassed 19,000, and was growing one day after a massive fuel blast on the edge of the rebel stronghold of Stepanakert rose to 20.

The toll threatened to rise because dozens were being treated in critical condition and many remained unaccounted for.

Most of them were stocking up on fuel for the trip down the only road connecting the impoverished and historically disputed region with Armenia.

Yerevan has warned of possible “ethnic cleansing” by Azerbaijan after Baku launched a 24-hour blitz that forced the rebels to agree to disarm last Wednesday.

Armenians and Azerbaijanis have fought two deadly wars over the mountainous territory since the Soviet Union’s 1991 collapse.

The area is now populated by up to 120,000 ethnic Armenians but is internationally recognised as part Azerbaijan.

The bad blood between the sides runs deep, with the first war in particular witnessing alleged



Refugees look on as they wait near a Red Cross registration centre in Goris. — AFP

massacres of civilians and gross human rights abuses by both sides.

A team allowed to access the Lachin Corridor on an Azerbaijani government-organised tour saw that most of the people crossing the border were women, children and the elderly.

The few Armenian men in their 20s and 30s coming out on Tuesday were forced to stare into a camera for identification at the last Azerbaijani border post.

“Azerbaijan intends to apply an amnesty to Armenian fighters who laid down their arms in Karabakh,” an Azerbaijani government source said.

Adding to the humanitarian drama, the separatist government on Tuesday said 13 bodies were found at the scene of a fuel depot blast on Monday and seven more people had died of their injuries.

It said 290 people had been hospitalised and “dozens of

patients remain in critical condition”. Armenia’s health ministry said it had sent a team of doctors to the rebel stronghold of Stepanakert by helicopter.

The Azerbaijani presidency said Baku had also sent medicine to help the wounded, and opened a special humanitarian corridor for Red Cross teams.

The European Union pledged to provide five million euros in humanitarian assistance. — AFP

## Kosovo court remands suspects in police ambush



Members of the Kosovo Police Special Intervention Unit escorts one of the alleged Serbian gunmen from a court in Pristina. — AFP

PRISTINA: A Kosovo court on Tuesday remanded two suspected gunmen into custody after they were arrested at the weekend during a firefight and standoff with police near the border with Serbia.

The court’s decision came days after the killing of a police officer during an ambush and an ensuing gunbattle at a monastery in the village of Banjska, marking one of the gravest escalations in Kosovo for years.

“The Basic Court in Pristina has set the measure of 30 days detention for the two arrested who are suspected of serious crimes against the constitutional order and security of the Republic of Kosovo and committing terrorist acts,” Mirlinda Gashi, a spokeswoman for the court in the capital Pristina, said.

The court’s decision followed an announcement in Serbia that an official day of mourning would be held on Wednesday to commemorate the “tragic events in Kosovo”.

The announcement mirrors a similar statement released by the leading political party for Serbs in northern Kosovo calling for several days of mourning for the gunmen killed in the clashes.

The party said flags at Serb institutions in Kosovo would be lowered to half mast, while all entertainment events would be cancelled.

Questions remained over the fate of the remaining gunmen who participated in the attack, with Kosovo authorities saying at least six had escaped across the border into Serbia.

Sunday’s attack came more than a week after talks between the leaders of Serbia and Kosovo on improving ties failed to make a breakthrough during EU-mediated negotiations in Brussels.

Tensions in the troubled north of Kosovo have been smouldering for months, following the Pristina government’s decision in May to install ethnic Albanian mayors in four Serb-majority municipalities there.

The move triggered one of the worst bouts of unrest in the north in years.

Demonstrations followed, as well as the arrest by Serbia of three Kosovar police officers and a riot by Serb protesters which saw more than 30 Nato peacekeepers injured.

The clash in the north is just the latest incident to rock the area since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. — AFP

# Reflecting on a million tourist arrivals in Dhofar



Ali Al Matani  
alimatani2@gmail.com

Every year, the autumn season in Dhofar experiences rapid changes, the most significant of which is a consistent rise in the number of tourists, which attests to the development of tourism in this priceless region of our country. The outstanding season the governorate had this year solidifies the efforts taken to achieve this record. These efforts were coordinated by a number of stakeholders, with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism serving as the prime mover. The overall number of visitors stood at one million from the beginning of June till the end of August 2023, an increase of 17 per cent over the previous season.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information's inaugural tourist indicators reveal a wealth of information about the season's realities and successes, as well as a number of areas that need for investment. For instance, the number of tourists arrived in less than three months, which is a short time by any criteria depending on how long the tourist seasons are in a certain location. In fact, statistics indicate that the governorate welcomed

almost 528,000 visitors in August 2023. Data also shows that there were 924,127 tourists, up from 792,980 visitors in the 2022 season. This represents an increase of 17 per cent from the previous season, which is a respectable rate when compared to the growth of tourism in other nations throughout the world over similar seasons. One of the crucial conclusions drawn from these figures is that, this season portends an increase in visits over the next years. Additionally, the growth fuels hope for the nation's tourism industry. This is a fact that necessitates positive investor engagement through the growth of hotel facilities and development of top-notch visitor services that maximise the added value of this industry, and work to boost tourism expenditures while continuing to promote and grow residential facilities in particular. Additionally, we must work hard to entice investors from both the Sultanate of Oman and abroad, stressing that the returns on investment in the industry over a time are lucrative and enticing to enter without reluctance. Everyone is aware that delivering all the services required to support this

THE OVERALL  
NUMBER OF  
VISITORS  
STOOD AT ONE  
MILLION FROM  
THE BEGINNING  
OF JUNE TILL  
THE END OF  
AUGUST 2023, AN  
INCREASE OF 17  
PER CENT OVER  
THE PREVIOUS  
SEASON

industry requires integration with all state agencies, each of which has urgent development priorities and operates on a scientific basis. Companies that follow a system of pure economic feasibility are also accountable for investing in lodging facilities and tourism services. But if we're being honest, we'll admit that what was accomplished in the Dhofar, what we observed in the tourists, and what they said need a great deal of pleasure with regard to the development of the tourism sector system with assurance and competence. One of the significant findings of the preliminary figures is that there has been a 16.4 per cent rise in the percentage of Omani tourists compared to previous season, with their number reaching 565,119, or two-thirds of all visitors to the governorate. This illustrates how domestic tourism accounts for the largest share of travellers to Dhofar. Instead, it is regarded as the primary foundation for the expansion of the tourism industry in Oman generally, which we depend on in all situations, and this is what must be invested in the subsequent stage by raising and advertising domestic travel packages.

## Has Britain lost its climate crown?

GLORIA DICKIE, KATE ABNETT  
AND SUSANNA TWIDALE

Britain, which was quick to set ambitious climate goals, is now stumbling on the path to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and facing hurdles that could resonate with nations trying to balance their targets with politics and the cost of action. After setting world-leading CO2-cutting targets into law in 2019, Britain has struggled to get on track to make them happen. Electric vehicle charging points are being installed slower than targeted, and despite early success in rolling out offshore wind, the government's latest renewable energy auction awarded zero contracts to wind developers. Analysts and politicians say that the British government's move last week to delay targets for green vehicles and heating systems ahead of a looming election reflects a crunch point that other countries may face as they attempt to turn far-off climate goals into concrete measures — with costs for companies and consumers as soon as this decade.

“The UK has been one of the real leaders in climate diplomacy and in their own emissions reductions,” Ireland's climate minister Eamon Ryan said. “As a friend and a neighbour, I'd have to say some of that has been put at risk.” Britain, which hosted the United Nations annual climate conference COP26 in 2021, still leads the G7 when it comes to slashing output of climate-warming gases — reducing emissions by 49 per cent between 1990 and 2022 with cutting down on coal the biggest driver. But according to the Climate Change Committee's June 2023 progress report to parliament, to hit mid-way climate targets, Britain must quadruple its annual emissions reductions outside the electricity supply sector by 2030. The committee, an independent body set up under Britain's climate change law, had already said in 2022 that the country's strategy “will not deliver net zero”.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said last week he remained committed to the legally binding target of reaching net zero by 2050 but said Britain could afford to make slower progress in getting there because it was “so far ahead of every other country in the world”. He said he was changing the policy because previous governments had moved too quickly to set net zero targets, without securing the support of the public. Delaying net zero transition investments could prove politically popular, analysts observed, if an election was on the horizon. — Reuters

## West losing sight of Sahel after France's Niger withdrawal

JOHN IRISH AND EDWARD  
MCALLISTER

France's decision to pull 1,500 troops from Niger leaves a gaping hole in Western efforts to counter a decade-long insurgency and could bolster Russian influence across the vast, insecure scrublands of West Africa, analysts and diplomats said. Niger was the West's last key ally in the central Sahel region south of the Sahara Desert until a July 26 coup brought in a military junta which called for France to leave.

France's forces have already been kicked out of neighbouring Mali and Burkina Faso following coups in those countries, weakening its influence in its former colonies amid a wave of anti-French sentiment. Now, its oversight that two years ago spanned hundreds of thousands of square miles of terrain has all but evaporated. “The public in West African countries has become increasingly wary of hosting a Western military presence,” said Mucahid Durmaz, a senior analyst at London-based risk firm Verisk Maplecroft. “The French exit from Niger will push Western troops further away from the central Sahel.”

The withdrawal, announced by French President Emmanuel Macron in a television interview on Sunday night, was welcomed in Niger, whose junta described it as a “new step towards Niger's sovereignty”. “Imperialist forces are no longer welcome on our national territory,” it said in a statement. But it worries security analysts and diplomats who say a spike in insecurity in Mali and Burkina Faso after their coups could be a sign of what awaits Niger, where militants have already killed hundreds of civilians in recent years. Come December, it will no longer be able to rely on French aerial reconnaissance, intelligence or ground support. Mali's junta has teamed up with mercenaries from Russia's Wagner Group, accused by the UN of human rights abuses. Russia has also courted leaders in Burkina Faso.



A person holds a paper that reads 'We no longer want France' as Nigerien women demonstrate in support of the putschists in front of French Army headquarters, in Niamey, Niger. — Reuters

Much now depends on what the United States will do. It has invested about \$200 million in drone bases in northern Niger manned by more than 1,000 troops that let it keep an eye on a gateway for migrants, traffickers and militants in the Sahara Desert towards Libya. The US has refused to call the Niger takeover a coup, meaning it can avoid severing ties for now. Officials remain cagey about Washington's next move. “We have not made any significant changes to our forces' posture,” US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin said in Nairobi on Monday. Washington wanted a peaceful resolution and the “preservation of Niger's democratically elected government,” he added.

Unlike France, American forces do not actively engage with Niger forces against militants and could be open to working within a transition to civilian rule. Still, a Western presence would at least be on the ground if they remain. Niger is “seen as an important hub for intelligence gathering and kind of security assistance. I think they won't want to give that up,” said Nathaniel Powell, West African analyst at the Oxford Analytica consulting firm. In an election year, US President Joe Biden will probably be unwilling to provide an opportunity to draw parallels with Washington's Afghanistan withdrawal, he said. Two weeks ago, Macron gave a bullish speech to his ambassadors vowing to defend Niger's democracy.

But his position became untenable. This month, the French ambassador was holed up at the embassy in Niamey after Macron ignored a junta deadline for him to leave. Tens of thousands of people gathered outside the French military base in the capital calling for the troops' departure. Protesters burned French flags and waved Russian ones. “It's a different Africa now. It's an Africa that has awoken and risen up,” Niamey resident Aissami Tchiroma said on Monday. “France, which is said to be a state where there is the rule of law... behaves like perfect gangsters.” On Sunday night, buried in the middle of an interview on inflation, petrol and immigration, Macron said Niger no longer wanted to fight terrorism, and so France would withdraw. The ambassador has also left. It's a long fall from when France beat back Islamist fighters who had taken control of northern Mali in 2013, much to the delight of local residents. “I think for the French, it's more a marker of defeat than anything else,” Nathaniel Powell, West African analyst at Oxford Analytica, said. France has few options. One would be to send troops to neighbouring Chad, where it has about 1,000 troops. But Chad is hundreds of miles from the centre of the jihadist insurgency and has its own security problems and simmering ant-French sentiment. As part of its regional rethink, Paris had sought more concerted European help. — Reuters

# Cheer to athletes, peace to world!

The largest and most comprehensive Asian Games in history is finally happening in the eastern Chinese city of Hangzhou after being delayed, as so many international sports have been affected over the past couple of years by the coronavirus pandemic.

While it brings cheer to the athletes who are participating in the games, it is a celebration for the entire Asia and even sports fans around the globe as this is the first mega games being held without any restrictions for the first time after the pandemic.

No doubt, it is a sports event in Asia with global influence. Started on September 23 and concluding on October 8, over 12,000 athletes from more than 40 nations and regions scattered throughout Asia are participating in the Hangzhou Asiad, setting a new record in Asian Games history.

Powerhouses like Japan and South Korea, as well as smaller nations like Mongolia and Palestine, have sent their largest-ever delegations to Hangzhou, hoping to demonstrate their sporting prowess. China, the host nation, has the most significant representation, with 886 athletes.

Other sports not in the Olympics, most notably cricket, are included in the events. In addition, as part of an effort to attract the interest of younger people, e-sports, breakdancing, and sport climbing are also making their debuts in the games.

Significantly, the venues predominantly use green electricity, aligning with Hangzhou's goal to host a carbon-neutral Asiad. The opening ceremony also omitted the traditional fireworks display to reduce carbon emissions as much as possible.

All these events are expected to help boost sports exchanges, including joint training of athletes and the exchange of outstanding coaches, leading to greater improvement of athletes in performance in Asian countries.

However, the Asian Games is about much more than sport or exchange programmes. It is a bridge for communication, symbolising friendship, solidarity, and national pride. It also provides strength for unity



**Samuel Kutty**  
@samkuttyvp  
The writer is a senior journalist, author and columnist

OTHER SPORTS, NOT IN THE OLYMPICS, MOST NOTABLY CRICKET, ARE INCLUDED IN THE EVENTS. IN ADDITION, AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO ATTRACT THE INTEREST OF YOUNGER PEOPLE, E-SPORTS, BREAKDANCING AND SPORT CLIMBING ARE ALSO MAKING THEIR DEBUT IN THE GAMES

and cooperation in Asia and the world.

We now that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognises any sporting event as a vital enabler of sustainable development and stresses it as a compelling tool to promote peace, tolerance, and understanding, bringing people together across boundaries, cultures, and religions.

Sport is not limited to the practice of physical activities. It unites and inspires people collectively, which builds communities. Athletes from various countries and regions in Asia are fighting hard in Hangzhou grounds and competing with their best skills and spirit. It is not just a sports event.

This sentiment was evident in the words of Palestinian beach volleyball player Abdullah al Arqan, as he told Chinese news agency Xinhua, “Even though we know very well that our mission of medalling in China will not be easy, we are really chasing the honour”.

Xinhua also quoted Syrian weightlifter Man Asaad as saying that despite his country’s difficult economic situation, it makes them “more determined to achieve and present a positive image of our country and its people”.

The fact is that, through the collective efforts of various countries and regions in Asia, the continent has achieved remarkable success in terms of peace and development in recent years.

At the same time, it also remains a fact that the overall environment for cooperation and development in Asia is facing unprecedented challenges with increasing signs of differentiation and division. When the international situation is complex and tense, Asia cannot be an exception.

Sporting events like the Asian Games have long been idealised to heal wounds, mend fences, and rise above differences among cultures and nations. The wish is that beyond competitive sports, the Games help the countries in Asia come together and move forward for a peaceful continent!

No doubt, the successful hosting of the Asian Games will make the world feel the appeal of unity and friendship. The Hangzhou Asian Games fully demonstrate the maturity and steadiness.

## FEEDING THE NEEDY!



A man hands bread to a refugee woman from Nagorno-Karabakh region who arrived in a truck at the border village of Kornidzor, Armenia, on Tuesday. – Reuters

# Bridging the climate-development gap

Low-income countries are in the throes of a liquidity crunch that is not only undermining their economic development but also deepening the global climate crisis. In 2020 and 2021, net financial transfers to Africa were close to zero – their lowest level in a decade – despite record transfers from multilateral development banks (MDBs). That drop-off was due to a reduction in loans from the private sector and China, and now the situation has deteriorated further, with all low- and lower-middle-income countries (LMICs) having lost access to the bond market. Meanwhile, higher food and fuel bills, and falling export receipts, have made matters even worse.

To be sure, only a handful of LMICs have defaulted on their external debts, and many others still hope to weather the storm and re-enter the market when it reopens. But with their debt-service obligations having grown vastly larger than the official support they can secure, their fiscal space is being squeezed, leading to a silent development crisis.

At the same time, global development and climate financing needs are estimated to have risen to \$1 trillion per year. The gap between the international community’s aspirations for poorer economies and the sad reality of their finances has never been



**Dani Rodrik**  
is Professor of International Political Economy at Harvard Kennedy School



**Ishac Diwan**  
is Research Director at the Finance for Development Lab

so large, nor so corrosive to the legitimacy of the global financial system.

A series of international gatherings – culminating with the recent G20 declaration – has sought to reform the global financial and development architecture, placing special emphasis on scaling up MDB support. But if MDB funding rises before the current debt crisis is resolved, much of that additional money will go not toward investments in LMICs but to other creditors, as is currently the case.

During the pandemic, many observers foresaw that massive insolvencies loomed on the horizon. While promising proposals were made for wholesale debt relief, world leaders failed to agree on ambitious solutions. Since then, the grinding difficulties of reaching debt deals selectively have demoralised the international community.

Much of the opposition to debt relief came from China, the largest bilateral donor. It argues that LMICs’ external debts remain relatively low, averaging only 40 per cent of GDP, compared to 100 per cent just before the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

Initiative was launched in 1996. China therefore has pushed for debt rescheduling, as happened earlier this year with the long-awaited Zambia deal.

Private lenders have also resisted deep debt relief, even as they remain unwilling to provide liquidity. During the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s, when liquidity rather than insolvency was seen as the problem, the few banks involved at least could agree on coordinated rescheduling. But now, the wholesale closure of the

bond market reflects a collective-action problem that is all too characteristic of fragmented bondholding.

While debt reduction is, understandably, a harrowing process, it should be much easier for countries that are only illiquid to build a bridge to a more financially sustainable future. The good news, here, is that just a handful of countries are currently insolvent. Recent estimates show that 25 LMICs, of which 17 are in Africa, remain below the International Monetary Fund’s

insolvency threshold, but exceed its liquidity threshold (with debt-servicing costs in the range of 12-15 per cent of revenues).

But the situation will worsen if these countries cannot refinance the principal on their outstanding debt when it reaches maturity. Consider Kenya. It has embarked on an ambitious programme of stabilisation and reforms, backed by a large fiscal stabilisation effort equal to 4 per cent of GDP, and generously supported by the IMF and MDBs. But it has \$2 billion in bonds maturing in 2024. If global capital markets do not allow for refinancing by then, repayment will require an additional fiscal outlay equal to 1.8 per cent of GDP, and that will increase the risk of popular unrest, as happened recently in response to tax hikes and higher costs of living.

The alternative – defaulting – is equally unattractive, considering that Kenya’s external debt stands at only 38 per cent of gross national income. To overcome this dilemma, the African Union’s Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change proposes that countries be allowed to reschedule debts coming due to create fiscal space for new “green growth” policies and reforms, financed by MDBs.

© Project Syndicate, 2023



Climate financing needs are estimated to have risen to \$1 trillion per year.

# sports

Follow us on  
omanobserver.om/sports



RUSSIAN TRIATHLETE WINS **IRONMAN 70.3 SALALAH**  
GERMANY'S RHODE TAKES WOMEN'S TITLE  
OMAN TRIATHLON CLAIM TEAM HONOURS

## SLEPOV CLINCHES OMAN DOUBLE

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Russian triathlete Ilya Slepov claimed an Oman double when he stormed to the top finish of Ironman 70.3 Salalah recently. Slepov made it an Oman double in Salalah as he had won the Ironman 70.3 Oman 2023 in Muscat in February.

The Russian finished first in 4 hours six minutes and one second ahead of Rory Buck of South Africa (4:24:05) and third-placed Vincent Bartscher (4:24:24) of Germany on September 23.

In the women's section, Germany's Janina Rhode won the honours with a timing of 4:53:07. South Africa's Slayde Beker (5:19:32) came second and Netherlands Jolien Sonneveld (5:20:59) finished third.

The field of 314 triathletes first took to the 1.9 km swim course located in the turquoise water of the Hawana Lagoons. The athletes swam around the lagoons to the middle of the marina where they entered the transition zone.

Next up was the out-and-back 90.1 km bike course along the majestic coastline of the Indian Ocean and touching the highway that leads from Salalah to Mirbat.

The final three-loop 21.1 km run course took the athletes around the Hawana Salalah and through spectator-friendly streets and alleys. The finish line was located in the heart of the marina.

Dr Ahmed bin Mohsen al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, was the chief guest for the closing ceremony along with Triathlon Middle East CEO Mohammed al Obeidani and other officials.

### OMAN TRIATHLON TRIUMPH

In the Ironman Triclub category, Oman Triathlon emerged toppers with 19, 633 points. Tri Team Athena were second with 14, 594 points and Saudi Tri Community finished third with 9,694 points.

In men's relay, Team Royal Navy of Oman 'A' came on top with a timing of 4:09:02 ahead of Team Royal Navy of Oman 'B' (4:36:12) while Team Tri Hubs (4:59:01) finished third.

In women's relay, Team Chicks With Kick (5:22:00) came first ahead of Team Trihards (5:50:12) and Team The Bussettes (5:53:29)

In mixed relay, Team Ocean Salalah (6:12:40) were the winners ahead of Team Karakora Dragons (6:32:05) and Team Dc 'Drop Till Ur Chop' (6:42:07).

In women's 18-24, Germany's Maja Falkiewicz (5:21:58) claimed first ahead of India's Reshal Bhati (7:44:11). In the men's 18-24, Abdulla al Zarra of Qatar (4:48:49) came first while Great Britain's Rolf Jager (4:58:36) was second and Egypt's Mahmoud Mostafa (5:04:54) finished third.



### IRONMAN 70.3 SALALAH 2023 RESULTS

| RANK | ATHLETE  | COUNTRY       | TIMING  |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.   | Ilya Slepov                                                                                   | Russia        | 4:06:01                                                                                      |
| 2.   | Rory Buck                                                                                     | South Africa  | 4:24:05                                                                                      |
| 3.   | Vincent Bartscher                                                                             | Germany       | 4:24:24                                                                                      |
| 4.   | Anton Safonov                                                                                 | Russia        | 4:29:10                                                                                      |
| 5.   | Mohammad al Qais                                                                              | Bahrain       | 4:29:24                                                                                      |
| 6.   | Konstantin Kolyasnikov                                                                        | Russia        | 4:36:08                                                                                      |
| 7.   | Daniel Power                                                                                  | Great Britain | 4:40:55                                                                                      |
| 8.   | Giacomo Giovenali                                                                             | Italy         | 4:42:56                                                                                      |
| 9.   | Iosif Psomas                                                                                  | Greece        | 4:43:18                                                                                      |
| 10.  | Abdullah al Refae                                                                             | Kuwait        | 4:47:37                                                                                      |

# HAUGHEY ISSUES OLYMPIC WARNING

**HANGZHOU, China:** Hosts China won the first eSports gold medal in the 72-year history of the Asian Games on Tuesday as Hong Kong swimmer Siobhan Haughey issued another warning for next year's Paris Olympics.

Gaming is making its debut as a medal event in Hangzhou in what is seen as a major step towards Olympic status one day.

Audiences of overwhelmingly young spectators have packed out the 4,500-capacity Hangzhou Esports Center in the hope of catching one of their heroes, especially South Korea's Lee 'Faker' Sang-hyeok.

He will lead the Koreans in League of Legends — and controversially earn an exemption from military service if they win gold.

Medals are up for grabs in seven gaming titles, with China grabbing the first gold when they defeated Malaysia in the final of smartphone game Arena of Valor. Malaysia take home silver and Thailand bronze.

"The audience who loves eSports and the veterans in the eSports industry have been looking forward to this for a long time," China's captain Luo Siyuan said after his team's historic victory.

"I believe that eSports will develop more and more in the future."

Underlining just how popular eSports is at the Games, it is the only competition in Hangzhou where tickets were allocated through an initial online lottery.

China's place in the Games

record books helped the home nation increase their overall tally of golds to 53 at the end of three days of action. They are way ahead of South Korea (14 golds), Japan (eight) and Uzbekistan and Hong Kong (both five).

## HAUGHEY SHINES

With the 2024 Paris Olympics just 10 months away, Haughey won her second gold of the Games in another impressive performance in the pool which will make her rivals sit up and take notice.

She shattered her own Asian record to add the Games 100m freestyle title to her Olympic and world silver medals.

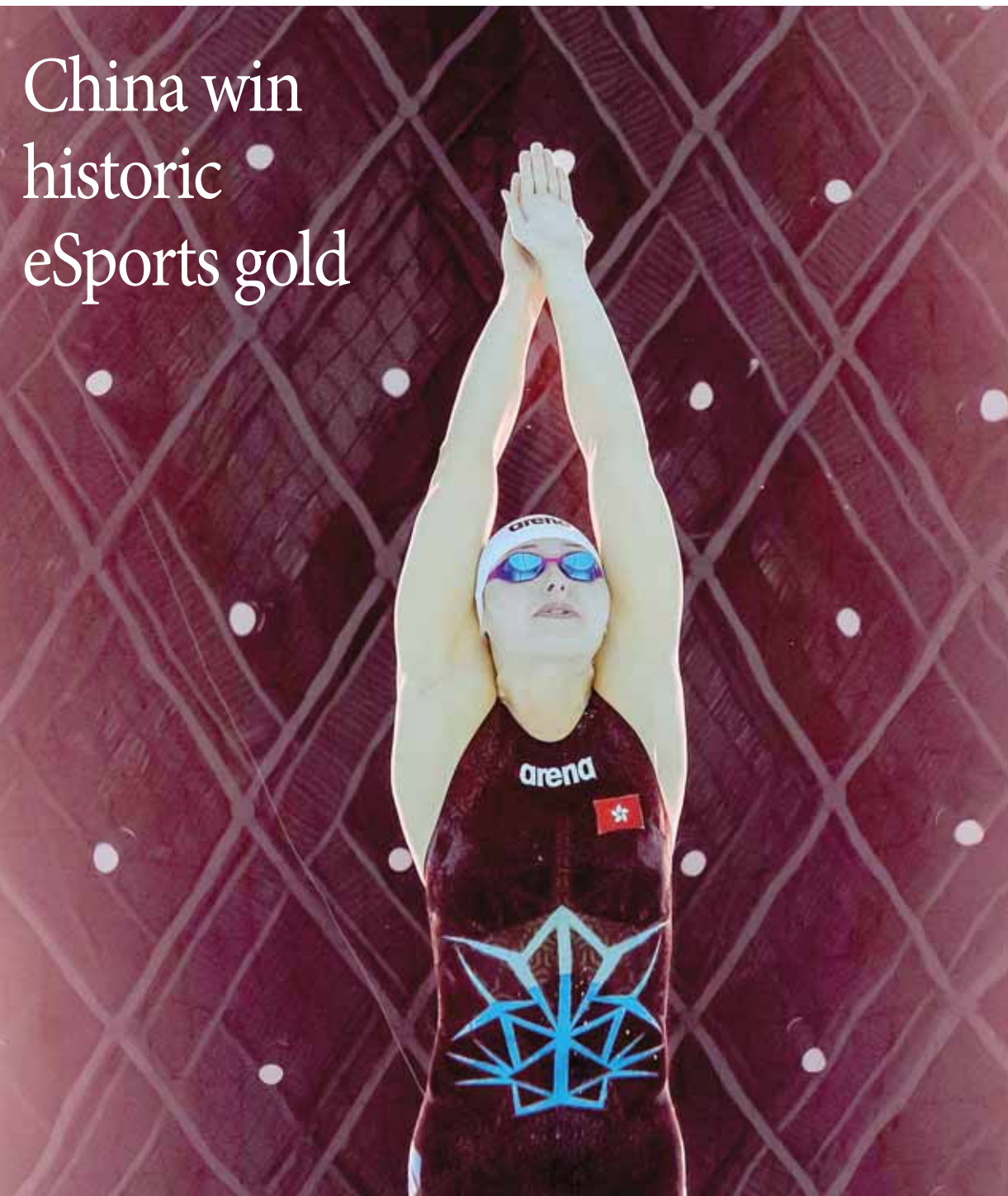
The 25-year-old produced an exceptional swim on Monday to crush the pack by nearly two seconds and take out the 200m crown, smashing an Asian Games record that had stood since 2010.

She was fired up again over the shorter distance in blasting a 52.17sec to send a warning to Australian freestylers Mollie O'Callaghan and Emma McKeon.

"I haven't swum a best time since Tokyo (Olympics in 2021), but I knew I had the ability of going faster," said Haughey.

"I'm really glad that I could do it here at the Asian Games and break the Asian record. It just proves that I'm not at my peak yet and hopefully I can keep going and keep swimming faster.

"Me and my coach, we're really prepared for Paris, and if I just keep doing what I'm doing right now, I'll be ready," she added.



Hong Kong's Siobhan Haughey competes in the heats of women's 100m freestyle event during the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou in China's eastern Zhejiang province. — AFP

Haughey previously set an Asian record of 52.27 when she came second to McKeon at the Tokyo Olympics. Only world champion O'Callaghan has gone faster in 2023.

China again bossed the Hangzhou pool, taking four of the six golds on the night. The other went to Tomoru Honda, who stunned exhausted Japanese team-mate Daiya Seto in the 400m medley.

## CHINA RACK UP MORE GOLD

On another day of dominance, China's all-powerful table tennis squad swept past rivals Japan 3-0 in the women's team final. They also claimed men's team gold over South Korea by the same scoreline.

In artistic gymnastics, Zhang Boheng won gold in the men's all-around final.

But China were dethroned by Japan in the men's team sprint at the Chun'an Jieshou Sports Centre Velodrome on the first day of action on the cycling track.

Japanese rider Yoshitaku Nagasako said his team thrived on the partisan crowd.

"When I heard 'China' I just thought 'Japan'. So the crowd was amazing," he said. "I'm really proud to win this one."

China's women made no mistake in their team sprint final, beating South Korea to the title.

In other action, Hong Kong retained their men's rugby sevens title when they beat South Korea 14-7 in the final, as hosts China won the women's gold. — AFP

# NZ whitewash Bangladesh to wrap WC preparation

**DHAKA:** New Zealand gave themselves a perfect boost ahead of the World Cup by whitewashing Bangladesh in the three-match series 2-0, with a seven wickets win in the final one-day international in Dhaka on Tuesday.

Will Young and Adam Milne starred with bat and ball respectively, with Young hitting 70 off 80 balls to guide New Zealand to 175-3.

Milne's 4-34 restricted the hosts to 171 in 34.3 overs at Dhaka's Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium.

Stand-in skipper Najmul Hossain Shanto scored highest with 76 runs for Bangladesh, but was unable to give the hosts a competitive score with a lack of support from the other end after he opted to bat first.

New Zealand made light of their target despite losing Finn Allen (28) and Dean Foxcroft (0) to Shoriful Islam in consecutive balls, as Young put on 81 runs with in-form Henry Nicholls for the third wicket. By the time left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed bowled Young, New Zealand were well in control.

Nicholls, who made 44 and 49 runs in the previous two matches, went on to complete 50 this time, with a single off Mahmudullah Riyad. Tom Blundell (23 not out) hit a boundary to take New Zealand home, with 91 balls to spare.

Cole McConchie and Trent Boult earlier complemented Milne, who was playing his first match of the series, claiming



New Zealand's Will Young plays a shot during the third one-day international (ODI) match between Bangladesh and New Zealand at the Sher-e-Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka. — AFP

2-18 and 2-33 respectively to deny Bangladesh any serious momentum in the contest.

The Kiwis, who lost the previous two series in Bangladesh 4-0 in 2010 and 3-0 in 2013, won the second match by 86 runs on Saturday. The first match was washed out by rain.

"The World Cup is just around the corner — to come up with the first win since 2008 is great," said Young, the man of the match, in a briefing afterwards.

"This group plays a lot together, we gel well and it's a lot of fun," he added. Young said that while he could not predict what

conditions the Kiwis would face in India when the World Cup opens on October 5, he hoped "it's similar to these".

Bangladesh initially rested key players but, with the series at stake, they brought back stalwarts Najmul, Mushfiquur Rahim and Shoriful Islam. However, it did little to improve their performance.

Najmul, leading Bangladesh for the first time, held down one end to score his fifth ODI fifty but wickets kept falling regularly from the other end.

"Our batsmen didn't score big runs," Najmul said.

"Hopefully, next time batters take responsibility and bat long."

Milne and Boult struck early to reduce Bangladesh to 35-3, before Najmul and Mushfiquur offered a brief resistance with a 53-run fourth wicket stand. Mushfiquur's dismissal to Lockie Ferguson for 18 put New Zealand back on top and the visitors did not lose the momentum again.

McConchie ended any real chance of Bangladesh lodging a fighting score by dismissing Najmul with his second ball of the day, with the left-hander hitting 10 fours in his 84-ball innings. — AFP

# OTA monthly tourney to begin from Sept 30

SPORTS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

The Oman Tennis Association (OTA) is organising the first monthly tournament for the current year, which is scheduled to be held on the tennis courts of the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher from September 30 to October 3. Male and female players from the national teams and the players from the communities residing in Sultanate of Oman who have registered with the Oman Tennis Association will participate in the tournament.

By holding this tournament, the OTA seeks to activate the game's activity among the various age levels of game players, as the tournament's competitions are held for ages from 8 to 18 years.

The tournament will see mini-tennis competitions, which the OTA launched some time ago with the aim of encouraging the talents in cadet category.

The OTA is working with the clubs to promote the grass roots

level players.

The current year witnesses the holding of four competitions in the Junior League for monthly tournaments, which will continue until the end of the year.

Siddiq al Hashemi, a technical expert at the OTA, said that the return of the monthly tournaments comes from the OTA's keenness to promote the game among the age group players.

"The young children will get good opportunity during the tournaments to brush up their skills. This will produce junior players who are technically efficient, whether for the national team or for the community players."

He added that the tournament will also witness the holding of mini-tennis competitions, which the OTA is counting on greatly to expand the base of the game. "We hope that everyone will benefit from this participation, which is expected to include a large group of players of different ages," Al Hashemi said.



The OTA is working with the clubs to promote the grass roots level players.



Musab al Hadi and Waleed al Kindi of Oman compete during the men's 49er sailing competition during the 19th Asian Games in Ningbo, China.

# Oman strikes first silver as sailors script history

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Omani sailing pair of Musab al Hadi and Waleed al Kindi snatched silver medal at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, China on Tuesday. Oman's duo managed to earn the silver in the men's 49er sailing after tough competition with the Japanese sailors Singen Furuya and Akira Takayanagi and Indian sailors Ganapathy Kelapanda Chengappa and Varun Ashok Thakkar.

The silver triumph meant, Oman claimed their first ever silver in the Asian Games history after one gold and three bronzes in the previous editions of the Asian Games. Olympian sprinter Mohammed al Malki had entered the Sultanate of Oman in the history when he became the first

Omani to claim a gold in the men's 400m race in Beijing Games in 1990. Al Malki had also bagged a bronze medal in the same category in Asian Games in Seoul in 1986.

Oman's men's 4x100m relay team won the bronze medal in Bangkok Games in 1998 while the latest Asian bronze medal was won by Oman's fastest sprint Barakat al Harthy in men's 100m at the 2010 Guangzhou Games in China.

Oman's duo sailors forthcoming assignment will be securing slot in the Paris 2024 Olympic Games as they managed to book spot in the Asian Qualification Regatta in Thailand which will be held in coming December.

Hashim bin Hamad al Rashidi, Oman Sail's Head Coach Performance, expressed his delight with the effort.

"Special thanks to our

stars as they managed to earn this crucial silver medal after tough competitions. This accomplishment is made after an intensive warm-up programme and continuous training sessions besides attending different events domestically and internationally. It was a strong test for the national sailors in presence of top sailors in Asian continent. Our focus is now shifted to the Asian qualification and then to secure slot in the next Olympic Games," he said.

The pair sailed excellently throughout the week in Ningbo, China, and kept their composure in the final intense races to take silver. This achievement means the team has secured automatic qualification to the Asian Qualification Regatta in Chon Buri, Thailand, in December where they will look to confirm

their place at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Al Rashidi added: "We have kept this participation in mind as the next step will be in the quest to obtain a seat in the Paris 2024 Olympic qualifiers, which will be held in December 2023."

After the end of the races, Musab al Hadi said: "We are very happy to represent the Sultanate of Oman in this major continental event, and we are delighted to win a silver medal for our nation. We dedicate this achievement to our dear homeland, and to all those who supported us on this journey, the technical staff and our colleagues at Oman Sail."

**HOCKEY HOPES HIT**

Meanwhile in Gongshu Canal Sports Park Stadium, Oman hockey team hopes suffered a

setback after they registered their second successive defeat against Malaysia 11-1 on Tuesday in Group B. Oman had lost 3-2 against hosts China in the opener.

Oman's shooting team comprising Issam al Balushi and Siham al Hasani failed to advance to the next level of the competitions in the Mixed Team 10m Air Rifle as they finished 13th among 21 teams.

The national shooters scored 622.6 points. Oman's shooters including Siham al Hasani and Amina al Tarshi will take part in the 50m Rifle 3 Positions Women's Qualification.

Oman's swimmer Issa al Adawi will compete on Wednesday in the Men's 200m Freestyle qualification and will look for better show than his previous attendance in the 100m and 50m freestyle

competitions. His teammate Abdulrahman al Kulaibi will compete in the men's 100m butterfly competitions.

Oman's top sprinter Barakat al Harthy arrived to Hangzhou on Tuesday to take part with his teammates in the athletics competitions. This is the fourth participation for Barakat in the Asian Games and he is among the expected candidates to claim another medal for Oman in this participation.

The athletics team includes Barakat al Harthy, Ali al Balushi, Mohammed al Saadi, Rashid al Asmi, Khalid al Ghilani, Fatik Abdulghafoor, Salim al Yarubi and Hussin al Farsi.

The athletics team will begin their competitions on Friday at Hangzhou Olympic Sports Centre Stadium.

# business

MUSCAT  
STOCK  
EXCHANGE

4669.02



CRUDE  
OIL PRICE

Oman Crude \$92.57  
Brent Crude \$91.31  
Light Crude \$89.11



Follow us on  
omanobserver.om/business



Closer than you think  
Over 100 branches, and more than 300  
ATMs/CDMs/FFMs/MFKs to serve you

bankdhofar

www.bankdhofar.com



## Oil and gas sector’s FDI share surpasses RO 14 billion

NASRULAH AL AJMI  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) recorded a net inflow of RO 1.744 billion in 2022, compared to an inflow of RO 2.926 billion a year earlier, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) stated in its newly issued 2022 Annual Report of Oman’s banking and financial sector.

The lower FDI inflows were a reflection of a transition in the investment climate as the business environment revived post-pandemic, the apex bank noted.

Nevertheless, the Sultanate of Oman remained an attractive destination for foreign investors, the CBO report said.

One standout highlight of the report is the stellar performance of Oman’s oil and gas sector, which saw a substantial 19.7 per cent increase in FDI, constituting the lion’s share of RO 14.166 billion (72.2 per cent), demonstrating the resilience and attractiveness of Oman’s energy industry to foreign investors.

Oman’s manufacturing sector made significant strides as well, claiming a 7.9-per cent share (RO 1.549 billion) of FDI. Financial



A drilling rig in operation

intermediation closely followed with a 7.6-per cent share (RO 1.481 billion), reflecting the strength of Oman’s financial services sector.

Real estate, renting and business activities also made their mark, recording a 5.3-per cent share of FDI.

Other sectors collectively

accounted for the remaining 7.1 per cent (RO 2.426 billion), showcasing a diversified investment portfolio in Oman.

The CBO report also highlighting the leading countries contributing to FDI in Oman. The United Kingdom emerged as the largest foreign direct investor,

with investments reaching RO 10.156 billion by the end of 2022, a notable increase from the previous year.

The United States followed closely with RO 2.735.8 billion, while the United Arab Emirates secured the third position with RO 1.083.4 billion.

Commenting on contribution of FDI in Oman’s overall fiscal performance during 2022, Tahir bin Salim al Amri, CBO Executive President, said: “The 2022 state’s general budget achieved remarkable positive fiscal performance in 2022, surpassing previous years, driven by higher oil prices, adoption of prudent policy measures and improved fiscal discipline.

“The government achieved fiscal sustainability by enhancing non-oil revenue, increasing spending efficiency and controlling the budget deficit.

“This resulted in a fiscal surplus of 2.6 per cent and a current account surplus of 5 per cent of GDP in 2022. The external sector remained resilient, supported by strong growth in exports and sustained inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI).”

## Dhamani set to reshape healthcare insurance services in Oman

NASRULAH AL AJMI  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

In an era where information exchange is the lifeblood of efficient healthcare systems, Oman has taken a key step forward with the implementation of Dhamani, a health insurance platform set up under the auspices of the Capital Market Authority of Oman.

Dhamani, as a digital innovation, is also reshaping the healthcare insurance landscape in the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman, like many countries, has recognised the need for a streamlined, efficient and transparent healthcare insurance ecosystem.

The complexities of claims processing, communication between healthcare providers and insurance companies, and ensuring that patients receive the care they need, all while keeping costs manageable, have been persistent challenges.

Dhamani was conceived to address these challenges by facilitating the seamless exchange of healthcare insurance information.

At its core, Dhamani is a platform designed to connect all stakeholders in the healthcare insurance system. It serves as a unified hub where information flows freely and securely between health insurance companies, healthcare providers and regulatory authorities.

This digital platform simplifies and accelerates key processes, enabling healthcare providers to submit claims digitally, reducing paperwork and administrative



Dhamani is a platform designed to connect all stakeholders in the healthcare insurance system.

overhead. Insurance companies can process claims more efficiently, leading to quicker reimbursements for healthcare providers and insured patients.

One of the most significant advantages of Dhamani is its role in building trust and transparency within the healthcare insurance sector.

Dhamani ensures that billing practices, insurance coverage details and reimbursement rates are readily available and easily accessible to all stakeholders.

Dhamani promotes accountability by providing clear and consistent feedback between insurance companies and healthcare providers.

This feedback loop is essential for continuous improvement and ensures the highest standards of patient care.

Real-time data access allows insurers to support healthcare providers in making well-informed decisions, optimising resource allocation and delivering the best possible care to patients.

The platform harnesses the power of digital innovation to streamline authorisation processes, reduce administrative burdens and improve overall system efficiency.

## Oman Electricity Market completes maiden year

CONRAD PRABHU  
MUSCAT, SEPT 26

The maiden annual report of the Oman Electricity Market (also known as the Spot Market) was issued here on Monday with officials characterising the roll-out of this initiative — the first in the Middle East’s power sector — as “challenging” yet successful, on the whole.

Yaqoob bin Saifal Kiyumi, Chief Executive Officer – Nama Power and Water Company (rebranded recently from Oman PWP), described the launch of the Oman Electricity Market on January 1, 2022 as a “remarkable milestone” for the nation’s electricity sector.

“It was very challenging during Covid-19 to complete the project along with the Market Management System,” Al Kiyumi said in a foreword to 2022 Annual Report. “Nonetheless, the market was launched successfully in January 2022 to start this new journey for the energy sector in the Sultanate of Oman as the energy sector plays a vital role in a country’s economy.”

State-owned Nama PWP, part of Nama Group, is the Market Operator of this new electricity



Illustrative image of a power plant in Oman

spot market. It was established primarily to enable power generators with expiring Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) to offer their surplus capacity via a competitive market process. The underlying objective was to help these generators increase the residual value of their plants upon the expiry of their PPAs.

Under the market rules, power purchases from these plants are undertaken by PWP through a short-term market run each day, with prices for each half-hour set each day based on what the generator concerned has offered to sell. Plants offering higher efficiency are prioritised in dispatch.

Significantly, the Oman Electricity Market recorded a total registered capacity of 8,032.83 MW for the year 2022.

Total energy generated as part of this Market was 31,787 terawatt-hours (TW), out of which 4.61 per cent came from solar PV-based renewable power.

Power companies that registered their capacities under the Electricity Market were: SMN Barka Power Co (Barka II), Al Suwadi Power Co (Barka III), Rusail Power Co (Rusail I), Al Batinah Power Co (Sohar II), Shinas Power Company (Sohar III), Ad-Dhahirah Generation Company (Ibri I), Petroleum Development Oman (Auto-generator), Shams Ad Dhahira Generating Company (Ibri II), Phoenix Power Co (Sur I), ACWA Power Barka (Barka I), and Sohar Power Co (Sohar I).

Al Kiyumi credited a number of stakeholders for the Market’s successful run in the first year of operations.

Besides lauding the role of the Market Advisory Committee, he also acknowledged the role of the Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR), Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), and the Market Operator and Power Procurer (roles assigned to Nama PWP itself).

## Oman-Built Fast Interceptor Craft Front-And-Center at DSEI in London



The P-38 Aggressor Program fast interceptor craft designed and built in Oman by United Engineering Services is being showcased at the Defense and Security Equipment International (DSEI) 2023 in London, which is taking place between the 12th and 15th of September, 2023.

The P-38 Fast Interceptor Craft has been fully integrated into BAE System’s Maritime Nautomate Autonomous System. Nautomate combines BAE Systems’ maritime surface autonomy solutions and UES’ P-38 FIC for marine operations.

David White, CEO - UES added: “The P-38 is already an exceptional Fast Interceptor has proven track record operating in complex

environments. The platform combines a maneuverability craft stable at high speeds which is able to operate in extreme sea conditions. The P-Series offers clients the latest in advanced composite design which minimizes life costs. This partnership with BAE adds a level of autonomy and responsiveness which is at the cutting edge of AI technology. It empowers operations through the ability to remain at sea for up to 24-hour, extended range, enhanced payload, whilst freeing up significant manpower to undertake other tasks.”

Mr. Mahfoodh Al Shaikh, General Manager of Business Development and contracting at UES, said: “This solution is the result of an extensive and rigorous testing period with

our strategic partner BAE Systems, during which we had the involvement of many stakeholders to ensure we provide a solution which fits the clients’ needs.

Being present at this exhibition provided an exceptional opportunity to be on the ground and speak to our stakeholders about their concerns and how we can address them. I believe the Nautomate is a great example of this type of solution and look forward to continuing our partnership with BAE.”

Over the coming period, Nautomate will be making the rounds at various prominent defense exhibitions around the world to showcase Nautomate’s utility and effectiveness at improving defense operations at sea.

# Omani “be’ahTec” programme empowers youth to drive sustainability through innovation

BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, SEPT 25

**MUSCAT:** In a significant milestone reflecting its unwavering commitment to sustainability and the principles of the circular economy, the Omani Environmental Services Holding Company, “be’ah,” has officially concluded its groundbreaking “be’ahTec” programme.

This initiative, conducted in collaboration with Engineering Village, took place at the prestigious W Hotel in Muscat and aimed to foster innovation while honing the skills of Omani youth in deploying Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies to develop sustainable solutions.

The “be’ahTec” programme was a visionary endeavour designed to enhance the proficiency of young individuals and empower them to devise sustainable solutions for efficient resource management.

The programme achieved this by conducting a series of interactive workshops meticulously crafted to stimulate creative thinking and inspire the development of innovative projects among the participants.

The programme kicked off



Presenters at the “be’ahTec” programme

with a series of workshops where participants were introduced to the programme’s over-arching objectives and the formidable challenges it sought to address.

These workshops were held across 12 carefully selected colleges and universities, representing various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Out of an impressive pool of 149 teams that passionately submitted their ideas through the “be’ahTec” website during the initial phase,

the programme meticulously selected three standout teams: “Scanner,” “Emata,” and “Quick.”

These teams are at the forefront of finding innovative technical solutions to the pressing issue of waste classification and characterisation, and they are doing so with remarkable efficiency and cost-effectiveness through the creation of an integrated AI system.

Abdulrahman al Jahdhami, a dedicated participant in the

programme, shared his journey, stating, “After an intensive three-month period filled with rigorous thinking, meticulous planning, exhaustive research, and active participation in training workshops led by field specialists, we have successfully crafted a real-world solution.

We are fully committed to overseeing its implementation with precision and accuracy.”

Al Jahdhami and his team are among the top three teams that

have emerged from the “be’ahTec” programme, and they are poised to revolutionise waste management by utilising cutting-edge AI technologies.

One of the hallmarks of the programme is the acquisition of invaluable skills by participants, including teamwork, problem-solving, and artificial intelligence programming.

These competencies, coupled with a deeper understanding of sustainability and circular economy concepts, have equipped these young innovators to contribute significantly to the broader environmental and economic challenges of our time.

The “be’ahTec” programme, launched in 2022, serves as a beacon of hope and progress in Oman’s quest for sustainability.

By nurturing the next generation of environmentally conscious leaders and entrepreneurs, it paves the way for a more sustainable and innovative future for the Sultanate of Oman and the world at large.

This programme underscores Oman’s dedication to promoting innovation and the practical application of Fourth Industrial Revolution technologies to tackle sustainability challenges head-on.

## Bank Muscat successfully manages IPO for OQ Gas Networks



Bank Muscat Facility

**MUSCAT:** Believing in its extensive experience in investments and money management strategies spanning more than 40 years, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman announced that it has been appointed as the Issue Manager for the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of OQ Gas Networks (OQGN), the exclusive owner and operator of the natural gas transportation network in the Sultanate of Oman. For this IPO, Bank Muscat is also acting as a Joint Global Coordinator with another regional and international financial institutions. OQGN will be offering 49% of its total share capital for public subscription through this IPO.

The offering is the first major equity transaction in Oman which is Shariah-compliant. It is part of Oman Investment Authority’s privatisation programme aiming to enhance economic growth in addition to creating development and innovation opportunities in the energy sector in the Sultanate of Oman.

The IPO Prospectus has been approved by the Capital Market Authority (CMA) on September 17th, 2023.

The subscription period for the offering commenced on September 26th for both Category I applicants (Institutions) and Category II applicants (Individuals) with Category I offer closing on October 9th and Category II offer closing on October 5th, 2023. Omani and non-Omani investors, encompassing individuals and institutional investors, can participate in the offering.

# Danube Home unveils exciting my garden collection for 2024

**MUSCAT:** Danube Home, the region’s foremost home improvement and furniture retailer, proudly announces the launch of its highly anticipated Garden Collection.

Sayed Habib, Director of Danube Home, shared insights about this year’s theme, stating, “The theme of the Danube Home My Garden 2024 catalogue is ‘Think Outdoor, Think Danube Home.’ The collection comprises of products that can create different outdoor aesthetics like Calm, Modern, Boho, Evergreen, Monochrome and Contemporary.

The meticulously designed and curated products are suitable for various outdoor spaces, whether it’s a cozy apartment balcony or an expansive villa backyard.

Our designs cater to diverse aesthetic preferences, ensuring that everyone can find something they love to design their dream



Parents enjoying Danube Furniture

garden under one roof.”

The remarkable My Garden collection at Danube Home encompasses a wide range of garden products, including gazebos and pergolas, balcony sets, sofa sets, dining sets, swings, parasols, outdoor lighting, and garden accessories. Each item

is designed to offer exceptional durability, capable of withstanding outdoor weather conditions. Habib further highlighted the company’s commitment to sustainability, saying, “Today, our customers are more environmentally conscious than ever before.

There’s a growing emphasis on sustainability and ethically sourced, manufactured, and packaged products. That’s why we’ve made sustainability a cornerstone of our collection this year. We’ve incorporated sustainable materials such as olefin fibres in our seating options, and our gazebos and pergolas are crafted from sustainable and recyclable materials like aluminium and steel.

Additionally, we’ve prioritised local sourcing to reduce transport emissions and conserve energy.”

Dangati Jayaraj, General Manager- Retail, Danube Home, emphasised the customer-centric approach, stating, “ Our My Garden 2024 catalogue has been crafted to ignite the imagination of our customers, encouraging them to craft and shape their ideal outdoor oasis. With our exquisite array of offerings, customers have

the freedom to blend and match products to manifest their desired aesthetics.

With decades of experience, we proudly hold the No 1 position as the premier outdoor solutions provider in the market with majority of the products having warranty of up to 2 years. Having already solidified our reputation as the ultimate home destination, offering a diverse array of products across various categories all under one roof, we are now setting our sights on becoming the go-to destination for all things outdoor as well.” As the region experiences cooler weather, the demand for high-quality outdoor furniture is on the rise. With its latest offering, Danube Home aspires to establish itself as the most trusted outdoor furniture brand in the region. The My Garden 2024 catalogue is user-friendly and accessible on both Android and iOS devices.

# Mazda: Affordable style, performance and comfort

**MUSCAT:** Mazda consistently pushes boundaries, redefines standards, and prioritises making exceptional driving experiences universally accessible. With a legacy rooted in innovation, craftsmanship, and performance, Mazda Oman proudly unveils the latest campaign: “Unmatched Style, Performance & Comfort - Now More Affordable”, and invites you to be a part of this automotive renaissance, where the allure of Mazda becomes even more attainable.

### Mazda 6

Dive into the world of the Mazda 6, a sedan that stands as a testament to meticulous craftsmanship and innovation.

Powered by a 2.5L engine delivering a robust 190PS, every drive promises to be an exhilarating

experience.

Safety, a cornerstone of Mazda’s philosophy, shines through with the Mazda Radar Cruise Control (MRCC) offering an Adaptive Cruise Control.

The plush Napa Leather Seats ensure that comfort isn’t just an option but a standard.

Advanced features such as the Lane Departure Warning System (LDWS) and Lane Keep Assist (LKA) work tirelessly, ensuring you stay on course.

With an EMI starting from just RO 93, luxury and performance are now within your grasp.

### Mazda CX-5

Adventure has a new name, and it’s the Mazda CX-5. Whether you’re navigating city streets or exploring off-road terrains, its dynamic 2.5L engine, offering



Mazda Q3

190PS, ensures you’re always in control.

The Mazda Radar Cruise Control (MRCC) with Adaptive Cruise Control stands as a beacon of safety, while the premium

Napa Leather seats cocoon you in comfort and with the Electric Tailgate Opening, every journey is effortless.

Begin your adventure with an EMI offer starting at RO 100.

### Mazda CX-60

The Mazda CX-60 is a luxury segment SUV. A powerful 2.5L engine delivering 191PS is paired with the Mazda Radar Cruise Control (MRCC) to offer a driving experience that’s both powerful and seamless.

The rear-wheel drive (RWD) setup promises optimal performance, while the 8-speed Transmission is a nod to Mazda’s commitment to luxury and craftsmanship.

Experience this marvel with EMIs starting from RO 143.

### Mazda CX-9

Step into a world where luxury meets functionality.

The Mazda CX-9, with its 2.5L Turbo Engine boasting 231PS, redefines what a 7-seater SUV should be. From the Mazda Radar

Cruise Control (MRCC) ensuring safety to the striking 20” Alloys and Real Wood Panel accents emphasising luxury, the CX-9 is a masterpiece on wheels.

Dive into this world of luxury with EMIs starting from RO 131. Acknowledging the trust, Mazda Oman also offers the Injaz Service Package guarantees that Mazda vehicles sustain their peak performance for 5 years or 100,000 kilometres, whichever comes first.

Similarly, a complimentary AAA Roadside Assistance for unexpected challenges on the road, and the support remains readily available, just a call away.

For more information and details visit the nearest Mazda showroom, explore the range, and let the journey with Mazda begin today.



## Japan's second place at risk in IMF contributors list



International Monetary Fund headquarters

**TOKYO:** Japan faces the possibility of losing its second-place position in the list of the largest contributors to the International Monetary Fund.

The country has held this position for about three decades, pending the completion of member countries' financing of their shares in the Fund's budget by the end of this year.

The Japanese news agency Kyodo reported that China and Germany are expected to surpass Japan in the ranking of contributors to the Fund based on the current equation, reflecting each country's economic strength.

Several Japanese officials have pointed out that, in light of the slowing economic growth and the depreciation of the yen against the dollar and other currencies, Japan's ranking is likely to drop to fifth place.

The Fund, which includes 190 countries, aims to finalise its reform plans in December, following an agreement by its board of directors in October, coinciding with the annual

meetings of the Fund and the World Bank in Marrakech, Morocco.

Currently, the United States is the largest contributor to the Fund with a share of 17.4%, followed by Japan with 6.0%, and then China with 6.0% of the Fund's capital.

According to documents obtained by the Japanese news agency Kyodo, if the current equation is used, China's share will increase to 14.6%, while the United States' share will decrease to 14.6%, with Germany coming in third place, followed by Britain, and Japan in fifth place.

It is worth mentioning that the International Monetary Fund, headquartered in Washington, reviews its members' shares at least every five years.

The plan to increase the Fund's capital aims to assist emerging and developing countries facing financial shortages due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other global economic and geopolitical challenges."

— ONA

# Madayn inaugurates services building in Al Rusayl Industrial City

The building, valued at RO 6.5 million, enhances industrial infrastructure amidst Oman's economic growth

**MUSCAT:** The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn) celebrated the inauguration of the services and facilities building in Al Rusayl Industrial City, with an investment cost of OMR 6.5 million.

The opening ceremony was presided over by Eng Dawood bin Salim al Hadabi, the CEO of Madayn, and attended by officials from the public and private sectors, investors, and business owners.

The inauguration of this building comes at a time of rapid industrial growth in the Sultanate of Oman. It reflects Madayn's ongoing efforts, through its investment arm, Shumookh for Investment and Services, to develop essential infrastructure in industrial cities across various governorates.

These efforts aim to ensure a comprehensive quality environment for work, life, and leisure for all.

Eng Musallam bin Juma al Hadifi, CEO of Shumookh for Investment and Services, emphasised the vital role that the industrial sector plays in economic development.

It contributes to job creation, increases national income, and boosts exports.

Al Rusayl Industrial City, with its excellent infrastructure and advanced logistics services, is a prominent hub for industrial activities in Oman and continues to expand.

He further explained that the services and facilities building project in Al Rusayl Industrial City is part of Shumookh's commitment to strategic projects.

The company has successfully invested in similar service buildings, including the fifth building in Muscat Knowledge Oasis and the services building in Sohar Industrial City.

Shumookh currently manages



Attendees at the ceremony

and operates this 19,000 square meter building, which includes 200 parking spaces within the building and additional public parking nearby.

Al Hadifi noted that the building comprises ten floors (basement, ground floor, and eight additional floors) with a total leasable area of up to 8,500 square meters.

It has been designed to provide various facilities and services, including banking services, exchange offices, travel agencies, a medical clinic, labour inspection centre, cafes, a consumer goods store, and a variety of international and local restaurants.

The building also offers numerous office spaces for government institutions, private companies, and organisations, providing visitors and investors with a diverse and unique experience.

This addition enhances the industrial city's offerings and adds value to the local economy.

Eng Mohsin bin Zuhair al Hinai, CEO of Al Rusayl Industrial City, highlighted that the services and facilities building project is part



Facility building inaugurated in Al Rusayl Industrial City

of Madayn's continuous efforts to provide incentives and services that facilitate local and foreign investments in its industrial cities.

These efforts align with Oman Vision 2040 and aim to boost the national economy by attracting investments and global strategic partnerships while promoting job opportunities and local industrial growth.

He further stated that several vital projects have recently been completed in Al Rusayl Industrial City, contributing to attracting investments. Additionally, infrastructure development projects within the city continue, focusing on improving internal roads and enhancing basic infrastructure facilities. — ONA

## Saudi Arabia to host world's largest gathering of tourism leaders

**RIYADH:** The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia will host tomorrow in its capital, Riyadh, the world's largest gathering of tourism leaders to celebrate World Tourism Day in an event described as the biggest commemoration of the anniversary that began 43 years ago.

The event, celebrated by the World Health Organization, will be attended by over 500 leaders, experts, and officials from 120 countries worldwide under the theme "Tourism and Green Investment," with the aim of promoting investment in people, the planet, and prosperity.

The tourism sector in Saudi Arabia is one of the key pillars of the "Saudi Vision 2030" with the aim of contributing to job opportunities, sustainable social development, and economic growth.

The World Tourism Organization described Saudi Arabia as the second-fastest-growing tourist destination in



Saudi Arabia to host world's largest tourism leaders gathering in Riyadh tomorrow, marking 43 years of World Tourism Day celebrations.

the world, with visitor numbers increasing by 64 percent in the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2019.

As part of Saudi Arabia's efforts to become a hub for both business and tourism, the Saudi Cabinet approved a new tourism system at the end of August.

Saudi Minister of Tourism Ahmed Al-Khateeb said that this system not only provides solutions to current problems but also envisions future tourism patterns.

The new system provides sufficient flexibility to the tourism sector given its rapid development and integration with modern technologies, through a new tool: experimental tourism activity permits aimed at creating a feasible tourism environment for all emerging sector activities.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in his annual message, "Tourism is a powerful force that can be harnessed to drive progress and promote mutual understanding." He

added, "On this World Tourism Day, we recognise the urgent need for green investments to build a tourism sector that benefits people and the planet."

In this context, he stressed the importance of governments and companies investing in sustainable tourism practices that can withstand crises.

During the two-day global tourism celebration in Riyadh, the spotlight will be on the importance of investing in projects that serve the interests of people and nations through investments in education, skills, the environment, sustainable infrastructure, accelerating the green transition, prosperity, innovation, technology, and entrepreneurship.

It is worth noting that Riyadh hosted the Global Summit of the World Travel and Tourism Council last year and is home to the regional office of the World Tourism Organization in the Middle East." — ONA

# Calls for a new finance council to boost growth



ANDY JALIL  
andyjalil@aol.com

The author is our  
correspondent based in the  
UK

The City of London Corporation has called on the government to form a new financial and professional services council to help the UK escape its low-growth situation. The increase in the economy has only been marginal in the last three consecutive quarters with two of them going up only 0.1 per cent.

But forecasters say in the long-term it sets Britain on course to grow faster than European neighbours such as Germany – the power house of the European Union – France and Italy and crucially swerve a recession.

The governing body in London's financial district has urged politicians to add "urgency, impact and direction" to their plans to bolster the City by romping in some of its brightest

minds for advice, as London's capital markets continue to be squeezed by international competitors and growth stalls.

The group would be similar to the wider business council run out of the Prime minister's office,

and would help execute a long-term strategy for how financial and professional services can drive economic growth.

The idea is just one of a host laid out by the City of London Corporation in a "roadmap" to economic growth published on 7 September.

The paper also calls for pension funds to unlock more capital, greater use of digital data in company reporting, a focus on sustainable finance, and the creation of a support hub that would boost service-oriented trade partnerships.

JPMorgan, KPMG, Schroders, EY and Barclays co-authored the report. Katharine Braddick, Barclay's group head of strategic policy, said that while the UK "has a long and successful track record as a key player in global markets," the City needs to work

with regulators and government to stay on top.

"The last thing we can afford is complacency," KPMG partner Huw Evans said. Schroders' senior public policy adviser Shiela Nicoll said the report highlighted an "urgent" need for a strategy to unlock sectors such as sustainable finance and technology.

The chief executive of the British Private Equity and Venture Capital Association, Michael Moore, added that "our international competitors are not standing still, so as they continue to adapt, we must do likewise."

The City of London Corporation's growth plan has added to a deluge of work that has sought to help London's progress as a listing's centre.

ARM priced its IPO earlier this month, having picked the US over London despite overtures

from politicians for the firm to list on its home turf.

Meanwhile, WE Soda abandoned its plans to list in London, citing "extreme investor caution."

That left CAB Payments as one of the few significant listings wins this year for the City.

The London Stock Exchange has tried to boost its own competitiveness by signing a new technology deal with Microsoft and expanding into areas such as blockchain-powered trading.

Meanwhile, the government's Edinburgh Reforms and Mansion House compact have ushered in more than 30 separate consultations or policy announcements to boost the City's standing.

The Financial Conduct Authority has also begun reforming its listings rules. It

is reducing the track-record requirements for young firms looking to list. It is also opening the door to the 'golden share' sweeteners favoured by the founders of US startups.

Several grantees from the City (financial district) were planning to come together to create the definitive blueprint for a path forward, having grown tired of what one person familiar with their plans dubbed "review-itis."

The City of London Corporation says its roadmap could boost the economy by £225 billion.

That would be made up of £75 billion from the government's Mansion House reforms, £100 billion from insurance reforms and £50 billion from net zero (emissions) investments. (The writer is our foreign correspondent based in the UK)

# Inflation, budget risks await Polish vote winner

BY KARL BADOHAL,  
PAWEŁ FLORKIEWICZ  
AND GERGELY SZAKACS

Less than three weeks ahead of Poland's hotly contested general election, Warsaw pensioner Jadwiga Buczek is feeling better about a cost of living crisis which, for the past two years, has hit central Europeans harder than most.

"Let me tell you, there was a time when I couldn't even afford to buy salmon, for example. And now I'll go and buy myself a piece of salmon and have it at least once a week," Buczek told Reuters of a favourite treat.

"I think that the government is really doing a lot, and those who think that this is some kind of mistake or that they are doing something wrong, that is absolutely not true," said Buczek, a supporter of the ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party.

Buczek has benefited from the fact that PiS has raised her pension as part of hefty welfare spending moves which, opinion surveys show, are easing Poles' concerns over high inflation.

Now, PiS and its rivals are vying to outdo each other with promises of even more generous spending - meaning that whoever wins the Oct. 15 election must pick up the tab for policies that risk fanning inflation and straining the state budget.

Poland's economy, the largest of the ex-communist countries which joined the European Union, has since the COVID-19 pandemic seen a two-year surge in foreign investment as firms take advantage of its skilled but still relatively cheap workforce.

That has helped the socially conservative PiS fund the expansion of a pro-family policy of child benefits, hikes to minimum wages and payments to pensioners - in turn prompting rivals to come up with even more expansive election promises.

While such welfare supports are modest compared to those in western Europe, the concern is that they could hinder efforts to lower inflation which reached a peak of 18.4% in February and is still stuck around 10% - double that of the euro area.

"The new fiscal measures



and a sizeable increase of the minimum wage in 2024 are expected to increase core inflation pressures," said the European Commission this month as it forecast 2024 inflation at 6.1%, double the central bank target of 2.5%.

For now, the main rating agencies are comfortable with a stable outlook on their A-tier credit ratings for Poland due to its strong fundamentals and solid medium-term growth prospects, even with high inflation stifling the economy this year.

However, some have concerns about monetary policy too.

The National Bank of Poland's rush to cut its main interest rate by a much-larger-than-expected

75 basis points ahead of the election raised worries the bank was more focused on economic growth than inflationary pressures.

"With oil prices above \$90 per barrel, and depreciation of the Polish zloty after the interest rate cut, that all raises the risk that inflation rates might still go down, but probably not at the speed that was anticipated before," said Steffen Dyck, senior vice president, Sovereign Risk Group at Moody's.

NBP Governor Adam Glapinski defended the move, saying that a retreat in inflation allowed for the cut and those surprised by the move - which included all the economists

polled by Reuters before the decision - were "simply wrong"

## EU CASH

Regardless of who wins on Oct. 15, credit rating agencies believe that pledges of higher social outlays will be hard to reverse, raising deeper questions over public finances.

Polish state spending is set to rise to more than 46% of gross domestic product this year, not as high as countries with larger welfare but still its second-highest level this century based on International Monetary Fund data.

"The reality is that the fundamental expenditure versus revenue trends are pointing to

higher deficits over the medium term," Fitch Ratings' Director Federico Barriga Salazar said.

The Polish minimum wage, already the highest in central Europe, will rise by nearly a fifth next year. With many homeowners on variable loan rates, Warsaw recently extended a scheme for mortgage repayment holidays into next year. In another gift to households, first-home buyers can get mortgages at a fixed 2% interest rate for 10 years, one of the best mortgage deals available in all of Europe.

"The question is who will win the elections and which election promises will be fulfilled," said Andrzej Kuzniak, an IT company

manager and 57-year-old father of three who supports the main opposition Civic Coalition.

"If we have social spending, there needs to be revenues, right?" he said. Such concerns feed into a final risk around the election: if it is inconclusive, as polls suggest, it will further delay the delivery of some 110 billion-euros (\$116.84 billion) worth of EU funding held up in a dispute with Brussels over rule of law concerns. "Ultimately, this could mean that the government has to spend more on its own, which would mean higher deficits and a rising debt burden, which would be over the medium term credit negative for the credit profile," Moody's Dyck said. — Reuters

WJ Towell Group Company

**Quality car rentals at competitive prices.**

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

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

اوربیت ORBIT  
Car Rental & Lease

# Classifieds

WEDNESDAY

SEPTEMBER 27, 2023

RABEE AL AWWAL 11, 1445 AH

**Observer Classified Section**

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230  
m.alrahdhi86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi  
95919344

94501166  
24649593  
24649595

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

**DOOR TO DOOR CARGO**

INDIA BANGLADESH NEPAL PHILIPPINES UAE INDONESIA EUROPE UK CANADA USA

WHATSAPP 96353654 TOLL FREE NUMBER 80066766  
Follow us: f i n t www.alnamanicargo.com

**Driving School**

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

Contact No: 99074072

**AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION**

Contact: 97239696 95355638

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

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

25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FAST DELIVERY EXCELLENT SERVICES

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

**سماء الخضراء للتجارة**  
**SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING**

**SERVICES:**

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES  
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

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

**HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?**

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

**AL JURY TECHNOLOGY & DESIGN**

Starting from OMR 150/-  
**WEBSITE DESIGN** (Including Hosting - Domain Name Registration)

Mobile App Development  
Website Development  
Digital Marketing Services  
E-commerce Solutions  
IT Consultancy Services

Call / WhatsApp To Reach Us: +968 7991 2201  
www.aljuryit.com info@aljuryit.com  
Suite#201/202, Ziad Building, Ghala Heights, Muscat.

**DAWOOD** **JOB VACANCY**

An Excellent grade, ISO 9001:2015-QMS accredited Construction company wishes to recruit enthusiastic personnel for the following position:

**Senior Project Manager**

**Required:**

1. 15 years min experience. 3. Bachelor degree.  
2. Must have executed 5 Star Hotel projects. 4. Oman Driving license holder.

Interested candidates pls forward your CV's to [Info@dawood.om](mailto:Info@dawood.om)

**OPEN POSITIONS**

Require qualified & experienced male

**1) Multicuisine "Cook" (Chef De Parte)**  
**2) Baker**

for a high-profile family in Oman

**Job requirements are:**

- Should have a minimum of 5 years of culinary experience and working in a formal household would be an asset.
- Prepare and develop recipes in accordance with the family and guest's nutritional needs and dietary restrictions such as lactose and gluten intolerance.
- Prepare daily meals for the family (Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner).
- Able to cook for events and formal dinner parties.
- Able to take full responsibility for the running of the kitchen and have effective communication skills.
- Be able to work alongside a team of household staff and as kitchen assistants that provide the highest level of service for the family.
- Ensure all kitchen equipment and appliances are kept clean and in proper working condition.
- Be creative, hardworking & have exceptional standards for cleanliness, health & safety.

Role carries an excellent salary, accommodation, food, annual leave with air ticket to hometown and medical insurance as per Oman Labor law.

Kindly send a CV with a recent photo to: [farmchefoman@gmail.com](mailto:farmchefoman@gmail.com)

**Job Vacancy** **FERROGRATE**

**FERROTECH GROUP OF COMPANIES** for its Oman branch looking for **Sales Engineer** with 3-5 years experience in Cable Management Systems and related products.

Candidates with relevant experience & valid Oman Driving License can apply to [recruitment23oman@gmail.com](mailto:recruitment23oman@gmail.com)

Salary OMR 500/- Month  
(Car, Fuel & mobile allowance will be provided)

**ROYAL CARGO**

ALL OVER INDIA  
INDONESIA NEPAL  
AIR EXPORT (Port to Port)  
SEA EXPORT (Container Booking)

**SERVICES BY AIR & SEA**

DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

FOR MORE INFORMATION JUST DIAL CUSTOMER CARE 93213207  
PICK UP FREE ANYWHERE IN MUSCAT 93213206

**PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.**

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

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

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

OMAN OBSERVER

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

## SIT. WANTED

INDIAN, male, Assistant Store Manager/ Sr Sales Executive with 6 years of experience, currently in Oman on visit visa, looking for a suitable opportunity. Contact: +968 78621201, touseefahmed265@gmail.com

## SIT. VACANT

LOOKING for Omani System Admin with knowledge of VM Ware, Linux machines management. Contact: innovativetse@omantel.net.om

## CHANGE OF NAME

I Harsha Papanna holder of Indian Passport No Z4630076 daughter of Papanna Channa Veera having permanent residence in F/501 Bldg/G, Daffodils, Magarpatta City, Hadapsar, Pune, 411028 and presently residing in Sohar, North Al Batinah, Palm Gardens Villa #469 intend to change my name from **Harsha Papanna** (old name) to **Harsha Shetty** (new name) for all practical purpose. Any objection towards my name change may please be communicated to Embassy of India, Muscat, Diplomatic Quarters, Al Khuwair, P Box No. 1727, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Sultanate of Oman.

ARCHITECT with three years of experience, 28-year-old Indian woman with a B.Arch., looking for work. Mobile: 96021743, sairanowshad3@gmail.com

SUDANESE lawyer and legal adviser, with more than 30 years of experience in Sudanese courts of all levels and types. Available in Muscat, Tel: 79121176, Yasir. Elmahi@hotmail.com

## FLAT FOR RENT

FLATS and offices for rent in Muscat. 96379095, 98403020.

EXPERT in selling and marketing goods produced in Oman to the UAE markets and vice versa is looking for a good break. 78501743.

A MASTER degree in Philosophy in Botany holder lady looking for any job (teacher preferably) available in Oman on visit visa. Contact: 96972323.

ACCOUNTANT (male), MBA Finance and a Certified SAP FICO Consultant with 7 years work experience from Oman in Finance Department. Looking for a suitable position. Contact: 99685330. Email: hussain\_ca87@yahoo.com

## FOR SALE

DISCONTINUOUS PU Sandwich Panel Machine, running condition, for sale. Contact number: 99205104. Mail id: mktho@omantel.net.om

**Observer**

**For Advertisements**

Please Contact with our Team:

**Head Office**

Mohd Al Rashdi  
99841230  
m.alrahdhi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari  
99639264  
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

**Salalah Office**

Bakhit Al Shihri  
92998577  
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

**Nizwa Office**

Abdullah Al Abri  
99429094  
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

**Suhar Office**

Musalam Al Saidi  
99429192  
sohardaily@outlook.com

[www.omanobserver.om](https://www.omanobserver.om)

**Observer**

FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2020 DHUL QAADA 16, 1441 AH

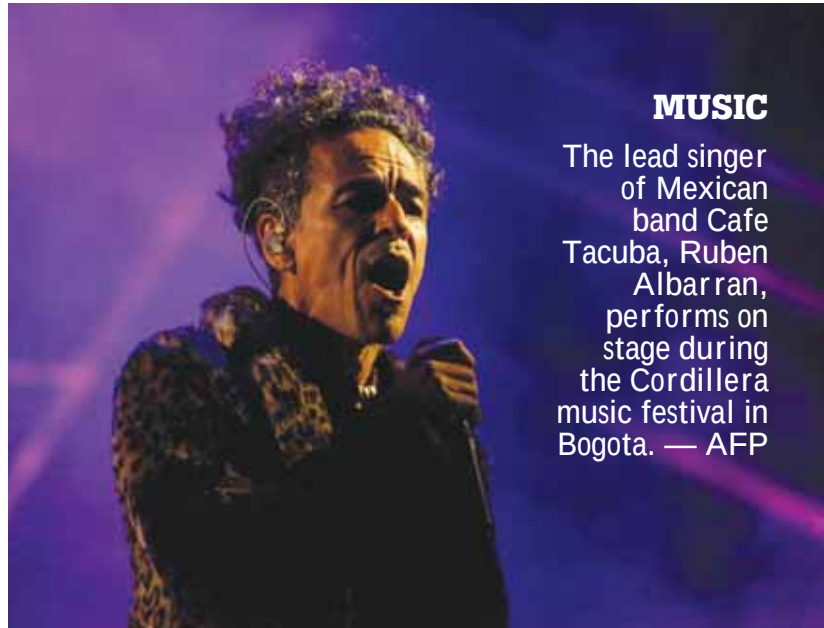
**HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER**

**NEW RO 50 BANKNOTE FROM THIS MONTH**

**STAY APART AND BREAK THE CHAIN**

PHOTOCALL

Spanish actor Luis Bermejo poses during a photocall of the film “Un amor” during the 71st San Sebastian International Film Festival in the northern Spanish Basque city of San Sebastian. — AFP



MUSIC

The lead singer of Mexican band Cafe Tacuba, Ruben Albarran, performs on stage during the Cordillera music festival in Bogota. — AFP

VISIT

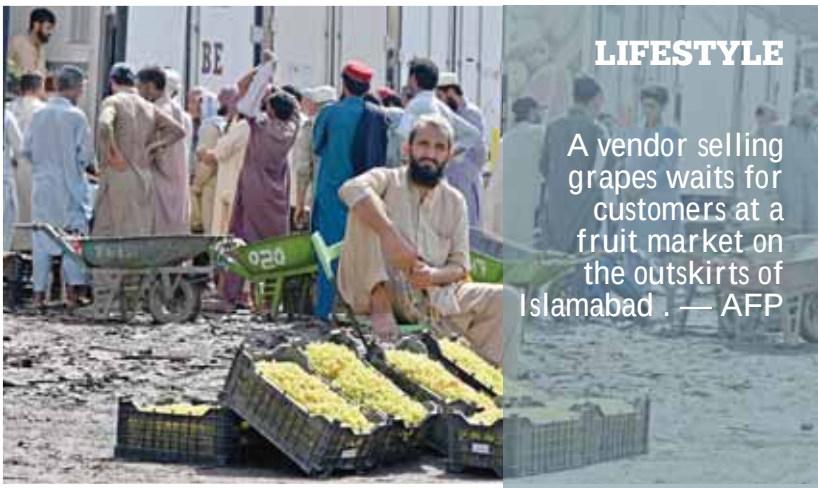
Britain's Catherine, Princess of Wales arrives to visit AW Hainsworth, a family-owned heritage textile mill established in 1783, in Leeds, northern England. — AFP



DIOR

FASHION

US actress Monica Barbaro poses during a photocall ahead of the Christian Dior fashion show as part of the Paris Fashion Week Womenswear Spring/Summer 2024 in Paris . — AFP



LIFESTYLE

A vendor selling grapes waits for customers at a fruit market on the outskirts of Islamabad . — AFP



art & life

WEDNESDAY | SEPTEMBER 27, 2023 | RABEE AL AWWAL 11, 1445 AH ⓘ OMAN OBSERVER f x @ y t v www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om



Natural beauty, culture, and adventure converge at Wadi Tiwi

BALQIS AL ORAIMI

Located in the enchanting eastern region of the Wilayat of Sur in the Sultanate of Oman, Wadi Tiwi is a hidden gem that beckons travellers seeking tranquillity and natural beauty. Adjacent to the famous Wadi Shab, this mesmerising valley takes its name from the nearby coastal village of Tiwi. Nestled amidst lush farmland, Wadi Tiwi offers a unique, verdant landscape that sets it apart from many other wadis in the region. It's a haven for nature lovers.

Wadi Tiwi stretches for more than 35 kilometres, starting from its source in the village of Wadi Bir in the Tiwi Niyabat and flowing all the way to the sea. Along its course, there's an 11-kilometre stretch of cemented road, featuring challenging terrain with steep inclines, slopes, and curves that can be somewhat treacherous, making a four-wheel-drive vehicle advisable.

This fertile valley is adorned with dense vegetation, with trees lining its banks providing refreshing shades. The wadi meanders through various agricultural and residential villages and is blessed with tributary valleys like Khub Fadil Valley and Wadi Deni, as well as rocky formations such as Baddah Division and Khazina



Division. These tributaries contribute to the abundant flow of Wadi Tiwi.

Numerous charming villages grace the banks of Wadi Tiwi. Mebam, in particular, stands out with its fascinating house formations, ancient castle, terraced farms, and perennial water pools that enthrall visitors throughout the year. The village also boasts a captivating waterfall, a popular tourist attraction in all seasons. Other villages, including Sui, Saima, Al-Hosn, and Harat Baddah,

capture with their architectural creativity, featuring old houses, towers, castles, palm groves, and picturesque surroundings.

Travellers can navigate the wadi by vehicle, passing through lush tree-lined paths and alongside flowing water throughout the year. The valley's farms are home to various palm tree varieties like Al Bonaranga, Al Madlouki, Al Sudari, Al Muhallabi, Al Manhahi, Al Qaddi, Al Najal, Al Salani, Al Khamri, Al Fard, Al Khasab, Al Hilali, and many more.



These farms are irrigated by the Gaelic aflaj, which draws water from the wadi's ponds and springs originating from the surrounding mountains. Notable aflaj in Wadi Tiwi include the rebel falaj, Bedouin falaj, Basab falaj, Uqair falaj, real estate falaj, Qalaa falaj, and Saffala falaj. The valley is also dotted with famous springs like Ain Masawa, Ain Al Ammar, Ain Sharihiyya, Ain Muhallabi, Ain Marawana, and Ain Halout.

To make the most of your visit to Wadi Tiwi, be sure to come pre-

pared. A 4WD vehicle is essential due to the challenging terrain. Additionally, pack a cap or hat, sunscreen, food, snacks, plenty of drinking water, swimming attire, a towel, and sturdy, water-friendly footwear, such as old sneakers or open-toe shoes. Safeguard your camera and electronics with waterproof bags, as there's a need to swim through one large pool toward the end of the wadi.

To reach Wadi Tiwi, travel approximately 160 kilometres from Muscat via the Sharqiyyah

highway towards Sur. Take the exit towards Tiwi village, a couple of kilometres past the Wadi Shab exit and immediately after crossing the bridge over Wadi Tiwi. Follow the road towards the village, and once you reach the mouth of the wadi near the beach, turn left to venture into Wadi Tiwi following the signpost on your right pointing to E35 Trekking Path, but be vigilant, as the sign can be easily missed).

The drive from Wadi Tiwi to Mibam village is under 10 kilometres. The road starts paved but can become slippery with water and seaweed, so exercise caution. Along the way, you'll pass through the narrow streets of Harat Bidah village, navigating tight roads while watching for oncoming traffic. After Harat Bidah, the road becomes a mountain path above the wadi, leading to a parking spot for hiking or all the way to Mibam Village, where you can park near the waste bins. Wherever you stop, you'll encounter a signpost pointing to the start of the E35 hiking trail, connecting to Wadi Bani Khalid, a challenging 2-day trek for the adventurous soul.

Embark on this unforgettable journey to Wadi Tiwi, where natural beauty, culture, and adventure converge to create a truly memorable experience.



find us on



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

## INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



krishnaraj\_jayaram

Salalah, Dhofar, Sultanate of Oman

SR LoFi · Adharam Madhuram (LoFi Mix)

Follow



THE PARROT



muiaad

Bawshar, Masqat, Oman

Following



AMAZING BRACELET DESIGNS



yunushikes

Al Noor Island Sharjah

Follow



SHARJAH HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



## Paris Fashion Week opens with drama and dashes of humour



MILAN FASHION WEEK was not even over and the fashionistas were already back in Paris on Monday for another 100-plus shows in the hectic womenswear season.

The spring-summer 2024 collections in the French capital run until October 3, with 107 brands presenting, of which 67 are giving runway shows.

All eyes are on Balmain's show on Wednesday night after the dramatic theft of 50 of its outfits.

Armed robbers seized the clothes on their way from Charles de Gaulle Airport to Balmain's Paris headquarters, leaving creative director Olivier Rousteing racing to pull together a replacement collection.

This week also sees final shows for

two big name designers.

Gabriela Hearst is leaving Chloe after fewer than three years. Her sustainable focus was critically acclaimed but did not bring a major boost to sales.

It will also be the last show for Sarah Burton, who took over at Alexander McQueen following the founder's suicide in 2010.

Paris is the last of the big four fashion weeks in the busy September calendar that sees back-to-back events in London, New York and Milan.

The biggest story this season has been a new creative director at Gucci.

The debut by Sabato de Sarno in Milan on Friday was a relatively low-key affair but gave a boost to the

share price of French parent company Kering, which has been struggling lately to keep up with its major rival, LVMH.

The first day of Paris fashion Week always focuses on emerging designers and there was excitement this year about avant-garde newcomer Marie Adam-Leenaardt from Belgium, who brought a dash of much-needed humour to the opening show.

It opened with a chorus singing "Let's go to the beach!" only to follow it with a series of decidedly un-beachy grey, formal and structured outfits before introducing some more summery Barbie pink and sky-blue dresses.

"There's something very Belgian

about it," the 27-year-old designer said backstage. "It's important for me to play with the codes and have some paradoxes."

There were doses of humour — opening with an extravagant wedding gown that he said was designed for "a woman who gets married entirely in Swarovski".

But he also showed a more serious side, with structured and chic pieces alongside more offbeat items like hooded suit jackets.

Far from a newcomer, but long absent from the official line-up in Paris, is Pierre Cardin, which returned to the catwalk for the first time in 25 years last season and was back with a glamorous show on Monday night. — AFP

### FILM

## Strike deal only first step in resolving film industry crisis

A TENTATIVE DEAL to end a long-running writers' strike that has paralysed Hollywood is only a first step in resolving a film industry crisis, as an equally bitter studio stand-off with the actors' union stretches on.

The Writers Guild of America, which walked out back in May over demands including better pay and safeguards against the use of artificial intelligence, finally thrashed out a deal with studios including Netflix and Disney on Sunday night.

Ratification of that agreement — first by the WGA board, then by its 11,500 members — is widely expected to be waved through without any obstacles in the



coming weeks.

Picketing for writers has been suspended and the guild has indicated that it could allow members to return to work even before the final vote is counted.

Late-night TV shows could return to air "within the next two to three weeks," according to Variety, citing industry insiders.

But a far thornier issue is the still ongoing strike by Hollywood actors, represented by the SAG-AFTRA union, which is likely to take weeks to resolve and will prevent any return to production in the immediate future.

Even after that, with hundreds of film and television shoots backed up, it could take months for Hollywood to clear the logistical logjam and get fully back to work.

"There are presumably upwards of 1,500 productions that all want to start as soon as they can," said entertainment lawyer Jonathan Handel.

"And so when SAG gives the word, they're all going to be competing simultaneously... it's absolute chaos.

"I don't think we're going to see normalcy in the production process until sometime after January or February."

### 'HUGE ROADBLOCK'

The WGA's deal with studios achieved compromises on minimum wage increases, bonus payments for writers participating in hit shows, and guarantees that scripts using AI will not undercut human writers and their paychecks.

Many of these issues overlap with the actors' demands, and SAG-AFTRA negotiators will be poring over the fine details this week, ahead of their own talks with studios.

But, Handel warned, many SAG-AFTRA demands go further than those of the writers.

These include steeper pay rises to counter rampant inflation, and an actual share of revenue for hit streaming shows.

Studios will be wary that whatever they offer to actors is likely to be demanded by other Hollywood professions such as movie set crews and technicians, who have their own contract renewals due next year.

"I think basic wages going are going to be a huge roadblock towards the SAG deal in the next few weeks, because of pattern bargaining," said Handel.

SAG-AFTRA also has its own specific demands, such as restrictions on the use of remote,

self-taped auditions, which became ubiquitous during the pandemic but are disliked by many actors.

### 'FOOL'S ASSUMPTION'

Still, Sunday's deal means SAG-AFTRA negotiators could meet with unions as soon as next week, for the first time since actors went on strike in July.

"The end of the WGA strike will hasten the end of SAG-AFTRA's walkout," predicted Variety.

But even "if things go smoothly — which is a fool's assumption — I still think it would take two to three weeks to get a SAG deal done... which takes you into October," said Handel.

"Then there's the ratification process, which takes another month."

That means the clock is ticking for actors to be able to promote big year-end movie releases, such as Disney's superhero sequel "The Marvels."

And publicists are desperate for their stars to start campaigning for some of the industry's biggest events — television's Emmy Awards, and the film industry's Oscars, which take place in January and March respectively. — AFP



OPERA

# 'Dead Man Walking,' an emotional look at death row, opens Met Opera season

IT'S BEEN THREE decades since Sister Helen Prejean entered the public eye for her memoir "Dead Man Walking," a recounting of her relationship with a death row inmate whose execution she witnessed.

The 1993 best-selling memoir was made into an Oscar-winning film starring Susan Sarandon and Sean Penn, as well as an opera examining love, pain and redemption that after twenty-some years on the stage is core to the contemporary canon, and this on Tuesday gets its Met debut in New York.

The operatic version of "Dead Man Walking" was composed by Jake Heggie, with Terrence McNally penning the libretto. This year's haunting Met production features mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato as Sister Helen.

Bass-baritone Ryan McKinny plays the death-row inmate Joseph De Rocher, while soprano Latonia Moore takes on the role of Sister Rose, and mezzo-soprano Susan Graham — who sang Helen Prejean in 2000 when it premiered in San Francisco — plays De Rocher's mother.

The real Sister Helen is now 84 years old, and has spent the latter half of her life as a leading American advocate urging the abolition of capital punishment, which remains legal in many US states.

After witnessing the death by electric chair of Elmo Patrick Sonnier — who the character of Joseph De Rocher is based on — she has accompanied a number of prisoners to their executions and hopes her book, the film and the opera can "wake people up" to her belief that the death penalty is morally wrong.

"I'm just so glad the story, and the reality is getting out to people," she said backstage during an intermission of the final dress rehearsal prior to Tuesday's opening.

Executions are "a secret ritual," she said, which few people bear witness to, recalling a Latin American expression she encountered while working in the region: "What the eye doesn't see the heart can't feel."

"So we need art to pull back the curtain and bring people into the reality of it."



FORGIVENESS?

The Met's stark staging of "Dead Man Walking" — directed by Ivo van Hove — begins with a short film depicting the murder and rape for which De Rocher was convicted.

In the next moment Sister Helen, who begins a correspondence with the convict as part of her Order's community outreach, is preparing to meet him at Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola.

Throughout the performance the two main characters are frequently onstage together, without the partitions or shackles that typically characterise the production — letting the austere stage become an emotional prison of its own.

"It's an opera about the death penalty, but in my mind it's really not — it's about, can you see the humanity in everyone? Particularly someone who's done terrible things?" McKinny, who plays De Rocher, said.

"It's really about seeing everyone involved as human beings and asking, 'Is forgiveness possible?'"

For Sister Helen, it's also about helping people to comprehend suffering — not only that carried out by individuals, but the kind perpetuated by society.

"There's the... thing of blaming individuals, we never look at the context of the culture in the society," she said, adding that beyond asking who did what, it's important to ask, "What did we do wrong?"



AMERICAN PRIDE

The Met's production of "Dead Man Walking" is part of the 143-year-old institution's shift towards more contemporary works, as it aims to diversify its audiences that traditionally skew elderly and white.

In recent years the company has found success at the box office with operas by living composers, including "The Hours" and "Fire Shut Up In My Bones."

Both are returning this season. The prestigious house will also stage "X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X" in November.

For Moore, the star American soprano who plays Sister Rose, the Met's move towards the contemporary is "necessary to show that we support American opera composers, and American artists here."

"For years it's been such an international art form simply because opera is not really in the forefront of the arts here in America," she told AFP in her dressing room.

But in recent years Moore said she's felt that change, giving her a sense of "American pride."

"Of course we want the



classics, but if we don't do something to move forward, and we don't incorporate our own culture into this art form, then the art form will die in this country."

Moore added that it's also about broadening the appeal of opera to less-informed audiences.

"For those people that think operas are for fuddy-duddies, and its just the horns and 'Figaro, figaro,'" she said contemporary works like "Fire" or "Dead Man Walking" offer something "they can really touch and relate to."

"It's tangible to them emotionally."—AFP



## Picasso's masterpiece begins pre-auction tour in Dubai

A PABLO PICASSO masterpiece expected to fetch at least \$120 million at auction went on show on Monday in Dubai, kicking off a set of rare viewings outside the United States.

"Femme a la montre", the 1932 portrait of Marie-Therese Walter, Picasso's mistress and "golden muse", is being exhibited for two days before heading to Hong Kong and London, a boon for the United Arab Emirates' bid to establish itself as a cultural powerhouse.

The viewing is "the first time a painting of this calibre by the world-renowned artist has ever been exhibited in the UAE", Sotheby's Dubai said in a statement, noting it is the first time the portrait had been



shown outside the United States in half a century.

"Over the years the UAE has earned the status of being a global art destination, which receives a further boost as this rare Picasso is unveiled here," said UAE Culture Minister Shaikh Salem bin Khalid al Qassimi.

"Femme a la montre" will be sold in November as part of a two-day auction of late New Yorker Emily Fisher Landau's prestigious collection.

Walter met Picasso in Paris in 1927, when the Spaniard was still married to Russian-Ukrainian ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova, and when Walter was 17.

Walter, whose daughter with Picasso died last year, also featured in "Femme assise pres d'une fenetre (Marie-Therese)", which was sold in 2021 for \$103.4 million by Christie's auction house.

"The market for Picasso is one of the most truly global of any artist. He is a worldwide phenomenon," said Julian Dawes, head of impressionist and modern art at Sotheby's.

Between 2021 and 2022 "we saw over 100 per cent increase in bidders and buyers across all of our departments from the Middle East", Dawes added.

Fifty years after his death in 1973 aged 91, Picasso remains one of the most influential artists of the modern world, and is often hailed as a dynamic and creative genius.—AFP