

The Sultanate of Oman affirmed its support to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the other relevant international tribunals and legal authorities that resolve and settle disputes between states by peaceful means as provided by the Charter of the United Nations. This was stated by Mohammed bin Ali al Shuhi, Second Secretary and member of the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, who delivered Oman's speech during the discussions of the ICJ's report at the United Nation General Assembly. **DETAILS ON P2**



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MUSCAT

NEW RULES ISSUED FOR OUTDOOR CAMPING

To regularise outdoor activities, Muscat Municipality said that it is not permissible to camp, including caravans and tents, for a period of more than 48 hours, unless with approval from a competent directorate after paying a security deposit of RO 100. The permit will be valid for a period of seven nights, which can be extended. The municipality has also come out with guidelines to be followed, which include camping in places specified by the municipality, leaving a separation between each site, and a reasonable distance between camping site and the beach. **DETAILS ON P4**

OMAN BACKS LEBANON'S DEAL

The Sultanate of Oman voiced its support to the sisterly Republic of Lebanon for signing an agreement to demarcate its maritime borders with Israel. A statement issued by the Foreign Ministry hailed the efforts made by the United States in brokering the deal in a way that enables Lebanon to obtain its sovereign maritime rights and benefit from the natural wealth and resources within borders to achieve the interests of the friendly Lebanese people. — ONA



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Musical heritage of Oman goes back to pre-historic period

AGA KHAN AWARDS CEREMONY KICKS OFF

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The Aga Khan Awards Ceremony kicked off on Saturday evening, under the auspices of HH Sayyid Kamil bin Fahd al Said, in the presence of high level attendees and local and international media.

The ceremony, which was held at the House of Musical Arts, the Royal Opera House, Muscat, was accompanied by the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra and the Music of the Aga Khan, in the presence of elite Omani architects and musicians, as well as approximately 250 international guests from around the world, members of the Awards Steering Committee, jury, finalists and winners of the Architecture and Music Awards.

The patron of the event honoured the winners of the 'Walk of Creativity' award within the Aga Khan Music Awards, namely Zakir Hussain, winner of the 'Lifetime Achievement Award', and Omani music researcher Muslim bin Ahmed al Kathiri, who won



a 'special award' for his contribution to safeguarding Omani musical heritage.

MUSICAL HERITAGE
The 3-day programme included, on its first day, live performances of various pieces of music by Aga Khan Orchestra.

Speaking on the occasion, Jamal al Moosawi, Director General of the National Museum, said that the Sultanate of

Oman makes appreciable efforts to make culture a common denominator among peoples, by making known to the world its richness of culture and knowledge through the cultural activities it undertakes or participates in and those held in cooperation with civil society institutions of various cultural and social backgrounds.

"The Sultanate of Oman's hosting of the second edition of the

Aga Khan Music Awards comes within the framework of building bridges of communication and links between various peoples of the world and enhancing joint cooperation by activating channels of cultural communication at all official and societal levels.

"After saying this, the musical heritage of the Sultanate of Oman goes back to the prehistoric period through the oldest musical instrument discovered at the archaeological site of Ras al Hadd, which can be seen in the National Museum in the Hall of Intangible Heritage. This hall indicates the importance that Oman attaches to musical experience," he added.

Al Moosawi mentioned that the modern Renaissance of Oman began in 1970, referring to late Sultan Qaboos's contributions to the development of music. He said "the Omani government took care of the institutions concerned with music, from the very beginning, crowned eventually by the establishment of the Royal Opera House Muscat in 2011".

TURN TO P2

State Council's fourth annual session begins on Nov 6

MUSCAT: The State Council will begin its fourth annual session (2022-2023) of the seventh term (2019-2023), on November 6. During its third annual session that ended on July 14, the State Council achieved a lot within the framework of its financial and legislative powers set forth by the Basic Statute of the State and the Law on the Council of Oman. The State Council prepared eight studies for the government. This is in addition to the state's general budget for the fiscal year 2022. Khalid bin Ahmed al Saeedi, Secretary-General of the State Council, said the State Council held six regular sessions during which 16 topics were discussed including draft laws referred to it by the Council of Ministers. The State Council also approved a number of studies and proposals.

— ONA

Russia halts Ukraine Black Sea grain exports

MOSCOW: Russia on Saturday suspended participation in a UN-brokered Black Sea grain deal after what it said was a major Ukrainian drone attack on its fleet in Crimea, dealing a blow to attempts to ease the global food crisis.

Russia's defence ministry said Ukraine attacked the Black Sea Fleet near Sevastopol on the annexed Crimean peninsula with 16 drones in the early hours of Saturday, and that British navy "specialists" had helped coordinate the attack.

Russia said it had repelled the attack, with just minor damage to a minesweeper, but that the ships targeted were involved in ensuring the grain corridor out of Ukraine's Black Sea ports.

"The Russian side suspends participation in the implementation of agreements on the export of agricultural products from Ukrainian ports," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Russia said the step, which will cut Ukrainian grain exports from its crucial Black Sea ports,



was taken due to the drone attack and the participation of British specialists.

Britain on Saturday said Russia's claims, including that British navy personnel blew up the Nord Stream pipelines last month, were false and aimed at distracting attention from Russian military failures in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff, Andriy Yermak, accused Russia of inventing "fictitious attacks on its own facilities" while Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Moscow was using a "false pretext" to sink the deal.

— Reuters

Oman's 'Aman' satellite launch awaits British approval

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The first Omani satellite, Aman, has been successfully integrated with Virgin Orbit's LauncherOne rocket, the spacewatch.global.com quoted the technology solutions provider TUATARA.

"The satellite is now awaiting to be deployed into low Earth orbit by Virgin from Newquay, Cornwall. LauncherOne is already on the launch site, awaiting its launch licence from the

British government. This will be the first launch from UK soil and the first international launch for Virgin."

Aman, the first Omani CubeSat is a result of international collaboration between the Sultanate of Oman, the USA, and Poland. The project comprises Omani technology innovator ETCO, US launch company Virgin Orbit, Polish nanosatellite manufacturer SatRev, and cognitive technology solutions provider TUATARA.

Virgin Orbit's integration team performed the final cleaning and checks on Aman, before placing it on the launch dispenser. The project is part of Oman Vision 2040, aimed at fostering economic competitiveness and social well-being. Oman expects its space programme to enable scientific research and the capturing of high-resolution satellite images. LauncherOne will carry seven payloads into low earth orbit, including a collection of satellites, on a mission called Start Me Up.





Arts sacrosanct in Oman: Prince Ameen

FROM PAGE 1

He also said that “the First Royal Ensemble for Folk Arts and Music was established in 1976. The establishment of the Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra in 1985 under the direct supervision of late Sultan Qaboos, and not to forget the Oman Centre for Traditional Music besides the Omani Oud Hobbyists Association”.

The DG of the National Museum said that “Music has a universal language spoken by all people and understood by everyone without any trouble or hardship. It unites peoples and blends with it the foundations of civilised dialogue, through which we seek to highlight the role of the Sultanate of Oman, its Omani vocabulary, and its diversity and rich cultural and knowledge patterns”.

Prince Ameen Aga Khan said, “Our gathering here in the magnificent Royal Opera House of Musical Arts is a deeply symbolic one, for it celebrates not only inspiring artistic and scholarly creativity, but also the resilience of music and musicians in challenging times. It is most fitting indeed that we are marking this happy occasion in the Sultanate of Oman, a country in which the central place of the arts is sacrosanct and the meeting of the performing arts from both Eastern and Western cultures is enshrined in this remarkable architectural complex in which we are gathered.

“In the darkest days of the pandemic, I had consulted with my brother, His Highness the Aga Khan, about whether the prudent course of action for this Music Awards ceremony would not be to hold it virtually, as was the fate at that time of so many other global events. A virtual ceremony would have been simpler and more economical to organise and would have avoided public health risks associated with the pandemic, and it would have lightened (in truth probably insignificantly) the carbon footprint created by our physical presence here in Muscat. These advantages of a virtual ceremony, however significant they were, had to be weighed against what would be lost. And in the end, we returned to the core idea underlying the establishment of the Music Awards in the first place: to support the transformative potential of the performing arts when they are



Prince Ameen Muhammad Aga Khan, younger brother of Aga Khan IV, presents Aga Khan Music Award to tabla maestro Zakir Hussain of India at ROHM on Saturday.



experienced directly, in ideal conditions, rendered by masters of their medium and to understand, to realise that the emotions and dreams we share through such music unite us, whatever our backgrounds. I hope you will agree with me that the performances this evening have vindicated our decision to insist on a live event.

“All of the laureates selected for this year’s awards have demonstrated a strong commitment to forms of social service, at the front ranks of which would be to serve as teachers and mentors. Throughout history many famous music teachers have taught by example, and in many musical traditions that have flourished in Muslim, as in other civilisations, learning music from traditional models presented by an esteemed teacher has become a canonical practice whether we call it a master class or, as in Urdu and Persian, *ustad-shagird*. But the ability to teach students how

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PRINCE AMEEN AGA KHAN

to make a traditional model come alive, revealing both discipline and passion, is a special gift. We hope that this ability is one that, with our support, laureates of the Aga Khan Music Awards will continue to cultivate in their ongoing work as educators. Moreover, by educating young people in their own musical traditions while also providing them the tools to expand those traditions in new cosmopolitan directions, we are helping to prepare a new

generation of cultural leaders and composers who will build bridges and connections across cultures. Laureates of the Music Awards are emissaries of this collective work, taking it to artistic communities and communities of listeners around the world. And while there is no single music that one could say is a universal language, the urge to make music and to have music in our lives is universal. Musical traditions have evolved, wherever

they may be, as people have travelled from one geographical area, one culture, to another and imbibed parts of the new cultures they experienced, leading at the same time to an evolution in the musical styles and expressions of the countries they visited. Such evolution through cross-cultural contact has been at the root of almost all musical creation.”

On the occasion, Luis Monreal, GM of Agha Khan for Trust for Culture, said : “Oman has a very rich archaeological heritage that is deep-rooted in history. This is shown through the government’s efforts to preserve this legacy and to make it available and accessible for both citizens and visitors. For example, the National Museum reflects the identity of the country and it shows its history over time”.

Talking about the trust he is presiding, Monreal said: “The trust is the cultural agency and is a part of the Agha Khan Development Network, which is the largest development entity privately-owned in the world. It represents the work of 90,000 people in many countries. We believe that the culture is a fundamental pillar not only to people who need it to understand their origin, but because it is an asset for development”.

“Agha Khan institutions work not only to restore ancient buildings but they adopt different activities like conservation, preservation and restoration in historic cities and bring micro-finance programmes, health, and education”.

The Sultanate of Oman’s hosting of the Music Awards Ceremony (after the Portuguese capital, Lisbon, which hosted the event in March of 2019) confirms the importance of the Sultanate of Oman as an important destination on the map of global culture, literature and art. This hosting also reflects the cultural movement in the Sultanate of Oman in line with global transformations according to its economic, social, political and cultural fabric, in line with the objectives of national, regional and international strategies, which are hoped to contribute to achieving the bases of the cultural strategy based on creativity, cultural development, cultural creative industries, culture and society, cultural identity, cultural development, cultural communication, and cultural regulations and legislation.

Oman takes part in Arab League meet

ALGIERS: The Sultanate of Oman took part in the Arab Foreign Ministers preparatory meeting for the 31st Arab League Summit scheduled to be held on November 1-2 in Algeria.

The Arab summit will debate a host of topics including the Palestinian cause and food security.

Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, said the 31st Arab League Summit is an opportunity to contribute to resolving the Arab issues, supporting the Palestinian cause and discussing initiatives related to food security.

— ONA

Oman affirms its support to ICJ

NEW YORK: The Sultanate of Oman affirmed its support to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the other relevant international tribunals and legal authorities that resolve and settle disputes between states by peaceful means as provided by the Charter of the United Nations.

This was stated by Mohammed bin Ali al Shuhi, Second Secretary and member of the Permanent Mission of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, who delivered his country’s speech during the discussions of the ICJ’s report at the United Nation General Assembly.

In his speech, Al Shuhi affirmed that the provisions of the Basic Statute of the State on the rule of law are concordant with the international and regional treaties and the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations.

The Sultanate of Oman’s speech affirmed that the ICJ is one of the pillars of the international order, which is based on the provisions of the international law. The ICJ has over the past years proven its capability and integrity in performing its mandate which earned it the confidence of states. — ONA

Muscat hosts Black and White Photography Biennale

MUSCAT: Greece bagged the World Cup in the 35th Black and White Photography Biennale held in Muscat on Saturday. The gold medal went to Singapore, the silver to Britain and the bronze to Spain. Bahrain, Australia, Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, the Netherlands and Russia were given honorary prizes.

Altogether 456 contestants from 46 countries participated in the international competition. The winning countries received 11 individual prizes and 11 group prizes.

The prizes were given to winners by Sayyid Said bin Sultan al Busaidy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Culture, at the headquarters of the Omani Arts Association, as part of the Seventh International Forum



of Photographers organised by the International Federation of Photographic Art /FIAP.

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth hosted the event.

In the individual category, the FIAP gold medal went to John

Sheridan from Ireland. The Oman Photographic Society’s gold medal went to Panos Zolax from Greece while the silver FIAP medals went to Heinz Beckers from Germany and Melina Ercig from Bosnia and Herzegovina. The

Omani Photographic Society’s silver medal went to Tres Uruk from Australia. The Bronze Vibe Medal went to Harald Beebel of Germany, the Vibe Bronze Medal went to Marcel van Balken of the Netherlands and Eugenio

Vini of Italy, and the Bronze Medal of the Omani Photographic Society went to Torlo O’Reilly of Ireland.

Jose Luis Orbital from Argentina and Guy Gilson from Belgium also received an

honorary mention from the Omani Photographic Society.

The jury consisted of FIAP Secretary-General Eunice Lykoria from Greece, Fadel al Maghoui from Bahrain and Riha Bailer from Turkey.





Nizwa celebrates Omani Youth Day



AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA OCT 29

The Department of Culture, Sports, and Youth in Al Dakhiliyah celebrated the Omani Youth Day on Thursday at Nizwa Cultural Centre.

The celebration was under the auspices of Saif bin Mubarak bin Saleh al Julandani, Director-General of the General Directorate of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, in the presence of Ahmed bin Mohammad al Harassi, Director of Culture, Sports and Youth Department in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The celebration of this year is in line with Oman Vision 2040. It hosted the Star of Science 2022 winner, Sumaiya bint Said al Siyabiyah.

Sumaiya al Siyabiyah spoke about her experience in the Star of Science programme. She explained the stages and obstacles she went through to obtain this award.

"I recently discovered that many people consider me a source of inspiration, especially students. I am responsible for spreading and educating others, and I continue to give and inspire



more innovators so that others can realise their dreams. They should always consider that obstacles are the first step to success."

She added: "I thank all the supporters. We should all not wait for innovations to come from the West. We can innovate. My goal for my innovation is to make it real and not just an idea."

Ishaq al Sheryani, Chairman of Bawareq Nizwa International Board of Investment, talked about entrepreneurship.

The participants visited the Al Busaid neighbourhood in the Wilayat of Adam.

The participants toured Al Busaid Quarter and presented suggestions for making the neighbourhood a tourist and economic destination.

New Covid mutant more contagious

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While the new Covid mutant (XBB) has not yet been consistently associated with an increase in new infections, health experts have warned that the variant is still said to be contagious and preventive measures must be followed.

Dr Abdullah al Qayudhi, a consultant in infections and immunity at the Directorate General of Disease Control at MoH, said, "The Covid XBB mutant is more contagious than others, according to the information available so far, and this is the reason for its spread in more than 26 countries, including Saudi Arabia. As chances of reaching Oman cannot be ruled out, we have to adhere to preventive measures."

WHO's Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution recently met to discuss the latest evidence on the Omicron variant of concern, and how its evolution is currently unfolding, in light of high levels of population immunity in many settings and country differences in the immune landscape.

Based on currently available evidence, the TAG does not feel that the overall phenotype of XBB and BQ.1 diverge sufficiently from each other, or from other Omicron lineages with additional immune escape mutations, in terms of the necessary public health response, to warrant the designation of new variants of concern and assignment of a new label. The two sub lineages remain part of Omicron, which continues to be a variant of concern.



The Covid XBB mutant is more contagious than others...this is the reason for its spread in more than 26 countries, including Saudi Arabia. As chances of reaching Oman cannot be ruled out, we have to adhere to preventive measures

DR ABDULLAH AL QAYUDHI
consultant, MoH

"While so far there is no epidemiological evidence that these sublineages will be of substantially greater risk compared to other Omicron sublineages, we note that this assessment is based on data from sentinel nations and

may not be fully generalisable to other settings. Wide-ranging, systematic laboratory-based efforts are urgently needed to make such determinations rapidly and with global interpretability," WHO said.

As of now, there are no data to support escape from recent immune responses induced by other Omicron lineages. Whether the increased immune escape of XBB* is sufficient to drive new infection waves appears to depend on the regional immune landscape as affected by the size and timing of previous Omicron waves, as well as the Covid-19 vaccination coverage. The role of the TAG-VE is to alert WHO if a variant with a substantially different phenotype (e.g. a variant that can cause more severe disease or lead to large epidemic waves causing increased burden to the healthcare system) is emerging and likely to pose a significant threat.

TV sales gather pace as World Cup kicks off

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With less than a month for the first whistle of the Fifa World Cup in Doha, sales of TVs is picking up steam, according to vendors. Television sets, predominantly bigger screens ranging from 55" to 120 inches are high in demand. While prices have increased for some models, sellers have slashed

prices of some models as a way of attracting more sales.

While brands like Hisense, Sony, LG, TCL and Samsung are much in demand, other brands like Mi, Nikai and Skyworth are also vying for attention with 55" to 75" models across all hypermarkets.

"TV sales has been proving to be highly promising as the football fever has started to grip Oman and we are working

a lot to cater to the increasing demand from the local market," a representative of a leading hypermarket chain said.

While 120" Hisense would cost you RO 1,499, a Nikai 55" is just RO 104.

The coming days will prove various 'larger than life' TV screens being placed on the street by road-side coffee shops and restaurants offering better view of the action live.

India business delegation to visit Oman

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A high-level discussion between Oman and India business people will be held at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) on Sunday.

The Indian delegation comprising company representatives in the food and beverages agriculture sectors will interact with their counterparts under the auspices of the OCCI and visit different landmarks of Oman.

"Oman seeks to host the Indian

delegation of trade and business representatives as a way to enhance bilateral relations existing between the two countries," a spokesperson from the OCCI said.

The Indian delegation's visit comes after the recent visit of V Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs of India earlier this month.

According to data released by the Indian Embassy in Oman, India is among Oman's top trading partners and is the 2nd largest market for Oman's crude oil exports in 2022 after China. India

is also the 4th largest market for Oman's non-oil exports in 2022 after the UAE, the US and Saudi Arabia and 2nd largest source of its import after UAE.

India's exports to Oman in FY 2021-2022 stood at US\$ 3.148 billion. Oman is India's 34th largest export market for the FY 2021-2022. India's imports from Oman in FY 2021-2022 were US\$ 6.840 billion. Oman is India's 24th largest import source for the FY 2021-2022. Overall, Oman is India's 31st largest trading partner in FY 2021-2022 with total trade of US\$ 9.988 billion.

Project to boost literacy in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar begins

AMAL AL RIYAMI
AL JABAL AL AKHDHAR, OCT. 29

The Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah celebrated the inauguration of the 'The educated village' project in the Al Hail area in the Wilayat of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, which aims to eradicate illiteracy.

The Department of Special Education and Continuing Learning in the General Directorate of Education in the governorate hosted the event at Al Gulail School. The opening was held under the auspices of Shaikh Ali bin Mohammed al Busaidy, Wali of Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, in the presence of Saif bin Mubarak al Julandani, Director-General of the General Directorate of Education in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate.

The ceremony began with a



speech presented by Faisal bin Said al Hinai, Director of the Special Education Department. "The Directorate is making tremendous efforts to reduce illiteracy in the governorate. This project is an embodiment of

the efforts aimed at eliminating illiteracy of all kinds, especially inability to read. Literacy will help people to read and write, engage in community life, and contribute to building and reconstructing the nation."



"Oman's Vision 2040 that the human capital is the greatest wealth of society. The Directorate is working to spread skills of reading and writing. Education is a right for all. Based on this principle, the Directorate,

represented by the Special Education and Continuing Learning Department, has drawn up plans and programmes in this regard. Undoubtedly, it has achieved good results as revealed by statistical indicators."

Areef bin Mohammad al Abri, from the Department of Special Education, gave a presentation on the steps and stages of the project. Al Hail area was chosen after they saw the statistics from the population census and the statistics of the Directorate of Education. It appeared that a large number of illiterates reside in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar areas, especially the areas surrounding the Al Hail area.

The Educated Village project is one of the innovative programmes to reduce total illiteracy. It aims to eradicate alphabetic and numerical illiteracy for men and women in the village and to raise their level of social, economic, and environmental awareness. The project's success depends on the involvement of the local community and volunteers.



CAMP

BUT DON'T SPOIL THE AREA



If you are planning to camp over 48 hours, get permission from municipality after paying a security deposit of RO100

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

WITH temperatures dropping in the country, people are venturing out for outdoor activities such as camping, especially on the beaches and waterfronts on the Muscat-Sur coastal road.

To regularise the activity, Muscat Municipality last week said that it is not permissible to camp, including caravans and tents, for a period of more than 48 hours, unless with approval from a competent directorate after paying a security deposit of RO100.

The licence will be valid for a period of seven nights, which can be extended, and the application for which will be received on November 13.

The municipality has also come out with guidelines to be followed, which include camping in places specified by the municipality.

There should be a distance not less than 5 metres between campsites and a reasonable gap between the camping site and the beach.

The camping site should be kept away from the sites of fishermen and the sites prohibited by security. It should be at least 100 metres away from residential neighbourhoods.

At all times, the cleanliness of the assigned site must be during the period of use.

The use of mobile toilets that carry unsanitary specifications and standards will be prohibited. Care must be taken to avoid damage to crops and wild plants.

Other restrictions included not erecting dirt barriers or any kind of modifications in the natural environment of the camping site, not burning waste, and not lighting fires or barbecues in green areas and on beaches.

The licensee must provide security and safety equipment for each site during camping. If a fence is used around the site, it must be

made of temporary materials and not obscure the view. Campers must not use lasers and lights directed upwards. They should avoid using camp for prohibited purposes.

Campers should follow laws and regulations of the Sultanate of Oman.

The issued licence number must be installed on a plate on the front of the caravan, tent, or sitting area. The licensee must not assign the licence to others or camp in a site other than the site specified in the licence.

Car parks, entry, and exit to and from the site must be organised. An administrative fine of RO200 in the case of camping without obtaining the necessary licence.

An administrative fine of RO50 in the event of non-compliance with one of the special controls or requirements.

if the violation is repeated and the violator fails to implement the instructions, the caravan, tent or camping will be removed.



A general view shows the scene of an explosion near the education ministry building in Mogadishu. – Reuters

Two car bomb explosions rock Somalia’s education ministry

MOGADISHU: Two huge car bombings rocked Somalia’s education ministry in the capital Mogadishu on Saturday causing casualties and shattering windows of nearby buildings, police and witnesses said.

The “simultaneous explosions occurred along the Zobe road and there are various casualties. We will provide details later,” Sadik Dudishe, Somali police spokesman said.

A vehicle loaded with explosive was driven into the ministry compound and followed by gunfire, police officer Ibrahim Mohamed said.

“In a few minutes another blast occurred in the same area,” he said.

Abdirahman Ise, a witness, said the road had been busy when the

first blast went off.

“I saw huge smoke in the ministry area and there is massive destruction,” another witness, Amino Salad, said.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack but armed group Al Shabaab remains a potent force in the troubled Horn of Africa nation despite multinational efforts to degrade its leadership.

The militants have been seeking to overthrow the fragile government in Mogadishu for about 15 years.

Its fighters were driven out of the capital in 2011 by an African Union force but the group still controls swathes of countryside and has the capacity to wage deadly strikes on civilian and

military targets. They use threats of violence to collect taxes in territory under their jurisdiction.

The group last week claimed responsibility for an attack on a hotel in the port city of Kismayo that killed nine people and wounded 47 others.

In August, the group launched a 30-hour gun and bomb attack on the popular Hayat hotel in Mogadishu, killing 21 people and wounding 117.

Somali President Hassan Shaikh Mohamud, who was elected in May, vowed after the August siege to wage “all-out war” on the militants.

In September he urged citizens to stay away from areas controlled by militants, saying the armed forces and tribal militia were

ratcheting up offensives against them.

A joint US-Somali drone strike killed one of the militants’ most senior commanders on October 1.

Just hours after his death was announced, a triple bombing in the southern city of Beledweyne killed at least 30 people.

In addition to violence, Somalia — like its neighbours in the Horn of Africa — is in the grip of the worst drought in more than 40 years. Four failed rainy seasons have wiped out livestock and crops.

The conflict-wracked nation is considered one of the most vulnerable to climate change but is particularly ill-equipped to cope with the crisis as it battles the deadly insurgency. — AFP

Oldest Guantanamo Bay prisoner released to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani known for being the oldest detainee at the US-run Guantanamo Bay detention facility in Cuba was released to his home country on Saturday, the South Asian country’s foreign ministry and the US Pentagon said.

The secretive US military prison once housed hundreds of suspected militants captured by US forces during America’s so-called “war on terror” following the 9/11 attacks by Al Qaeda in 2001.

Businessman Saif Ullah Paracha was detained in 2003 in Thailand and accused of financing the militant group, but he has maintained his innocence and claimed a love for the United States.

Like most detainees at Guantanamo, Paracha — aged 75 or 76 — was never formally charged and had little legal power to challenge his detention.

“The Foreign Ministry completed an extensive inter-agency process to facilitate repatriation of Paracha,” Pakistan’s foreign office said in a statement on Saturday. “We are glad that a Pakistani citizen detained abroad is finally reunited with his family.”

Paracha’s arrival comes after US President Joe Biden last year approved his release, along with that of another Pakistani national Abdul Rabbani, 55, and Yemen native Uthman Abdul al Rahim Uthman, 41.

The statement from the Pakistani foreign ministry did

not mention Rabbani.

A statement from the US Department of Defense said Paracha was released after it was determined his detention “was no longer necessary to protect against a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States”.

The Pentagon thanked Pakistan for its “willingness... to support ongoing US efforts focused on responsibly reducing the detainee population and ultimately closing the Guantanamo Bay facility”.

Biden is under pressure to clear out uncharged prisoners at Guantanamo and move ahead with the trials of those accused of having direct ties to Al Qaeda.

The Pentagon statement said 35 detainees now remain at the facility, with 20 eligible for transfer and nine still facing charges in a military tribunal.

Among the remaining detainees on trial are several men who allegedly had direct roles in 9/11 and other Al Qaeda attacks.

Paracha, who studied in the United States, had an import-export business supplying major US retailers.

US authorities accused him of having contact with Al Qaeda figures, including Osama bin Laden and Khalid Shaikh Mohammad.

In 2008, Paracha’s lawyer said the businessman had met bin Laden in 1999, and again a year later, in connection with the production of a television programme. — AFP

Lebanon’s president warns of crisis on eve of stepping down

BEIRUT: Outgoing Lebanese President Michel Aoun told Reuters on Saturday his nation could be sliding into “constitutional chaos”, with no one in line to succeed him and a cabinet that is operating in a caretaker capacity.

Aoun is set to leave the presidential palace on Sunday, a day before his six-year term ends, but four sessions in the nation’s fractured parliament have failed to reach consensus on a candidate to succeed him.

While Lebanon has faced prolonged presidential vacuums in the past, the country now finds itself on the verge of an unprecedented situation with both a vacant presidency and a caretaker cabinet with limited powers.

Aoun said an 11th-hour political move to address the constitutional crisis might be possible, but said “there is no final decision” on what that could involve.

Aoun’s presidency is inextricably linked in the minds of many Lebanese to their country’s worst days since the 1975-1990 civil war, with the financial crisis that began in 2019 and the deadly Beirut port blast of 2020. His son-in-law Gebran Bassil, who was put on a sanctions list by the United States in 2020 for alleged corruption, has presidential ambitions.

Bassil has denied the allegations, and Aoun said on Saturday the sanctions would not stop Bassil from eventually being a presidential candidate.

“Once he’s elected (as president), the



Aoun is set to leave the presidential palace in Baabda on Sunday, a day before his six-year term ends.

Aoun’s presidency is inextricably linked in the minds of many Lebanese to their country’s worst days since the 1975-1990 civil war, with the financial crisis that began in 2019 and the deadly Beirut port blast of 2020

sanctions will go away,” Aoun said, without elaborating.

In his final week as president, Aoun signed a US-brokered deal delineating Lebanon’s southern maritime border with Israel - a modest diplomatic breakthrough

that would allow both countries to extract natural gas from maritime deposits.

He said Hezbollah group, which sent unarmed drones over Israel and threatened to attack its offshore rigs multiple times, had served as a “deterrent” that had helped keep the negotiations going in Lebanon’s favour.

“It wasn’t coordinated (with the government). It was an initiative taken by Hezbollah and it was useful,” Aoun said.

He said the deal paved the way for gas discoveries that could be Lebanon’s “last chance” at recovering from a three-year financial meltdown that has cost the currency 95% of its value and pushed 80% of the population into poverty. — Reuters



Sultanate of Oman سلطنة عُمان
وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender No.	45/2022	Tender Name	RESTORATION OF AL BAIT AL- GHARBI - AL RUSTAQ AT SOUTH AL BATINAH GOVERNORATE
Tender No.	46/2022	Tender Name	RESTORATION OF SADAH CASTLE - GOVERNORATE OF DHOFAR
Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)	25 O.R		
Tender Document Sales End Date	13/11/2022		
Last Date for Bid Submission	07/12/2022		
Grade	First		
E-Tendering Portal	https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om		

- Interested Companies registered with Tender Board (in the mentioned Grade) may obtain Tender documents from the ETendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>, against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document.
- Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by a tender bond from a local bank not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission.
 - Any bid that does not meet the required tender bond will not be considered.
 - The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids.
- The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time).

Support and inquiries	For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om
	For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@ita.gov.om or 24402200
For further information	Email : sotic@mht.gov.om Phones : 22088348 - 22088085



People wade through flood water in Boac. — Reuters

Philippines president orders urgent aid as storm kills 45

MANILA: Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr on Saturday ordered urgent aid distribution in a southern province where landslides have been triggered by Tropical Storm Nalgae, which has killed 45 people across the country so far.

Heavy rains and strong winds pounded the capital, Manila, and surrounding areas for most of Saturday as Nalgae forced tens of thousands of people to leave their homes and disrupted peak holiday travel in much of the nation.

Nalgae is the second deadliest cyclone to hit the Philippines this year, with the disasters agency reporting 45 deaths, mostly in hard-hit Maguindanao province. Another 33 people have been injured and 17 are registered missing.

“We could have done better

in Maguindanao in terms of preparing. The 40 deaths, with 10 people missing there is a little too high,” Marcos said in a briefing with disaster officials.

He ordered the immediate distribution of drinking water and purifying systems to the province and other parts of the badly affected southern Philippines.

In the country’s capital region, which includes Manila and other cities, flooding prompted authorities to suspend classes and sports events.

Airlines have cancelled 116 domestic and international flights to and from the Philippines’ main gateway, which stopped operations from 0800 to 1400 GMT because of strong winds, the transport ministry said.

Nearly 7,500 passengers and workers, and 107 vessels, were

stranded in the country’s ports, the coast guard said.

Manila Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan on Saturday ordered the closure of the city’s cemeteries, where millions had been expected to visit during the extended All Saints’ Day weekend.

Nalgae has maintained its strength, with maximum winds of 95 kilometres per hour and gusts of up to 115 kmph as it cut through the main Luzon island and headed to the South China Sea, the state weather agency said.

Another tropical depression gaining strength in the Pacific Ocean could enter Philippine territory on Tuesday, it added.

Almost 170,000 people have been forced from their homes by the storm, nearly a third of whom were sheltering in evacuation centres, government data showed.

In the central Leyte province, coast guard personnel led residents through chest-deep floodwaters, with rescuers using a plastic chair and an old refrigerator to float children and elderly people to safety, photos shared by the weather agency showed.

Marcos said the aid response should be stepped up once Nalgae exits land areas - on Sunday morning, according to the latest forecasts.

“Let us not wait for the helicopters and air assets to fly. If the weather is not good, look for more ways to deliver relief goods, water and medicines,” he said.

The Philippines sees an average of 20 tropical storms annually. In December, category 5 Typhoon Rai ravaged central provinces, leaving 407 dead and more than 1,100 injured. — Reuters

Russia: US lowers ‘nuclear threshold’ by deploying new bombs in Europe

LONDON: Russia said on Saturday that the accelerated deployment of modernised US B61 tactical nuclear weapons at Nato bases in Europe would lower the “nuclear threshold” and that Russia would take the move into account in its military planning.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has triggered the gravest confrontation between Moscow and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis when the two Cold War superpowers came closest to nuclear war.

Russia has around 2,000 working tactical nuclear weapons while the United States has around 200 such weapons, half of which are at bases in Italy, Germany, Turkey, Belgium and the Netherlands.

Politico reported on October 26 that the US told a closed Nato meeting this month that it would accelerate the deployment of a modernised version of the B61, the B61-12, with the new weapons arriving at European bases in December, several

months earlier than planned.

“We cannot ignore the plans to modernise nuclear weapons, those free-fall bombs that are in Europe,” Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko told state RIA news agency.

The 12-ft B61-12 gravity bomb carries a lower yield nuclear warhead than many earlier versions but is more accurate and can penetrate below ground, according to research by the Federation of American Scientists published in 2014.

“The US is modernising them, increasing their accuracy and reducing the power of the nuclear charge, that is, they turn these weapons into ‘battlefield weapons’, thereby reducing the nuclear threshold,” Grushko said.

The Pentagon did not respond to a request for comment out of US business hours. Politico quoted a spokesman as saying nuclear details would not be discussed but that the modernisation of B61 weapons had been under way for years. — Reuters



Ukrainian artillery unit members fire towards Kherson, amid Russia’s military invasion of Ukraine. — AFP

Mega party as South Africa crowns new Zulu king

DURBAN: South Africa’s new Zulu King was formally declared the head of the country’s most influential traditional monarchy at a colourful ceremony presided over by President Cyril Ramaphosa on Saturday.

Ramaphosa was to hand over the giant framed certificate to formally recognise the 48-year-old new ruler Misuzulu Zulu before tens of thousands of people in colourful regalia gathered at a huge soccer stadium in the coastal city of Durban.

“Our king, is indeed officially

the King of the Zulu nation and the only king of the Zulu nation,” said Ramaphosa to loud applause from those gathered to fete the new ruler.

Saturday’s official coronation of the ruler of the country’s richest monarchy comes after a year of bitter feuding over the royal succession that has spilled into the courts.

Misuzulu Zulu ascended the throne once held by his late father, Goodwill Zwelithini, who died in March 2021 — after more than 50 years on the throne.



Zulu women clad in traditional dresses arrive at the Moses Mabhida Stadium in Durban to celebrate the official coronation of South Africa’s Zulu king. — AFP

The crowning which followed a traditional coronation ceremony in August, is the first South Africa has witnessed in more than half a century.

“This historic moment only comes once in a lifetime, many of us will never see this historic moment again,” said Ramaphosa.

Although the title of king does not bestow executive power, the monarchs wield great moral influence over more than 11 million Zulus, who make up nearly a fifth of South Africa’s population of 60 million people.

Amabutho, or royal regiments, clad in traditional skirts, faux leopard skin tops, and carrying shields and sticks chanted songs of praise for their king.

Singing and blowing whistles as they slowly glided around the pitch, women wore broad-brimmed Zulu hats and traditional wraps. Young girls in equally brightly coloured pleated skirts and beads, excitedly danced and ululated in the 85,000-seater Moses Mabhida Stadium — which was built for the 2010 Fifa World Cup tournament.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

WELLINGTON

Arden’s plane breaks down in Antarctica

New Zealand’s Prime Minister Jacinda Arden spent an extra night on Friday at the country’s research station in Antarctica after the military aircraft she was meant to be travelling back to New Zealand on broke down.

Arden has been in Antarctica meeting with the country’s scientists and visiting the sites of historical importance while promoting the need for co-operation in the region.

A spokeswoman for the prime



minister said on Saturday that Arden and those travelling with her are due to return on Saturday on a Italian C-13 Hercules military aircraft.

Arden flew on a US military plane to Antarctica after her first flight had to turn back midflight due to bad weather.

New Zealand is one of seven countries, including Australia, France and Chile, with a territorial claim to Antarctica. — Reuters

NEW DELHI

India increases influence over social media content

The Indian government has announced amendments to its information technology (IT) rules that will apply to social media companies, in a move likely to be seen as a reining in of big tech firms.

Under the amended rules, which will come into effect from October 28, a government panel would be formed to hear complaints from users about content moderation decisions of social media platforms.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government has had strained relations with many big tech companies, and New Delhi has been tightening regulation of firms such



as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter.

Tension over social media content decisions has been a particularly thorny issue in India with companies often receiving take down requests from the government or removing content proactively.

Social media firms are already required to have an in-house grievance redress officer and designate executives to co-ordinate with law enforcement officials.

Under the amended rules, the companies would be required to acknowledge complaints from users within 24 hours and resolve them within 15 days or 72 hours in case of an information takedown request.

In June, the government had issued draft changes to the IT law that would require companies to “respect the rights accorded to the citizens under the constitution of India” and proposed setting up a government panel. — Reuters

For Britain’s new PM, family wealth from outsourcing adds to a secretive fortune



JANE BRADLEY

Rishi Sunak married into an \$800 million stake in Infosys, a company that does not fit neatly into his party's views on immigration

As Rishi Sunak made his rapid ascent in British politics, campaigning for Brexit and greater immigration controls to preserve jobs for Britons, the company that made his family exceedingly wealthy was becoming a political lightning rod as one of the world's biggest outsourcing firms.

Infosys, the Indian outsourcing giant founded by Sunak's father-in-law, became notorious among both American political parties for helping companies replace their workers with thousands of Indian immigrants or move their positions to the sprawling Infosys complex in Bangalore.

As the company grew to a market value of nearly \$80 billion, it also paid record fines and faced repeated accusations that it broke immigration laws and helped companies discriminate against American workers.

At a perilous time in British politics, with markets on edge, his party in turmoil and inflation rising, Sunak's financial ties to Infosys blend two volatile political issues: immigration and inequality. Although Sunak's family members are no longer company directors, they are major shareholders, and the company's outsourcing history does not neatly fit with his party's stance on limiting immigration to protect jobs. And his wife's \$800 million stake in the company is the biggest source of his wealth, which has emerged as an early source of unease at a time when the government appears ready to cut benefits for working-class families and the poor.

Infosys is also a British government contractor that has made more than \$120 million in public sector deals since Sunak entered government, according to an analysis of records from Tussell, a research firm that tracks public spending.

That includes an \$8.6 million technology contract with the Home Office, the government department responsible for immigration. The contract, which has not previously been reported, was made public only this May, years after it was signed, despite rules requiring contracts to be made public within 30 days.

Sunak, who was a member of Parliament when the deal was signed and became chancellor of the Exchequer later in the contract term, did not disclose his wife's stake in the company. British financial disclosure rules do not uniformly require disclosure of spousal earnings, but lawmakers are supposed to reveal financial interests that might "reasonably be thought by others to influence" their actions.

"After years of sleaze and scandal, public confidence in the UK standards system is already at rock bottom," Angela Rayner, deputy leader of the opposition Labour Party, said. "There has been a worrying lack of transparency over what processes were put in place in the case of Infosys."

The revelations add to a growing picture of Sunak's closely guarded wealth, one flecked by tax controversies, offshore accounts and millions of dollars in potential conflicts of interests that went undeclared. He and his wife, Akshata Murty, have a net worth of \$845 million, according to the Rich List, the annual catalog of British wealth published in The Sunday Times.

Robert Ford, a University of Manchester political scientist, said Infosys represented a "fairly obvious potential conflict of interest." Coming after the scandals of Boris Johnson's administration, he said, "you would think Sunak



Sunak represents many firsts, including the first prime minister of colour and the first Hindu prime minister. But in other ways, his is a familiar story in British politics.

would want to avoid even the mildest hint of anything like that."

"Yet we do have a situation where he is married into a family that has government contracts, has an interest in extending those contracts and in extending trade with Britain," Ford said.

Sunak, a former Goldman Sachs banker and hedge fund manager, is wealthy in his own right. His early fiscal policies and his finance background have helped steady British markets after his predecessor, Liz Truss, so unsettled the markets that she resigned after 44 days in office.

A FAMILIAR STORY

Sunak represents many firsts, including the first prime minister of color and the first Hindu prime minister. But in other ways, his is a familiar story in British politics.

The eldest son of immigrants of Indian heritage who moved to Southampton, on the southern English coast, Sunak's father was a family doctor and his mother ran a pharmacy.

Sunak was educated at private schools, including the prestigious Winchester College, which today is one of the most expensive in the country, with fees of roughly \$50,000 a year. When his political allies briefed reporters about his early life, they said he attended on scholarship. But his parents had described saving up to pay the fees.

He went on to study politics, philosophy and economics at Oxford University — where six of the past seven prime ministers and more than half of all British prime ministers since 1721 also studied.

Earlier this year, footage emerged of a 20-year-old Sunak telling documentary filmmakers: "I have friends who are aristocrats. I have friends who are upper class. I have friends who are, you know, working class, but — well, not working class."

His parents helped him buy his first apartment, in an affluent London neighborhood, at age 21, and he worked as an analyst for Goldman Sachs for nearly four years — something he makes no mention of in his public resume.

Around 2006, Sunak, by then living in the United States, joined Children's Investment Fund Management as a partner, a hedge fund known as TCI that was owned by a Cayman Islands company and co-founded by billionaire Christopher Hohn.

Sunak moved next to Theleme Partners, another offshore-linked hedge fund. The fund launched with an initial investment of more than \$620 million, and partners were paid a share of the offshore funds they managed, according to corporate filings first reported by Channel 4 News.

His time at the two funds made Sunak wealthy. But his net worth was tiny compared with the fortune he married into in 2009 with his wedding to Murty at a Bangalore hotel.

Win or lose, Bolsonaro has destroyed trust in elections

For many supporters of President Jair Bolsonaro, Sunday's presidential election in Brazil can have just two possible outcomes: They celebrate or they take to the streets.

That is because, they say, his defeat can only mean the vote was rigged.



JACK NICLAS

Throughout his presidency, Bolsonaro has methodically questioned and criticized the security of Brazil's electronic voting system, despite the lack of credible evidence of a problem. Now, at the end of his first term, it is clear that his attacks have had an effect: Much of Brazil's electorate has lost faith in the integrity of their nation's elections.

According to multiple polls over the past several months, including one last week, 3 out of 4 of Bolsonaro's supporters trust Brazil's voting system only a little or not at all. And in

interviews with more than 40 of Bolsonaro's supporters in recent months, nearly all said they were worried about election rigging and were prepared to protest if he loses.

Those doubts have undermined one of the world's largest democracies and are likely to end up as one of Bolsonaro's most pernicious legacies — part of a global trend of lies and conspiracy theories, often stoked by populist leaders and amplified by the internet, that are threatening democratic norms in the United States and across the world.

Now, on Sunday, Brazil could see how far those doubts about its elections go. Polls show that the race between Bolsonaro, the far-right incumbent, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, a former leftist president, is close. Yet Bolsonaro has suggested that if he loses, he may not accept the results.

"Elections that you can't audit? That's not an election. It's fraud," Bolsonaro told reporters in July, citing a common claim about Brazil's election system. "I'll hand over power — in a clean election."

If Bolsonaro is defeated and seeks to hold on to power, it appears that Brazil's democratic institutions are prepared to resist. But it also appears that some of his supporters are prepared to fight. "If our president isn't elected, everyone goes to Brasília," said Rogério Ramos, 40, owner of an automotive electronics shop, referring to the nation's capital. "We shut down Congress just like in '64."

In 1964, a military coup led to a violent, 21-year dictatorship in Brazil.



Brazilian court inspectors audit and seal electronic voting machines.

Throughout his presidency, Bolsonaro has questioned the security of Brazil's electronic voting system again and again, despite the lack of credible evidence of a problem. Now, much of Brazil's electorate has lost faith in the integrity of their nation's elections

Many such warnings are likely off-the-cuff comments rather than organized plans for violence. Law enforcement officials have not warned of any threat by groups in the event of Bolsonaro's defeat.

But Brazil's Supreme Court and electoral court have increased security, and the military is preparing in case there is unrest after the election, according to two senior military officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private plans. The president or the courts could call on the military to try to control violent crowds.

Bolsonaro has also questioned the security of Brazil's electronic voting machines since 2015, after a center-right presidential candidate disputed a narrow loss. Then a congressman, Bolsonaro began a crusade that the voting machines were vulnerable to fraud because they are not backed up by paper ballots.

Bolsonaro is right that Brazil's voting system is unique. It is the only country in the world to use a fully digital system, with no paper backups.

Computer security experts who study the system say that its design indeed makes it difficult to audit an election. But they also say that the system has numerous layers of security to prevent fraud or errors, including fingerprint readers, tests of hundreds of machines on Election Day, outside experts' inspection of the source code and the fact that the machines do not connect to the internet, significantly reducing the chances of a hack.

You are not a tree



Dr Hamed al Sinawi @alsinawi

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

Few days ago I was chatting with a healthcare worker who moved to work in a nearby country where she was made a head of a unit and given more responsibility and appreciation.

The move made her realize how she spent over twenty years doing a job with little recognition. She was managed by someone less qualified and less ambitious than her so her plans of improving were sabotaged by her manager.

“I was starting to lose my passion, everyday was a struggle until one day I received an invitation from a head of a unit who attended a workshop I was present at, he asked for my CV and after a short interview I was offered my dream job, I was reluctant at first but after

thinking about it I decided to take the offer and now am leading a big team and doing wonderful work.”

For most people, a job is more than a source of income, it's one of the things that gives meaning to life which makes them more motivated to work and excel in what they do. Most of us develop emotional connection to the job we do as it provides us with a sense of pride and a feeling of fulfilment that we are achieving our purpose.

In some professions, the person becomes identified with the job as it comes with a title that people call him or her with, be it a doctor, a lawyer or a policeman.

But when the job becomes a source of stress and unhappiness like when we feel unappreciated

WHEN THE JOB BECOMES A SOURCE OF STRESS AND UNHAPPINESS LIKE WHEN WE FEEL UNAPPRECIATED OR BULLIED WE EXPERIENCE A DISTINCT LACK OF CONNECTION TO OUR WORK. THIS MAKES US LACK ENERGY AND MOTIVATION

or bullied we experience a distinct lack of connection to our work. This makes us lack energy and motivation. We start doubting our abilities to do the job and have negative thoughts and feelings about our future. We may feel

lonely and isolated from our work colleagues and eventually we get to the point of wanting to give up.

Those of us who are able to move into another more fulfilling job would do so but some decide to stay, maybe because they convinced themselves that they will not find a better working environment or that “not everyone gets appreciated at work anyway” so they should get on with it.

In psychology, there is a phenomenon called the battered wife syndrome which originally referred to women who are abused by their husbands yet they try to convince themselves that it's a normal thing and it's pointless to leave because nobody would love them anyway.

Some would even blame themselves and find excuses to justify the abuse or even exaggerate the little kindness the abusive husband may have shown. This phenomenon can also be experienced by workers who are subjected to unfair treatment as they get to the point of hopelessness and helplessness. They do their job day in and day out but without passion or motivation. The salary becomes the only thing that makes them go to work.

This reminded me of the statement “if you don't like where you are, move. You are not a tree.” But the question is, how many of us are prepared to adopt this attitude? To free themselves and venture into a new horizon?

A ‘rumbling’ in the dark: Philippine mum recounts landslide escape

FERDINANDH CABRERA

As midnight approached and floodwaters rose around her, mother-of-three Chonalyn Sapi sought refuge at her local village chapel in the southern Philippines province of Maguindanao del Norte, only to find it was already filled with her neighbours.

Desperate to find shelter before tropical storm Nalgae hit, she and others ran uphill in the dark, as boulders, mud and debris rumbled down the mountain in a massive landslide that would go on to bury the nearby hamlet of Kusiong, their home.

“We didn't sleep that night after the rain started,” Sapi, one of the few survivors of the deluge, told reporters.

“At midnight it was already mud, not water. Some ran to the school, while the others chose the church. Some were already asleep.”

Sapi said those who reached the local high school building survived, but those in the church — including two elderly relatives of hers — were buried beneath the mud.

“We did not even have a flashlight. It was really dark. We heard the rumbling of boulders rolling down the mountain. You could not mistake it for anything else,” she said.

Miraculously, she, her husband, and their two younger children were unscathed.

Soaking wet and shivering in the cold, they waited out the deluge on the hillside for three hours. Just before dawn, the rain abated, and the family gingerly picked its way back down to the devastated village, wading through torrents of water.

Viewed through drone footage, the impact of the landslide was staggering. It created a massive mound of debris the size of about 10 football fields, just below several picturesque mountain peaks carpeted in yellow-green grass.

LOOKING FOR BODIES

Rescuers clad in the orange vests of the local fire department and armed with shovels poked beneath the galvanised iron roofing sheets of the homes that were half-buried in the rock and mud, looking for bodies.

About 60 houses were buried, while a few others made of lighter materials were swept down towards the road below, said Lieutenant-Colonel Dennis Almorato, spokesman for an army division tasked with helping rescue efforts.

“That area is at the foot of the mountain. The heavy rain could have softened up the slopes,” Almorato said. Fourteen bodies have been recovered so far. They are among 40 confirmed deaths in a series of flash floods and landslides that swept through the southern Philippines ahead of Nalgae's landfall on Saturday. — AFP

Barack Obama in the fray — again



DR IMRAN KHALID

The writer is freelance columnist on international affairs



Former US president Barack Obama speaks at a campaign rally for Senator Raphael Warnock ahead of the midterm elections in Atlanta.

This time US President Biden has adopted a different kind of election campaign to keep Republicans from regaining control of the Congress in the forthcoming mid-term polls on November 8.

The game plan is two-pronged: hot and cold. The cold part is being played by President Biden who is conspicuously keeping a low-key campaign, abstaining from big rallies – a staple feature of America's Congressional election campaigns patronised by both sides quite religiously – and attending only fundraising events to highlight his party's accomplishments.

While the “hotter” part of the game plan is being spearheaded by former president Barack Obama who is crisscrossing various states to promote the Democratic candidates and attending campaign rallies. Unlike the traditional model of American election campaigns, which revolves around high-octane rallies and fanfare of large political gatherings, President Biden has adopted an atypical model to attract the voters; he is focusing on grabbing media headlines to promote his accomplishments of the last two years. He wants to project himself as a national politician who is above the political fray.

Biden's strategy is to use the fundraising events, where he

UNLIKE THE TRADITIONAL MODEL OF AMERICAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS, WHICH REVOLVES AROUND HIGH-OCTANE RALLIES AND FANFARE OF LARGE POLITICAL GATHERINGS, PRESIDENT BIDEN HAS ADOPTED AN ATYPICAL MODEL TO ATTRACT THE VOTERS

lavishly talks about all the major accomplishments of his two-year stint, to be in the headlines of the media on a daily basis and keep reaching out to a wider base of voters by showing his past performance rather than routine exaggerated political oratory.

Donald Trump, on the other hand, is busy in an unending series of mega rallies that are routinely adorned by his signature rhetoric against Biden and Republicans.

The Big boisterous campaign of Donald Trump, who is putting all his heart into this campaign with an intention to use the Republican's victory in the midterms as the basis to stage his own comeback, has pushed

the panic button among the middle and lower cadres of Democrats.

But President Biden has shoved Barack Obama to take the lead in political rallies in some targeted states. With his witty and calm demeanor, Barack Obama has all the ingredients to neutralize more glamorous and piquant gimmicks of Donald Trump.

Obama has focused on Atlanta, Detroit and Milwaukee as special projects to campaign for Democratic candidates. There is no doubt that Barack Obama, considered to be one of the most persuasive and influential Democratic leaders who possess a special aura to enhance the voters base of the political left in America, is the right choice to counter the growing nuisance of Donald Trump.

Obama has been at loggerheads with Trump when he withdrew from the Paris Agreement and Iran nuclear deal. Similarly, in May 2020, both were again engaged in a short-live personal skirmish when Obama criticized Trump's handling of the Covid-19 crisis.

So, a very interesting duel between two former Presidents is being witnessed on the sidelines of the midterm polls. This is also a fact that Trump is much more enthusiastic in this midterm campaign – perhaps he is vying for the 2024 presidential contest.

Reboot: With hugs, not handshakes...

A friend confided recently that he was feeling absolutely shattered, ‘wiped out,’ was how he put it, ‘completely exhausted, but that he had no prospect of a break, or a holiday to unwind, until the traditional break at the end of the year. He was doing what men rarely do... asking for help.

I advised him to talk to his employer, who, if he understood the depth of lethargy, (let’s call him ‘Tom’), was feeling. ‘Tom’ rejected that immediately, saying that one of the reasons he was so exhausted was because he was trying to stay ‘ahead of the game, on top of everything, because redundancies were expected due to poor results over the last year, and I want to make sure I’m not one of the ones that gets the DCM (Don’t Come Monday!).’

I could understand his perspective and explained that I felt that in that case he had two different issues concerning him: It was clear that he was worried about keeping his job, one thing, and he was exhausting himself trying to work twice as hard to stay ahead of his colleagues, second thing. Chasing swallows does that to you... if you let it.

I offered, knowing ‘Tom’ as I do, that redundancies are a fact of life, they are not his pay grade, but also that knowing what great relationships and camaraderie he has with his work colleagues, he’s not going to feel great whoever gets the push. I know, it’s not much consolation, to ‘Tom’ himself, but initially I’m just trying to settle the ship a wee bit, to get him to relax, and for clarity.

Redundancies happen, and they are never fair, someone is always hurt, and it’s natural to be anxious. The only saving grace is that most employers are slightly disingenuous, in that they will know who they will dispense with before they announce redundancies. Their ‘due diligence’ if you like, as to who ‘goes,’ will have been done prior to any in-



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REDUNDANCIES HAPPEN, AND THEY ARE NEVER FAIR, SOMEONE IS ALWAYS HURT, AND IT’S NATURAL TO BE ANXIOUS

house announcement, so if you have been effective, proven reliable, and resilient, why would you not be fine?

‘Tom’ is a good person, respected and appreciated by colleagues, a confidant of his supervisors, so I see no genuine reason for anxiety. Working, while worrying, is the least productive state of mind one can possibly engage with, and its deep-seated mental and physical fatigue can be incredibly debilitating, and regardless of the actuality, our lack of worth tends to be reflected in negativity, irritability, cynicism, even disengagement, and that’s mainly what I cautioned him against.

Clinical psychologist, Karen Nimmo writes that, “burnout is similar to moderate depression,” as sleep problems, low motivation, low energy, bad mood, irritability, and exaggerated emotions, disinterest, and exasperated responses are symptomatic of burnout, which is also a temporary form of depression, and I genuinely felt that is where ‘Tom’ ‘is’ now. So, I felt confident in giving him quite modest, easy to achieve perspectives, for his home life that I felt would benefit him all-round, at home and work.

I urged him to eat and drink healthy, well healthi-er, for a while. To get some ‘fresh air,’ to leave the car on the driveway and walk to the shop, to ‘smell the roses.’ I was adamant too, that he should spend time with his wife and kids, whether its shopping, football, or whatever. This sort of situation is perfect for remembering what brought you together, taking you back, putting the smile back on your face. I also offered some of Nimmo’s other advice that instead of watching TV, to read a book or a magazine, exercising your brain, not entertaining it. Refresh, and reboot!

Of course... ‘Tom’ was retained, the company did a U-turn, and as is often the case, it was ‘much ado about now!’ ‘Tom’s final thought: “A hug, more than a handshake, worked wonders.” So why would it not for you?

AUTUMN COLOURS



Golden leaves colour the autumn as boats are moored in the port on Canal de l’Escaut, in Cambrai, France, on Saturday. – Reuters

As UN mulls sending troops to Haiti, a gang’s rise shows how hard it is

BRIAN ELLSWORTH

As Haiti’s gang-induced humanitarian crisis deepened in October, a group of looters ransacked a supermarket in a well-to-do suburb of the capital Port-au-Prince, leading police to arrest over a dozen people and take them to a nearby police station. They were not there for long.

Within hours, the station in the area known as Thomassin came under a hail of bullets from gang members led by a man named Carlo Petithomme, whose brother had been among those arrested, according to two security sources.

Petithomme goes by the alias Ti Makak, and leads a gang of the same name. They overpowered officers and released the looters as well as others who had previously been arrested, the sources said.

Reuters was unable to contact Petithomme for security reasons.

The brazen October 10 assault, which is reported in detail for the first time here, shocked residents of an area that had been largely shielded from Haitian gangs, a group of which have created a humanitarian crisis by blocking fuel distribution.

While Ti Makak is not directly linked to the fuel blockade, its rise is

THE BRAZEN OCTOBER 10 ASSAULT, WHICH IS REPORTED IN DETAIL FOR THE FIRST TIME HERE, SHOCKED RESIDENTS OF AN AREA THAT HAD BEEN LARGELY SHIELDED FROM HAITIAN GANGS, A GROUP OF WHICH HAVE CREATED A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS BY BLOCKING FUEL DISTRIBUTION

a sign of how Haitian gangs can quickly evolve from a ragtag band of thieves into powerful warlords who can subvert the rule of law even in the country’s stablest regions.

It is further evidence of how gangs have expanded their power since the shocking 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise, and the difficulties facing Prime Minister Ariel Henry in restoring order to the country.

Most gangs first emerged in the slums near the capital, but residents and merchants left those areas in response, said James Boyard, a security expert and professor of international relations at the State University of Haiti.

“With the aim of having access to new sources of income, the gangs now seek to settle in what were once ‘green zones,’ to carry out kidnapping and extortion,” Boyard said.

Haiti is now held hostage by a gang coalition called G9 led by Jimmy “Barbecue” Cherizier, a former police officer who in September began a blockade of the Varreux fuel terminal, a move Cherizier called a protest over a plan to cut fuel subsidies.

Many Haitians, as well as a growing number of US policy-makers, believe that wealthy Haitians finance the gangs to further their own economic interests.

The blockade has left Haiti without fuel, triggering shortages of food and clean water, just as the country is facing a cholera outbreak. The United Nations has discussed a possible strike force to clear the blockade and resume fuel distribution, though it remains unclear who would lead it.

The last major foreign military



A man holds a tyre at a road block as demonstrators blocked streets to protest ongoing fuel shortages even in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. – Reuters file photo

force in Haiti, a 13-year UN mission known as MINUSTAH, was deeply unpopular by the time it ended in 2017 due to credible evidence that its troops caused a 2010 cholera epidemic as well as accusations of sexual abuse of underaged girls.

Gangs are also deeply enmeshed in the civilian population, meaning a standard military assault against them would carry risks of significant civilian casualties. Haiti’s National Police did not respond to requests for comment on the police commissary incident or about Ti

Makak in general.

Ti Makak now has a strong grip on Laboule, an area of steep, verdant hillsides to the south of Port-au-Prince, according to residents and security experts.

Since the 1990s, Laboule has been populated by well-off families drawn by the fresh air and sweeping views, some of whom built mansions and luxury homes. Laboule’s sub-districts are demarcated by numbers, and Laboule 12 has suffered a significant rise in gang activity. Its streets, which for years teemed with drivers, vendors, and restaurant-goers, are increasingly empty.

In 2021, when gangs took control of the main road heading from Port-au-Prince to Haiti’s southern peninsula, drivers began taking Laboule as an alternate route.

Well-known politician Eric Jean Baptiste was killed on Friday night in an apparent gang attack as he was returning to his home in Laboule 12, according to local media reports and a tweet by Prime Minister Ariel Henry on Saturday.

Ti Makak’s early activities are difficult to ascertain. — Reuters

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AL SUWAIQ OUST DHOFAR IN HM CUP

Al Rustaq and Al Oruba book
spots in last-eight



ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

Oman national team goalkeeper Faye al Rushaidi was Al Suwaiq's star as the three-time champions booked a spot in the last-eight of the 2022-23 His Majesty's Cup Football Championship late on Friday.

Al Suwaiq defeated 10 time champions Dhofar 4-3 on penalties after the regulation time ended at 2-2 draw in a round-of-16 knockout match. With the triumph, the Northern Batinah team, coached under former national team coach Muhanna Said, moved to the next stage of the coveted cup while Salalah giants crashed out from round-16 as one of the major surprises of the championship.

Essam al Subhi took the lead for Al Suwaiq as he found the goal in the 16th minute and the first half ended with Suwaiq leading 1-0. Dhofar got the equaliser through Awadh Mohammed al Shari in the 66th minute. As the match was approaching its end, Al Suwaiq's AbdulRahman al Mushaifri managed to score the second goal in the 84th minute.

As the match was in the injury-time, Dhofar players pressed hard to score the equaliser again and they succeeded as Ali salim al Nahar scored in the 94th minute

to force extra-time which failed to break the deadlock.

In the penalty shoot-out, both the teams went level till the sixth shot before Faye al Rushaidi made a brilliant save of Dhofar's Awadh al Shari's kick. Then, Faye scored the sixth penalty to deliver a crucial win for Suwaiq at 4-3.

AL RUSTAQ THROUGH

In the other last-16 match of the evening, Al Rustaq snatched a 1-0 win against Bahla to progress into the quarterfinals.

At Nizwa Sports Complex on Friday night, Faisal al Balushi netted the winner for Al Rustaq in the 69th minute from a penalty kick. The only goal in the match sealed a berth for the Southern Batinah team in the last-eight round. Al Rustaq will meet Oman Club in the next round of the HM Cup.

Four-time champions Al Oruba sealed a berth in the quarterfinals as they beat hosts Salalah 1-0 in the last-16 match at Al Saada Sports Complex on Friday. The only goal in the match was scored by Youssef Nasser in the 10th minute. The triumph meant Al Oruba will meet Al Nahda in the quarterfinals. The first leg match will be held in Al Buraimi while the second leg will be played in Sur.

International Day of tent pegging marked

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

The activities and programmes continued by the International Tent Pegging Federation (ITPF), based in the Sultanate of Oman, in celebration of the International Day of tent pegging, which falls on October 27 each year.

Seminars, competitions and festivals for tent pegging were organised in the various countries which are members of the ITPF.

The International Tent Pegging Federation organised a meeting via visual communication technology. ITPF Chairman Mohammed bin Issa al Fairouz delivered a speech by greeting the members and fans of tent pegging in various countries and thanked the Sultanate of

Oman for the great contributions in supporting the development activities of the International Tent Pegging Federation. Al Fairouz also appreciated the achievements of the ITPF since the federation was set up in 2013 based in Oman.

The federation organised three World Cup tournaments. It will organise the fourth World Cup next year, which will be held in South Africa, in addition to organising many international tournaments.

The ITPF formed a committee for the activities in connection to the International Day of tent pegging, headed by Khaled al Quraini, Head of the Administrative Affairs Department of ITPF, and with the membership of Sarah al Masry, Head of the Women's Committee, Noura al Jabr and Nizar Abdel



Wahhab.

On the other hand, the Oman Equestrian Federation, under the supervision of the International Equestrian Federation, organised the first international endurance competition for season 202-23, in Al Mahamed field in Barka.

The competition included an international night race for a

distance of 100 km, where 36 horses entered the competition. As many as 30 horses managed to successfully pass the first stage, where 26 horses successfully completed the second stage and in the third and final stage 25 horses made the mark.

The Oman Equestrian Federation in cooperation with the British Horse Association, organised a course for equestrian trainers, at Al Rahba Farm in Barka, with the participation of 40 trainers.

British international lecturer Harizink Annie Elizabeth lectured for four days, the practical and theoretical aspects, to raise their competencies in the field of horse training. The conclusion was sponsored by Ahmed bin Saif al Abri, Secretary General of the Oman Equestrian Federation.



Russia's Daniil Medvedev reacts as he plays against Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov (not pictured) during the semifinal match of the ATP Vienna Open tennis tournament in Vienna, Austria, on October 29, 2022. — AFP

Medvedev eases into Vienna final

VIENNA: Daniil Medvedev made short work of his last-four match against Grigor Dimitrov on Saturday to reach the final of the ATP tournament in Vienna.

The former world number one did not face a single break point in a dominant 6-4, 6-2 victory.

Medvedev will face Denis Shapovalov on Sunday as he bids to win his second title of the season. The Russian's only tournament success this year came in an ATP 250 event in Mexico in August, which ended a run of five straight final defeats.

"There were a few moments in the match where I thought I should have done just a little bit better, to go in front earlier and try to build the pressure earlier," said Medvedev.

"Then I managed to stay consistent and, in the most important points, managed to raise my level. That was enough today, and I'm really happy with my level."

He had lost his previous

meeting with Dimitrov at Indian Wells last year but had no such problems this time around, securing victory by winning the last five games of the match.

Medvedev is edging closer to securing his place at the ATP Finals which get under way in Turin on November 13.

The 26-year-old, who won the season-ending event in 2020, sits fifth in the standings.

Canadian Shapovalov reached his second final of the month, after losing the Korea Open title match to Yoshihito Nishioka, by downing the in-form Borna Coric 7-6 (7/4), 6-0.

Shapovalov, who still has not won an ATP tournament since his first title in 2019, has won two of his five meetings with Medvedev, but lost the last three.

The 23-year-old edged a tight opening set in a tie-break, but Cincinnati Masters champion Coric fell away in the second as Shapovalov romped into the final.

— AFP



Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov serves the ball to Russia's Daniil Medvedev (not pictured) during the semifinal match of the ATP Vienna Open tennis tournament in Vienna, Austria. — AFP

Qurum Thunders crowned D10 champions

MUSCAT: Consistency marked the journey of Qurum Thunders to the summit as they were crowned champions of the second edition of Oman D10 Championship, which concluded at the Oman Cricket Academy ground in Al Amerat, recently.

In a power-packed display in the final, Qurum Thunders outclassed Amerat Royals by seven wickets to bring curtains down on the 12-day exciting tournament, organised by Oman Cricket (OC).

A lot was expected in the summit clash between the two teams with Amerat Royals displaying impressive form in the group stages and then overpowering Ruwi Rangers in the semifinals.

While Amerat and Qurum had won eight of their 12 matches, Ruwi was one better with nine victories in their league stage. However, Amerat stopped the streak of Ruwi to set a clash with Qurum.

Samay Shrivastav, the wily spinner of Qurum, turned out to be the architect of Qurum's title triumph as he bagged four wickets, including three in one over, to deflate the Amerat batting line-up. Amerat were restricted to 63/8 with Pratik Athawale the top-scorer with 22.

Qurum's chase was rocked early as Bilal Khan dismissed opener Kashyap Prajapati early but the experienced batters, skipper Jatinder Singh and Shoaib Khan, took the team closer to the target before getting out to Mohit Patel. Ayaan Khan and Hashir Dafedar led the team to win with four balls to spare.

The title was the first trophy for Qurum Thunders of the 2022-23 season and they will now hope to carry the momentum in the Premier League ODI and T20 formats.

The second edition of Oman D10 witnessed 46 matches being played and saw a total of 443 maximums and 560 boundaries being smashed while a total 444 wickets fell.

Shrivastav was adjudged Player of the Final for four taking four wickets for just four runs. Syed Aamir Kaleem was adjudged the Player of the Tournament for his allround performance. He



Champions Qurum Thunders



Syed Amir Kaleem player of the tournament



Samay Shrivastav player of the final



Runners-up Amerat Royals

smashed 285 runs and claimed 17 wickets in 11 matches.

At the post-match presentation ceremony, Pankaj Khimji, OC chairman, handed the champions trophy to Qurum Thunders skipper Jatinder Singh.

Varun Khimji, OC adviser, handed the runners-up trophy Amerat Royals captain Karan Sonavale. Nayeem Khan, Senior Manager, ITW Universe, Qasim Al Rahbi and Duleep Mendis, OC chief development officer,

presented the other individual awards and mementoes.

Brief scores: Amerat Royals 63/8 in 10 overs (Pratik Athawale 22, 3x4, 1x6; Samay Shrivastav 4/4; Ganesh N 3/9) lost to Qurum Thunders 66/3 in 7.2 overs (Hashir Dafedar 13, 1x4, 1x6, Ayaan Khan 14; Mohit Patel 2/13).

Oman Association team wins deaf football tourney

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, OCT 29

The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, represented by Deaf Oman Sport Committee, concluded the deaf football tournament 2022, at the Al Amal club in Muscat on October 26.

Chief guest Shaikh Said bin Rashid al Qatabi, Director-General of Social Sectors at the Ministry of Economy, awarded the medals to the top winners in the tournament held from October 22 to 26.

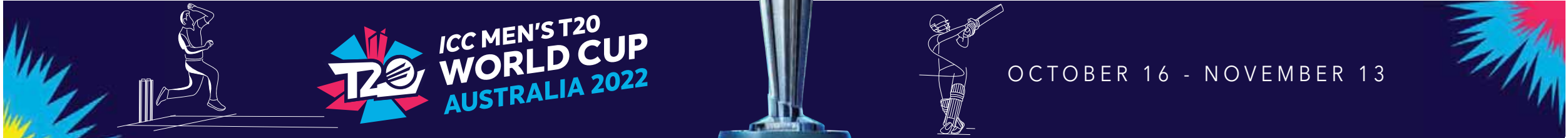
The Oman Association for the Hearing Impaired team were crowned the champions of the tournament on Wednesday after the final match against Sohar team at the Al Amal club. Sohar came in second Place and Al Amerat team finished in third position.

Six teams took part in the tournament from various cities of Oman — Nakhal team, Sohar, Al Amerat, Al Buraimi, Nizwa and Oman Association for the Hearing Impaired team. The teams were divided into two groups. Four teams qualified to the semifinals — Oman association team, Sohar, Al Amerat and Nakhal team.

Oman Association for the Hearing Impaired team include Abdullah al Riyami, Moaz al Amiri, Matar al Rashidi, Issa al Yazidi, Ayoub al Hinai, Osama al Amiri, Yarub al Maamari, Waleed al Mahrouqi and Hammoud Hamed.

Sohar players included Hassan al Ghafri, Ismail al Abri, Abdullah al Saadi, Abdullah al Ajmi, Ibrahim al Hadrami, Abdullah al Shaidi, Ali al Rahbi, Anas al Harthy, Muhannad al Maamari and Ayman Khamis.





Phillips hits 104 as New Zealand crush Sri Lanka



SYDNEY: Glenn Phillips smashed a powerhouse 104 and Trent Boult grabbed four wickets as New Zealand swept past Sri Lanka by 65 runs in Sydney on Saturday to put them in pole position to make the semifinals at the Twenty20 World Cup.

New Zealand batted first and posted 167-7 with Phillips unstoppable, rescuing his team after the top order was blown away, losing Finn Allen, Doug Conway and Kane Williamson for 15 runs.

Boult and Tim Southee then reduced Sri Lanka to 4-8 in the chase and there was no way back as they crumbled to 102 all out. Boult ended with a career-best 4-13.

Phillips hit 10 fours and four sixes in his 64-ball knock — the second century of the tournament, after South African Rilee Rossouw's 109 against Bangladesh, and only the 11th in T20 World Cup history.

"Incredible, any hundred is amazing but the way he worked hard and put pressure on the opposition after our poor start," skipper Williamson said. "The boys executed the plans really well."

Phillips said it was "absolutely indescribable" to score a century at the World Cup.

"I try to entertain as much as possible, and today it worked out well," he added.

Plenty was on the line with Group One wide open after both matches in Melbourne on Friday — Australia v England and Afghanistan v Ireland — were washed out.

New Zealand's win gives them a two point buffer, and a superior run rate, at the top of the table from England, Ireland and



Australia with two games to play.

They face a crunch game against England next in Brisbane on Tuesday while Sri Lanka face a must-win clash with Afghanistan on the same day to keep their hopes alive.

"Credit to Glenn Phillips who played an outstanding knock. We also dropped a few catches. 160 is always a tough ask with their bowling attack," said Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka.

"If we get a couple of wins, we're still in with a chance of qualifying, so just looking forward to that."

GOT WORSE

Sri Lanka began with the spin of Maheesh Theekshana after losing the toss, and it immediately paid dividends.

Allen took apart Australia's hallowed pace attack in their opening game during a 16-ball 42, but he managed just three balls and one run this time, confounded by an inswinger in

the opening over.

Conway, who smashed an unbeaten 92 against Australia, fared little better. Spinner Dhananjaya de Silva joined the attack and Conway was bowled, also for one.

Things got worse when skipper Williamson (8) got an outside edge off pace bowler Kasun Rajitha in the next over and was caught behind.

Phillips and Daryl Mitchell, returning to the side after fracturing his hand, crawled to 54-3 at the halfway point.

But Phillips then flicked a switch, with sloppy fielding aiding him, dropped by Pathum Nissanka on 12 and again on 45 by Shanaka.

An 84-run stand with Mitchell ended when his partner was bowled for 22 by Wanindu Hasaranga. Mitchell Santner was alongside him when he brought up only his second T20 100 in the 19th over before being caught in the final over.

Sri Lanka made the worst possible start to the chase, losing three wickets for five runs.

Southee bowled a wicket- maiden to open proceedings, trapping Nissanka lbw, then long-time bowling partner Boult chipped in with two wickets in his first over.

He enticed an edge from Kusal Mendis to Conway then de Silva chopped onto his wicket. Charith Asalanka didn't last much longer, caught by a diving Allen as Boult grabbed his third.

Spinner Santner came on and Chamika Karunaratne swung his bat, only to find Boult in the deep, leaving Sri Lanka in disarray.

Shanaka hit a gutsy 35 and Bhanuka Rajapaksa 34, but to no avail. — AFP



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OIA explores investment opportunities in Riyadh

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver

The Oman Investment Authority (OIA) participated in the sixth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) held last week in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

During the event, OIA held a meeting with a group of international investors under the theme ‘Your Partner in Potential’, in which investment opportunities were presented to investors, especially on OIA’s subsidiaries operating in different sectors such as the technology sector and the food sector, in addition to informing the investors of the Sultanate of Oman’s attractive

geographical and natural features.

OIA also presented visual presentations and examples of successful global investment partnerships that the OIA signed this year with the aim of creating an opportunity to attract with these investors.

Abdulsalam bin Muhammad al Murshidi, Chairman of the Oman Investment Authority, said in a welcome speech that the Sultanate of Oman, along with the other GCC countries, constitute ideal destinations for global investors.

He shared many investment trends and stressed the competitive advantages of the Sultanate of Oman beginning from its location overlooking the open seas that



connects the east of the world with the west and north and south, and the world-class infrastructure that provides all what the investor needs.

The country also has a clear

diversification and building a strong and vibrant economy. In order to achieve this, many initiatives have been implemented to attract foreign investment, such as providing a residency programme for investors, the foreign investment law and others, and the OIA looks forward to reaching with investors and discovering investment opportunities that can lead to partnerships with them.

The meeting also featured a presentation on the experiences of the US companies Myco Technology and Crusoe Energy in partnership with the Oman Investment Authority this year.

OIA and Myco Technology

established, in May this year, a joint venture that will use locally-grown date to produce high-quality mushroom based protein. The JV also plans to build a factory in Oman.

Meanwhile, OIA announced in June an investment pact with Crusoe Energy, which aims to produce clean energy from gases emitted from oil and gas fields torch.

The sixth edition of the Future Investment Initiative (FII) was held on October 25-27 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, under the theme of ‘Investing in Humanity: Enabling a New Global Order’ with the attendance of 6,000 participants and 500 speakers.

Industry, energy and vehicles account for bulk of Oman’s CO2 emissions

CARBON NEUTRALITY: 49 projects and initiatives outlined to achieve nation’s Net Zero target

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 29

Four key sectors — Industry, Oil & Gas, Transportation and Power/Buildings — account for 95 per cent of Oman’s total carbon emissions equivalent to around 90 million tonnes of CO2 in 2021, according to a high-level official associated with the country’s newly unveiled Net Zero Emission (NZE) reduction strategy.

Eng Faiza al Harthi (pictured), Head of Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Priority Support at Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit, said responsibility for delivering the Omani government’s commitment to cutting CO2 emissions to net zero by 2050 falls predominantly on the newly established Oman Sustainability Centre (OSC).

Shedding light on the Oman National Net Zero Plan, as well as the role of the new centre, at a media briefing last week, the official warned that the Sultanate of Oman’s planet-warming greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions — unless tackled — could rise by 10 – 20 per cent in a ‘business-as-usual’ (BAU) scenario from 2021 – 2050.

Significantly, 32 per cent of CO2 emissions come from the industrial sector, encompassing Iron & Steel, Cement, Aluminium, Ammonia, Methanol, Petrochemicals & Refining, among other industries.



SIGNIFICANTLY, 32 PER CENT OF CO2 EMISSIONS COME FROM THE INDUSTRIAL SECTOR, ENCOMPASSING IRON & STEEL, CEMENT, ALUMINIUM, AMMONIA, METHANOL, PETROCHEMICALS & REFINING, AMONG OTHER INDUSTRIES. NEXT IS THE OIL & GAS SECTOR WITH A 25 PER CENT SHARE. GROUPED IN THIS CATEGORY ARE UPSTREAM ACTIVITIES, FLARING, LNG, FUGITIVE GASES AND VENTING.

Next is the Oil & Gas sector with a 25 per cent share. Grouped in this category are upstream activities, flaring, LNG, fugitive gases and venting.

Ranked third is the Power / Buildings component with a 20 per cent share. Electricity from fossil fuels, chiefly natural gas, accounts for the bulk of emissions from this sector, particularly when used in the air-conditioning of homes and buildings.

Not far behind is the transportation sector with a contribution of 18 per cent of the total. Clubbed in this category are passenger cars, trucks, buses and light commercial vehicles.

Making up the balance 5 per cent are emissions linked to livestock and wastewater services, among other activities.

According to the official, a broad strategy for whittling down CO2 emissions to Net Zero was chalked out during the recent National Carbon Management Lab. It identifies as many as 49 projects and initiatives for delivering on the Net Zero Emission reduction target.

For buildings and urban areas, the Lab moots the introduction of building codes, smart energy meters, green zones and renewable energy resources.

For the transportation sector, the Lab calls for a transition to Electric Vehicles and public transportation modes. Reducing CO2 emissions in the industrial sector calls for

more strident measures and technologies, such as Carbon Capture Utilisation & Storage (CCUS), easing gas consumption and utilisation, and supporting a circular economy.

To rein in emissions in the Oil & Gas sector, the Lab has proposed enhancements in gas production and use, CCUS, methane emission abatement, and flare reduction.

Finally, for the power sector, it has recommended a switch to renewable resources including Waste-to-Energy and Biofuels, and improved grid interconnection.

Energy efficiency has also been strongly championed across all the emission-generating sectors.

Last week, Oman’s newly established hydrogen-centric company, Hydrom, announced that it is overseeing the development of a new green hydrogen industry with a capacity of 1 million tonnes per annum by 2030, rising to 7.5 – 8.5 million tonnes by 2050

LONDON: Global energy giants including Exxon Mobil Corp and Chevron Corp posted another round of huge quarterly profits, benefiting from surging natural gas and fuel prices that have boosted inflation around the world and led to fresh calls to further tax the sector.

Four of the five largest global oil companies have now reported results, combining for nearly \$50 billion in net income, lifted by tight global markets and disruption following Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

The sheer size of the profits has revived calls from politicians and consumer groups to impose more taxes on the companies to raise funds to offset the hit to households, businesses and the wider economy from higher energy costs. They have also criticised big oil companies for not doing enough to raise production to offset rising fuel and heating costs.

Chevron Chief Financial Officer Pierre Breber warned that “taxing production will just reduce it.” The company reported its second-highest profit of \$11.2 billion. However, the company’s global production is down so far this year from a year ago, and other US oil companies signalled that output in the top-producing US shale region is waning already.

“If you raise the costs on energy producers, it will decrease investment so that goes against the intent of increasing suppliers and making energy more affordable.”

US President Joe Biden, who earlier this year said Exxon was making “more money than God”, told oil companies this month that they were not doing enough to bring down energy costs.



An employee walks a carbon capture and storage facility in Fort Saskatchewan in, Canada. — Reuters

Hours after Shell reported a quarterly profit of \$9.45 billion and raised its dividend by 15% on Thursday, Biden said the company was misusing its profits. On Friday, he noted on Twitter in response to a comment from Exxon’s CEO that “giving profits to shareholders is not the same as bringing prices down for American families.”

In the UK, the president of the COP26 climate summit Alok Sharma said on Friday that Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s government should explore extending a windfall tax on oil and gas firms. “These are excessive profits, and they have to be treated in the appropriate way when it comes to taxation,” Sharma said.

Shell CEO Ben Van Beurden has said the energy industry “should be prepared and accept” that it will face higher taxes to help struggling parts of society. Shell earned more than \$9 billion in the third quarter, putting it on track to surpass its record annual profit of \$31 billion set in 2008.

Exxon Mobil reported nearly \$20 billion in net income in the quarter ending in September, exceeding expectations and surpassing its previous record set earlier. — Reuters

MHD-ITICS sets new Guinness World Record

MUSCAT: Paying tribute to Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi, the Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions cluster of Mohsin Haider Darwish LLC (MHD-ITICS), sponsored an event to set a new Guinness World Record for 'A Word Written with the Largest Number of Flowers'.

The event was hosted by the Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, Chairperson, MHD-ITICS. The mammoth task of assembling 12,000 roses, which spelt out the First Lady's name, 'Ahd', began with fabrication work on October 25 and was successfully completed on October 26. It was then displayed at a grand event organised near the Snow Zone area, located on level two of the Mall of Oman. Official adjudicators from Guinness World Records were



present to supervise, analyse and follow every step of the process.

Adhering to all the stringent criteria, the masterpiece, once finished, stood 8.2 metres wide and 3 metres tall and proved to be a

true work of art.

Ideated and conceptualised by Naseem Abdullah al Fadhli, MD, Integrated Benefits Projects and supported by Haifa Balfaqih, Investment Program Director

— Nazdaher and GM, Strategic Planning and Technology, beah, the historic event witnessed the presence of some of the highly-esteemed guests including Her Excellencies, leading

businesswomen and attendees from all over the country. Receiving an overwhelming response from the audience, the new Guinness World Record further cements Oman's position on the map as a country filled with unique initiatives and also as a nation raising an empowered generation of women.

Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Darwish said, "With the key message behind this initiative being especially close to our hearts, we are indeed delighted to set this new world record. It not only celebrates Omani women but is a tribute to Her Highness the Honourable Lady Assayida Ahd Abdullah Hamed al Busaidi. Her unwavering faith in the capabilities of the Omani women of today and continuous appreciation of their achievements have served as a constant motivation for all. It has ignited a zeal in every woman to

break the glass ceiling and push the frontiers of women leadership."

"Drawing inspiration from our leaders, MHD-ITICS will continue to act as a catalyst of change, encouraging women's contribution to the Omani economy as well as participating and leading in their respective areas of influence and expertise.

The strong Omani women have displayed courage, creativity, vision and accomplishment and will continue to play an instrumental role in driving transformation," she added.

A keynote speech was delivered by Honourable Lujaina Mohsin Darwish, which was then followed by the much-awaited reveal and showcase of the largest flower word. Another key highlight of the event was the large LED display wall with snippets and pictures of the First Lady of Oman.

Bank Nizwa participates in 6th Scientific Conference at SQU

MUSCAT: Bank Nizwa, the Sultanate of Oman's leading Islamic bank, participated as the main banking sponsor of the Sixth Scientific Conference of the College of Law at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) as part of its relentless effort to support activities aimed at achieving sustainable development goals.

The conference, titled "Towards a Renewed Legislative System to Achieve Oman's Vision 2040", discussed constitutional principles and their role in achieving sustainable development, the system of economic legislation and labour market regulations.

The two-day conference brought together researchers, academics, representatives of



legal and judicial bodies in the country and investment experts.

Commenting on Bank Nizwa's participation, Saif al Rawahi, AGM at Bank Nizwa said, "As an Islamic bank, we uphold the values of social responsibility and sustainability, which are significant pillars of our organisation. Our participation in this conference is an honour as it is a platform for sharing expertise and academic competencies."

NU ranked among the top 3 universities in Oman

MUSCAT: The National University of Science and Technology has made 3 new achievements in higher education and research, whereas the first achievement is that the NU is ranked among the best 101-110 universities at the Arab universities level for 2023 according to the QS World University Rankings and among the top three (3) local (public and private) universities in Oman.

This notwithstanding the highly competitive environment in which universities are ranked and new Arab universities are entered into the Arab Region University Rankings.

The second achievement is that five (5) faculty members have been listed in the global Stanford University list of the top 2% of the world's most academically cited researchers in the Scopus Worldwide Database 2022.

The academicians are Professor Jafar Sadiq Pasha, Dr Okedu



Professor Jafar Sadiq Pasha



Dr Baker Shaheen

Kenneth Eloghene, Dr Shah Alam Khan, Dr Mohamed Jawaad Akhtar, and Dr Baker Shaheen.

In another achievement for the National University, Prekerthi Panikar Head of Professional



Dr Okedu Kenneth Eloghene



Prekerthi Panikar

Development & Humanities, College of Engineering completed the requirements of the Higher Education Academy, UK, and was awarded the Senior Fellow of Higher Education Academy

(SFHEA). Prekerthi is the first SFHEA at the National University of Science and Technology to achieve this notable academic recognition.

These achievements by NU are a result of the hard work exerted by the university's academics, students, and officials in various colleges and disciplines.

They are in line with the main objectives set by the National University, which coincide with the pillars and strategies of the Oman Vision 2040.

Over the past years, the National University has advanced distinguished academic levels of education and research in many disciplines, including engineering, medicine, health sciences, pharmacy, and marine sciences.

This contributed to the University's achievement of a level of excellence that qualifies it to be among the best universities at the local and Arab levels.

Bank Muscat celebrates 15th edition of Partners in Progress with gala event

MUSCAT: In line with its commitment to digital transformation and e-payments, Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman celebrated the 15th edition of its annual "Partners in Progress (PiP)" awards ceremony.

The grand event was held at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre under the auspices of Shaikh Waleed K al Hashar, Chief Executive Officer, Bank Muscat. Members of the bank's Management Team as well as representatives from the top merchant partners of the bank were present at the gala event.

Shaikh Waleed K al Hashar, CEO, presented the PiP awards to senior officials and executives from winning institutions and companies covering a total of 40 categories and congratulated them on their achievement. The winners ranged from ministries and government institutions to companies operating in the automotive, airline, healthcare, telecommunications, tourism and retail sectors.



Nine ministries and government institutions won awards for the "Best Government Institutions" at the 15th "Partners in Progress Awards" event including Royal Oman Police, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, Oman Development Bank, Supreme Judiciary Council and Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

As many as 31 companies won accolades for the Top 40 Merchant of the Year category at the event.

They are as follows: Lulu Hypermarket, Carrefour, Makkah

Hypermarket, Yas Modern Shopping, Regency International Company, Nesto Hypermarkets, Omantel, Ooredoo, Awasr Oman and Partners, Salam Air, Landmark Group, Shell Oman Marketing, Apparel International, Retail Global Fashion, OIFC, ONEIC, Al Shaya Group, Malabar Gold, Al Romaizan Gold and Jewellery, Muscat Pharmacy, Pan Emirates Furniture, Saud Bahwan Automotive, Sharaf DG, Extra, Oman International Container Terminal, Pizza Hut, Taageer Finance, Talabat, Al Qabayel Discount Center, Rivoli & Co and EMC.

Abdulnasser al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking,

extended his best wishes and congratulations to all the winners and reiterated the importance with which Bank Muscat values its partnerships with government institutions and merchant partners.

He added that the bank was looking forward to further enhancing and strengthening its partnerships and wished everyone even greater success in the future. He extended his sincere gratitude and appreciation to the Government of Oman for guiding the digital transformation of the economy and said that Bank Muscat would do its very best to facilitate achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.



ahlibank felicitated for commendable bancassurance sale

MUSCAT: ahlibank's consistent efforts to inspire confidence among its customers with products and services that assure security and safety, was hailed at a formal event organised by Dhofar Insurance, its bancassurance partner.

The function marked the successful two-year partnership between the two and acknowledged the outstanding performance of ahlibank's branches during the period. ahlibank had forged a partnership with Dhofar Insurance in 2020 to offer customers easy access to a range of insurance products, including motor, travel, property and casualty among others, under its bancassurance portfolio.

In compliance with its

industry best practices, the bank set an elevated benchmark to create awareness about its financial solutions with attractive offers to benefit its growing customer base.

Muneer al Balushi, AGM — Head of Retail Distribution, ahlibank, said, "Teamwork is the key to our success. We have, over the last two years of our partnership with Dhofar Insurance, explicitly demonstrated our commitment to raise customers' confidence with financial solutions that are targeted to enhance their personal and professional growth. Our customer-centric approach to banking has been pivotal in shaping and expanding our insurance portfolio to meet specific needs of our customers."



Neobanks see potential for accelerated growth in GCC

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, OCT 29

Neobanks, often referred to as challenger banks operate under the umbrella of mainstream finance but are supercharging specific services long associated with veteran institutions such as retail banks, payment providers, and international wire services.

These financial service providers operate online entirely, with no physical presence apart from office space in the offline world. Estimates now suggest that neobanks in the GCC will account for more than \$2 trillion in market size by 2030 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 53.4%, according to a new report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

Titled, 'Neobanks Set to Surge in GCC's Rapidly Transforming

Finance Industry' the report delves into the changes in the regulatory landscape combined with the mass adoption of the internet and smart technology as being key reasons for this growth spurt.

With GCC regulators indicating their readiness to challenge existing norms and fast-forward the development of policies and frameworks to foster an environment conducive to fintech advances by easing requirements for new market entrants to enter, launch and promote innovation, the sector is expected to surge ahead.

The report shows that neobanks have had and will continue to have, a tremendous impact on consumer finance, the economy, and society at large.

For neobanks, traits that have often defined success include



digital and mobile-centric services, great user experiences, cloud-based platforms with a modular architecture, a lean and agile technology-first culture, and building brands that users have an emotional connection with.

Customer preference for digital

banking over branch banking has come at a time when the internet itself is arguably entering the next stage of its revolutionary life cycle.

The GCC has some of the highest connectivity rates in the world with more than 90% of its population connected to the

Internet far surpassing the global average of 51.4%, and nearly two-thirds of the population is expected to hold 5G connections by 2026.

"Internet-enabled digital finance has emerged at a time when proponents of the change behind the 'new Internet', or Web3, are arguing for user-centric innovation — where the end-user is the ultimate arbiter of a platform's evolution and viability.

And we see this directly translating across neobanks. The sector is expected to be valued at \$3.45 billion by 2026 as a direct result of a boom in growth rates for digital payments and digital remittances," said Bhavya Kumar, Managing Director & Partner, BCG.

Global examples of how neobanks have built such differentiated digital-only

propositions shed important insights into how financial sector market entrants can capture market share in the region. BCG's Fintech Control Tower Report, which monitors and maps the latest trends in the industry, tracks more than 26,000 fintech firms globally and reports a more than 200% increase in the number of neobanks since 2015.

In 2021 alone, equity funding raised by fintech globally amounted to approximately \$131 billion. "Given that traditional branch banking in the GCC provides one of the highest rates of return on equity globally the proliferation of digital-only branchless banking, favoured by a young, highly connected, and digitally savvy population can only enhance the significant returns generated," said Martin Blechta, Principal, BCG.

How to pitch a web3 project to an investor



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

WEB3 IS THE EVOLUTION ON WEB 2.0, WHICH ITSELF WAS AN EVOLUTION OF THE FIRST VERSION OF THE INTERNET, WHEN WEB PAGES WERE MERELY DISPLAYING INFORMATION FOR AN AUDIENCE TO BROWSE.

If you are a startup entrepreneur with a Web3 project that you need to pitch to a Venture Capital investor, it's important to know what the investors are looking for. In this column you can find some tips on how to make your pitch stand out and impress the investors.

Web3 is the evolution on Web 2.0, which itself was an evolution of the first version of the Internet, when web pages were merely displaying information for an audience to browse. Web 2.0 allowed for engagement and interaction with users, such as social media websites.

Web3 aims to empower anyone with actual ownership of digital assets such as personal data. Investors in Web3 tend to look at how your project could improve the current state of the Internet or solve a specific problem.

For instance, if you identified a problem related to the use of data that has yet to be addressed, you could come up with a Web3 solution to address it. Spoiler alert: many have already tried, but yet not succeeded on a global scale.

It is crucial for you to estimate accurately what are your estimated costs and how will you use the funding you receive, so that the investors know what to expect in terms of development and deliverables.

Generally avoid to pitch a "solo" project. Investors are keen

to know who is behind the project and what are their qualifications. Probably this alone is one of the key criteria the defines the difference between a go and a no-go investment.

Eventually think that investors are willing to take a risk by providing you with funds that you will have to manage. In other words, they delegate the risk to you.

So it is very important that you measure success and evaluate what are the potential risks involved in the project. Frequent reporting is usually appreciated in a VC-startup relation. Some project appoint a dedicated person to investor relation, making sure that the chain of communication is always fulfilled.

You might have heard many times other founders pitching their projects as something meant for the long haul, and not a quick "get rich easy" scheme. I personally have heard it so many times that I have become indifferent to it. Anyone can promise anything, but the test of time is the only assessment criteria that matters.

In short, can you articulate what are your plans for long-term sustainability and how will you ensure that your project remains relevant over time? That is what investors are looking for.

If you want to have a quick checklist ready, these are the most common points to address when pitching your project to an investor.

1. Introduce your project and explain the problem you are trying to solve

2. Describe how your project is different or better than existing solutions

3. Outline your business model and how you plan to make money

4. Show that you have a team of experienced developers who are capable of executing on your vision

5. Explain why you need investors and what they can expect to gain from supporting your project Even after receiving rejections, do not give up on your dreams.

With a clear vision, an experienced team, and a sound business model, you have everything you need to succeed.

Merit Trainings merges with Baker Tilly ME

MAI AL GHADHANIYA

MUSCAT, OCT 29

Merit Trainings, an Omani company, signed last week an agreement to merge with Baker Tilly ME, the Middle Eastern branch of the global consulting firm. Through this agreement, Merit Trainings now holds a 50 per cent share of the Baker Tilly Academy in the Middle East, Asia and Africa.

In addition to becoming the managing partner of the Academy and its strategic consulting at a regional level, Merit Trainings is also the managing partner of Baker Tilly in the Sultanate of Oman. The merger agreement was signed under the auspices of Halima bint Rashed al Zariah, Chairperson of the Authority for SME Development.

Abbas al Humaid, CEO of Merit



Trainings, said: "The importance of this merger lies in its capacity to expand the horizons of a small and local Omani company to the outlook of a global company, where I can offer my services to clients around the world. This will allow us to expand our customer base, not only in Oman, but at a global level, and to bring more prominence to Omani companies abroad. Through actions like this, Oman will become a global hub for administrative consulting and

training."

He added: "I started my professional journey in 2003 – around 20 years ago – and I founded Merit Trainings during the COVID pandemic in 2021. I did so in order to send a message to Omani entrepreneurs and business leaders about the importance of expanding their operations globally and benefiting from the knowledge economy, along with the accelerating growth of technological wealth, and the

importance of not remaining limited to local business."

Merit Trainings is specialised in training and consulting and it recently published a book titled "Strategic Management Processes", which was mapped and recognized by the Chartered Management Institute in the UK. This book contains success stories that can inspire Omani business leaders.

It also contains examples that can be emulated and it provides a qualitative jump for the Omani business sector. Baker Tilly is one of the ten largest consulting companies in the world. It specializes in auditing, accounting, taxes, consulting and training. It has more than 40,000 employees in 1,000 offices in 160 countries, with a combined global revenue of \$4.3 billion in 2021.

(Picture credit: Huda al Bahriya)

MSX30 ends week lower by 1.17%

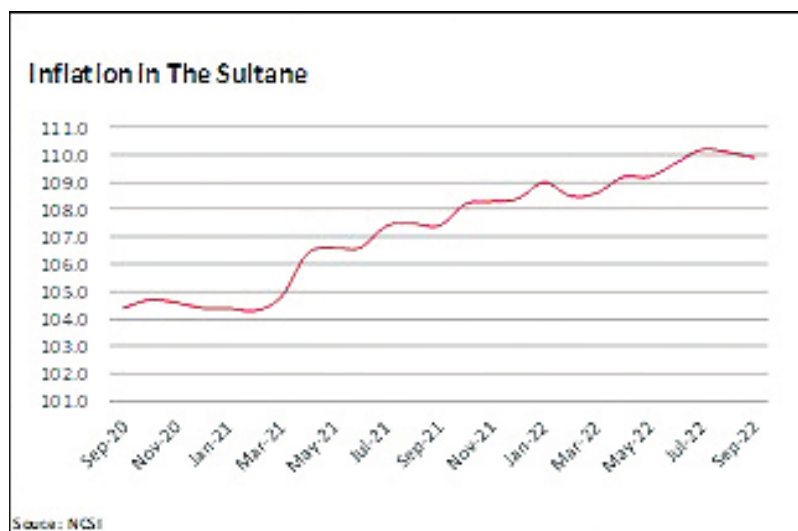
MUSCAT: MSX30 Index ended the week down by 1.17%. The Financial Index ended the week lower by 0.97%. The Services Index and industrial index ended the week down by 0.99% and 1.70% respectively. The MSX Shariah Index declined by 2.53%.

Bank Muscat informed the market that they signed the necessary agreements to sell its 27.29% stake in SICO Capital, based in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to SICO BSC, Bahrain.

All the necessary regulatory approvals for the transaction are now received and that the transfer of the 27.29% shares in SICO Capital has been completed on October 23, 2022. They received around RO 1.95 million as sale consideration. Bank Muscat also acquired a further 2.76% shareholding in SICO BSC for RO 1.95 million and for which the necessary regulatory approvals have been obtained.

Subsequent to these transaction, Bank Muscat has now fully exited its shareholding interest in SICO Capital and increased its stake in SICO BSC to 13.14%, which is designated as an associate in the Bank's financial statements.

Bank Dhofar has announced the successful issuance of RO 115,500,000 Additional Tier 1



perpetual capital securities (the "AT1 Bonds") by way of private placement to investors. The issuance of the AT1 Bonds has received the approvals of both the Capital Market Authority and the Central Bank of Oman. The AT1 Bonds are listed on Bond and Sukuk Market of the Muscat Stock Exchange.

The inflation rate the in the Sultanate of Oman was 2.4% at the end of last September, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The data showed an increase in the prices of the main commodity groups in September 2022 compared to the same month in 2021 — education group by 5.1 per cent, the food and non-alcoholic beverages group by

five percent, the health group by 3.5 per cent, the transportation group by 3.1 per cent, and the furniture, fixtures and equipment group household and regular household maintenance by 1.7 per cent, restaurants, and hotels group by 1.7 per cent, culture, and entertainment group by 1.6 per cent, miscellaneous goods, and services group by 1.6 per cent, clothing, and footwear group by 1.2 per cent, housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels group by 0.3 per cent.

The communications group decreased by 0.1 per cent. Value of traded property in Oman declined by 21% in September 2022 to RO 246.5 million compared to RO 311 million in September 2021.

Traded value of mortgage contracts went up by 32% to RO 154 million compared to RO 116 million in same period last year.

Traded value of sale contracts declined by 53% to RO 92 million compared to RO 193 million YoY. Number of properties issued in September decreased by 9% to 21,353 compared to 23,499 in September 2021.

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority signed a memorandum of cooperation with the Muscat Stock Exchange regarding the listing of small and medium enterprises in the third and then secondary market, according to the regulations in force and providing the necessary qualification, data and information related to enterprises for listing in the stock exchange.

The memorandum aims to empower small and medium enterprises and push them to be eligible for listing on the Muscat Stock Exchange for trading, buying and selling securities and financial instruments, in addition to spreading and raising awareness among entrepreneurs of the importance of putting their enterprises in the stock market and introducing them to potential opportunities.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

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Is she the youngest female paraglider in the world?

By Baraah Al-Mujaini

Raghad Alkhabani started paragliding when she was 5 years old. Now at 11, she's mastered many of the techniques and has been flying on her own confident enough to make a safe landing every time.

Throughout these years, Raghad has been practising with her father and her parents massively supported her.

As she was embraced and raised within a family that encourages sport in general, and paragliding in particular, she decided, and her elder brother too, who is 13, to practice paragliding seriously. Especially due to the fact that Raghad's father is the founder of the Al Dhahirah Governorate team for paragliding amateurs, and who is also a credited

international trainer in this kind of sport.

"She joined paragliding mainly because she had the deep desire to master it", her father said.

However, Raghad has faced many obstacles on her way, and still facing lots of ups and downs, yet she and her parents always do their best to overcome all of these challenges. One of the most critical problems Raghad faced was the lack of a certain paragliding engine that suits her age, yet, her father managed to seek industries that specialised in these engines and requested a customised engine for Raghad's age and weight.

"I can vividly remember the first time I flew alone, I was the captain, for the first time, and not my father. I felt over the moon. What was concerning me at that time

was only the time of landing, since it is a very critical phase and requires a very qualified person" Raghad said.

From Raghad's perspective, for those who would like to try paragliding, there are certain qualifications, some of which are the courage and deep desire to do so.

This sport has gained somehow a negative reputation, in the sense that it is risky and limited to amateurs; However, Raghad stated that it is not risky as long as the person has the appropriate equipment and courage.

"Currently I am not thinking about joining international competitions, I do need to practice more and master this kind of paragliding. I prefer to participate first in local competitions and events and then broaden my scope regionally and

internationally", Raghad added.

On Saudi National Day, Raghad celebrated in her unique way, by hoisting the Saudi flag while practising paragliding. Her way of celebration goes viral through different social media platforms, which has impressed people from different parts and locally and regionally.

Raghad aims to be known globally as a paragliding armature, the environment and family that surrounded her played a crucial role in enhancing her talent and her passion for paragliding.

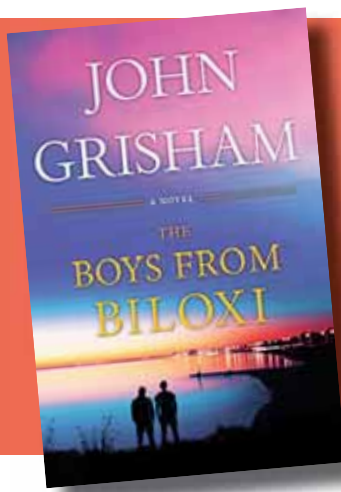
"Thanks to everyone who has been supporting me. And a special thanks to my beloved country, Sultanate of Oman, for embracing kids' interests and helping them reach their dreams regardless of their backgrounds, gender, or age", Raghad said.

READ

THE BOYS FROM BILOXI

BY JOHN GRISHAM

Two childhood friends follow in their fathers' footsteps, which puts them on opposite sides of the law.



TRAVEL TALES

Flocks of sheep are herded through the city centre of Madrid. Shepherds guided a flock of around 1,100 sheep and 200 goats through the streets of Madrid today in defence of ancient grazing and migration rights increasingly threatened by urban sprawl. — AFP



MOVIE TIME

Bollywood actors Varun Dhawan and Kriti Sanon pose for pictures during the song launch of their upcoming Hindi language film 'Bhediya' in Mumbai. — AFP





Manga mindset: Japan's biggest 'One Piece' fans

SHOHEI SATO'S DEVOTION to the pirate manga "One Piece" culminated in a wedding themed on the series, and he's not the only superfan obsessed with its intricate plots and swashbuckling characters.

The Japanese comic-book saga began 25 years ago and is one of the biggest-selling mangas of all time, with more than 500 million copies sold globally.

It follows straw hat-wearing Monkey D. Luffy and his team as they hunt for treasure, and has grown into a sprawling cultural franchise -- now riding even greater waves of popularity thanks to a new hit film and an upcoming live-action Netflix series.

Since childhood, 29-year-old Sato estimates he has spent "well over 10 million yen (\$67,000 at current rates), if not 20 million" amassing merchandise and crisscrossing Japan to attend "One Piece" events.

So the office worker's friends weren't surprised when he and his bride Junna had a pirate-ship cake at their wedding in July and posed for photos beside a giant poster of Luffy and his gang in formal attire.

"They told me, 'Shohei, it was so you,'" Sato told AFP at his home in Tokyo, where plush toys of the reindeer-like character Chopper sit next to bookshelves packed with "One Piece" volumes.

"I've lived my whole life alongside 'One Piece', so I wanted my wedding to honour it."

The latest movie in the franchise, "One Piece Film: Red", was released in August and is already Japan's highest-grossing film this year.

Sato has seen it 21 times. The film has also been a hit abroad, especially in France, while fans came out in costume for a huge Times Square ad campaign ahead of the US release in November.

- KNOWLEDGE KING -

Inspiring dialogue, clever foreshadowing and relatable characters -- author Eiichiro Oda is said to shed tears as he draws them crying -- are often cited by "One Piece" superfans as the reason for their infatuation.

The manga's plots are so intricate that publisher Shueisha holds



a yearly quiz in which tens of thousands of fans compete to become its "knowledge king".

Sato once came in 10th, winning a golden trophy.

Another regular contestant, whose record is 15th place, is a systems engineer who goes by the online moniker Arimo.

Every night, after tucking his son into bed, the 32-year-old reads "One Piece" in his study, which is decorated with illustrations from the series.

Even the walls of Arimo's toilet are plastered with pages from the manga, and the geography-lover has crafted his own globe to map the islands and oceans explored by Luffy.

"The 'One Piece' world is so meticulously thought-out, I sometimes feel like there's truly an alternative universe like this somewhere," Arimo said.

"One Piece" is serialised in the

weekly Shonen Jump magazine, which is aimed at teenage boys.

But its exaggerated humour, adrenalised action scenes and hundreds of varied characters appeal to a far broader readership.

- 'ONE PIECE IS MY ENERGY'-

Natsumi Takezawa, 34, said she had "forgotten 'One Piece' is supposed to be a boy's manga", because it "strikes a chord with all generations".

She works part-time and reads "One Piece" for a little relaxation after picking up her five-year-old daughter from nursery, making dinner, bathing and playing with her, before finally putting her to bed.

"Without 'One Piece', I might feel drained", she told AFP.

"I might be too exhausted by chores to do anything but sleep. That's all my life could've been



about. 'One Piece' is my energy."

Takezawa says the manga has even helped her with grief.

Seeing the bawling Luffy realise "I still have my friends" after the death of his brother resonated deeply after she lost a close friend this year.

"What kind of experience does a person have to go through to be able to draw such a powerful scene?" she said.

The "One Piece" saga entered its final arc in July.

Oda said in 2019 that he wants to wrap up the story "within five years", technically leaving little time until its conclusion.

Sato thinks "another seven to eight years" would be a reasonable bet, however.

"One Piece' is part of my life now, so I definitely want to see it through to the end," he said.

"Until then, I refuse to die".

— AFP

CHANGING WORLD

T-rex in Singapore as experts decry 'harmful' auctions



DINOSAUR FANS GOT a glimpse of a Tyrannosaurus rex skeleton as it went on display in Singapore Friday before an auction next month, as experts slammed the big-money bone trade as "harmful to science".

The 1,400-kilo frame, composed of about 80 bones, will be the first T-rex skeleton auctioned in Asia, according to Christie's, which has not given an estimate for the lot.

Dubbed Shen, meaning god-like, it will be on display for three days before being shipped to Hong Kong to be sold in November.

"None of the 20 T-Rex that exist in the world is owned by either an Asian institution or an Asian collector," said Francis Belin, president of Christie's Asia Pacific.

"We really wish that Shen will find a new home amongst our Asian collectors here."

The adult dino, which stands 4.6 metres tall and 12 metres long, is thought to be male. It was excavated from private land in the Hells Creek Formation in Montana in the United States in 2020.

"I've never seen a real-life fossil before... It makes me feel in awe because it's quite majestic," said Lauren Lim, 33, who went to view the exhibit.



-- 'BAD NEWS FOR SCIENCE' --

Shen -- which lived during the Cretaceous period about 67 million years ago -- is not the only dino auctioned in recent years.

In July, the first skeleton of a Gorgosaurus went under the hammer for \$6.1 million in New York. Another T-rex, "Stan", was sold for \$31.8 million by Christie's in 2020.

But the trend for prehistoric auction lots has some experts concerned.

"It's a sad thing that dinosaurs are becoming collectible toys for the oligarch class, and I can only hope this fad ends soon," said Steve Brusatte, a paleontologist at the University of Edinburgh.

He told AFP the trend was "bad news for science", and the remains belonged in museums.

Thomas Carr, a paleontologist from the US, described such sales as being "unquestionably harmful to science" even if the skeletons had been studied before being sold.

"A secure, permanent collection ensures that the observations that a scientist makes of a fossil can be tested and replicated -- and a commercially held fossil has no such assurance," Carr said.

Belin, of Christie's, said he hoped a public institution would buy Shen, and added that the whole skeleton had been fully researched, recorded in 3D and "all the elements of the skeleton will be made available for the public to research".

"We strongly hope that the new owner, whether it's an institution or private, will ensure that it's being seen by the public," Belin said. — AFP



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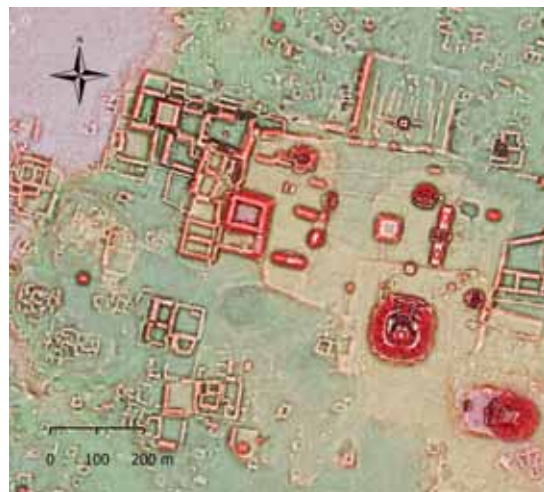
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AROUND THE WORLD

DISCOVERY

Ancient Maya city in Mexico may rank as most crowded, new data shows



A LASER-POWERED study of the sprawling metropolis of Calakmul in southern Mexico offers tantalising new evidence that it may have been the most crowded ancient Maya urban center during the civilisation's classical peak some 1,300 years ago.

The new LIDAR study announced late Wednesday by Mexican antiquities institute INAH covers the jungle-covered ruins of once-mighty Calakmul, located in the central lowlands of the Yucatan peninsula near the Guatemalan border.

Calakmul thrived during the Maya's classic-era zenith from around 250-900 AD, boasting massive pyramids, palace and temple complexes, only a tiny portion of which have been excavated.

At its peak, it was ruled by fearsome Snake dynasty rulers who jostled for power with other kingdoms at a time of major human achievements in writing, math and art throughout the Maya world in present-day Central America and southern Mexico.

Kathryn Reese-Taylor, a University of Calgary scholar affiliated with the LIDAR study, explained in a webcast that new maps of the site reveal numerous previously unknown buildings showing that Calakmul was denser than even Tikal, the ancient Maya metropolis located in northern Guatemala long thought to be the civilisation's biggest urban center.

LIDAR mapping technology uses planes to shoot pulses of light into dense forest canopies, allowing researchers to peel away vegetation and reveal ancient structures below.

Reese-Taylor noted the new preliminary maps of the barely three-month old data show extensive residential apartment complexes clustered around temples and possible markets.

She added that by around 700 A.D., Calakmul's physical footprint equaled that of modern-day Amsterdam or Brussels.

Previous estimates suggested the city's population likely reached some 50,000 inhabitants, but the new study could force a recalculation.

INAH said in a statement that the sheer density of the buildings point to a big population and suggest that all available land was modified by the Maya, including previously unknown water canals, terraces and dams likely designed to protect water supplies and boost farmland.

"There are so many details, big and small structures," said Maya specialist Felix Kupprat at Mexico's National Autonomous University, also part of the study team.

INAH added that the new imaging will better inform conservation as well as future field archeology at the site, which will likely see more tourists.

The study comes as Mexico's government has fast-tracked the construction of a multi-billion dollar tourist train to boost visits and promote development across the archaeologically rich but poor Yucatan region. — Reuters

ENTERTAINMENT

Kanye says lost \$2bn over anti-Semitic rants



KANYE WEST LOST \$2 billion in a single day, he said on Thursday, as business partners rushed to dump the rapper in the wake of a series of anti-Semitic outbursts.

The music and fashion mogul has seen lucrative commercial tie-ups shelved as companies including Adidas and Gap took fright at comments dubbed hate speech by activists.

"I lost 2 billion dollars in one day. And I'm still alive. This is love speech," West, who is also known as Ye, wrote on Instagram in a post that had been liked over a million times.

"I still love you. God still loves you. The money is not who I am. The people is who I am," the post said, naming Emanuel Ari, the CEO of entertainment company Endeavor, who had urged companies to sever ties with the rapper.

German sportswear giant Adidas said on Tuesday it was ending its partnership with West after his "unacceptable, hateful and dangerous" comments.

Adidas also said it would end production of the highly successful "Yeezy" line designed together with West and "stop all payments to Ye and his companies".

The move is expected to lop around a quarter of a billion dollars off Adidas's bottom line this year alone.

West, who is open about his struggles with bipolar disorder, has long been outspoken, having half-heartedly run for US president in 2020 and then thrown his weight behind Donald Trump.

His willingness to go beyond the pale is a double-edged sword for business partners, who have benefited from his high profile and his frequent media appearances, but who risk being tarnished by association.

While they weathered previous comments, including when West called slavery a "choice", things began to unravel this month with his appearance at a Paris fashion show wearing a shirt emblazoned "White Lives Matter", a slogan created as a backlash to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Days later he was temporarily locked out of Twitter and Instagram for threatening to "Go death con 3 on JEWISH PEOPLE", using a misspelled reference to US military readiness.

That sparked alarm, including apparently from his ex-wife Kim Kardashian, who wrote on

SCIENCE

Bees shown to 'count' from left to right for first time



BEEES ORDER NUMBERS in increasing size from left to right, a study has shown for the first time, supporting the much-debated theory that this direction is inherent in all animals including humans.

Western research has found that even before children learn to count, they start organising growing quantities from left to right in what has been called the "mental number line".

However the opposite direction has been found in people from cultures that use an Arabic script which reads from right to left.

"The subject is still being debated between those who think the mental number line has an innate character and those who say it is cultural," said Martin Giurfa, a professor at the Research Centre on Animal Cognition at Paul Sabatier University in Toulouse, France.

There has been recent evidence that newborn babies and some vertebrate animals, including primates, organise numbers from left to right.

Giurfa led a study, published last week in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS), aiming to find out if the same holds true for insects, via an experiment on bees.

"It has already been shown that bees are able to count — at least up to five," Giurfa told AFP.

They also process information differently in the two hemispheres of their brains, he added. This trait they seem to share with humans, and is thought to be a potential reason for the "the existence of the mental number line," Giurfa said.

A NUMBERS GAME

For the experiment, the researchers had individual honeybees fly into the first of two compartments of a wooden box.

Sugar-water was then used to entice the bees to select a number affixed to the middle of the back of the second compartment.

The number stayed the same for each individual bee, but varied randomly across the group from between one, three or five, in shapes of circles, squares or triangles.

Once the bees were trained to fly towards their set number, the researchers removed it and put another number on both sides of the second compartment, leaving the middle blank. They then removed the sugar-water reward and observed which way the bees went.

For example, if the bee was trained to select the number three, and was now faced with two number ones on either side and nothing in the middle, which way did they fly?

Around 80 per cent of the time the bees chose the option on the left — the "correct choice" if brains order numbers from left to right, Giurfa said.

But if those same bees were given two number fives to choose from, they went right, again supporting the mental number line.

And bees trained to go for number one went to the right for a number three, while bees targeting a five went left for their three.

So if animals do in fact think of numbers from left to right, why is this not true for all humans?

Giurfa said it was more complicated than directly choosing between nature and nurture.

Even if the mental number line "is innate, culture can still modify it, even reverse it — or on the contrary accentuate it," he said.

Bees, on the other hand, have to stick to what nature dictates. — AFP



Yemeni farmers turn to planting wheat as prices bite

SOME YEMENI farmers have turned to planting their own wheat as global disruptions dent imports and send prices soaring in Yemen where a seven-year conflict has pushed people deeper into poverty and left millions hungry.

Farmer Khaled Maasar said most Yemenis cannot afford foreign wheat with prices rising to some 20,000 riyals, equivalent to \$33. Food price inflation had already doubled in just two years in some part of the country.

"If the farmer works in the field and this gets him an income — then this is a great blessing. This is what is pushing people back to farming wheat," he said.

The conflict in Yemen that began in 2014 and divided the country between the Houthis-led movement and the Saudi-backed government has wrecked the economy and basic infrastructure.

In the background, Yemeni women knelt to gather wheat in fields in Hamedan district.

"As a result of the Ukrainian crisis, people who never planted crops before have now started to cultivate (wheat) in their lands," said farmer Abdo Mohsen Sinan. "Now people are making use of their lands, which is better than relying on imports."

Large-scale local production of wheat in Yemen is challenging as irrigation water is scarce, and infrastructure to make use of rainfall is lacking.

In 2021, Yemen produced around 250,000 tonnes of wheat. The government launched a project to add acres for wheat planting.

"The Ministry of Agriculture must support farmers with seeds and grains, as well as with wells and dams," said Saleh Hababi, who works as a vendor in the Houthi-held capital, Sanaa.

"This will increase local output and we won't need to rely on imports at all."

— Reuters

