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MAX VERSTAPPEN TAKES MEXICO GP POLE POSITION



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OMAN CHROMITE INVESTS IN LOW-CARBON FERROCHROME PLANT IN SUHAR



P20

ESO MARKS OMAN TREE DAY WITH A PUBLICATION CELEBRATING FRANKINCENSE



MUSCAT

INCENTIVES FOR SELF-EMPLOYED

The National Employment Programme (NEP) organised an introductory workshop on self-employment in Oman. A number of government and private establishments took part in the workshop, held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. The initiative seeks to provide a set of incentives for self-employed persons. Legal and regulatory frameworks have been developed for this purpose, including funding services, platforms showcasing private business, accounts management services and social protection. **DETAILS ON P3**

NEW DELHI

68 DEAD IN INDIA BRIDGE COLLAPSE

At least 68 people were killed on Sunday after a 100-year-old suspension bridge collapsed in India, a senior official said. “So far 68 bodies have been recovered. The rescue operation is going,” Brijesh Merja, a minister in the state government of Gujarat where the incident happened, said. Local media quoted officials as saying that as many as 500 people were on the Morbi bridge performing rituals for a major religious festival when it gave way.



INSIDE



Delegated by HM, Sayyid Asaad to attend Arab Summit

MUSCAT: Delegated by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, will leave on Monday for the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to chair the Sultanate of Oman's delegation

at the 31st Arab Summit, to be held in the capital Algiers on November 1 and 2. HH Sayyid Asaad will be accompanied by an official delegation comprising Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Justice and Legal Affairs, Dr Said bin Mohammed



al Saqri, Minister of Economy, Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs, Abdullah bin Nasser al Rahbi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Egypt and its Permanent Representative to the Arab League, Saif bin Nasser al Badai, Ambassador of Oman to Algeria, and the two advisers at

the office of HH Sayyid Asaad. The 22-member Arab League held its last summit in 2019, prior to both the coronavirus pandemic. Arab League chief Ahmed Aboul Gheit on Friday called for an “integrated Arab vision” to tackle the region's pressing food security challenges. — ONA

Aga Khan Awards for Music to inspire future generations

WINNERS OF AGA KHAN AWARD FOR MUSIC FETED

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
[@zainabnasseri](#)

The winners of the Aga Khan Music Awards were feted on Sunday at the Royal Opera House in Muscat in the presence of a gathering of high-level attendees and a large number of national and international media representatives.

His Highness Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said presided over the award distribution and concluding ceremony of the second edition of the Aga Khan Award for Music (2020-2022) at the House of Musical Arts in the Royal Opera House Muscat.

AWARD WINNERS
The winners of the second cycle of the Aga Khan Award for Music were awarded to Avil Bokum from Mali, Asin Khan Langa from India, Compan Mint Aal Warkan from Mauritania, and Daoud Khan Sadouzai from Afghanistan, Benny Chandra Rainey from Indonesia, Shomik Datta from the United Kingdom, Yahya Hussain Abdullah from Tanzania, Yasmin Shah Hosseini from Iran, and Zarsanga from Pakistan.



As for the winners of the second cycle of the Aga Khan Special Awards for Music are Dilshad Khan from India, Gulshan Ensemble from Iran, Sin Zuhour from Pakistan, Dhul-Kifl, Baram Ensemble from Indonesia, Seyyed Muhammad Mousavi and Mahor from Iran, while Omani artist Muslim bin Ahmed al Kathiri

was awarded a special award for excellence in Omani Musical Heritage Service. The ceremony included a live performance of musical pieces and a solo performance by the winning musicians. In her concluding speech, Fairouz Nishanova, Director of Aga Khan Music Programme, extended a warm wel-

come to all who gathered for the awards celebration. “I would like to express deepest gratitude to the Sultanate of Oman for hosting this awards ceremony. I would like to thank the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, the Royal Opera House Muscat and its House of Musical Arts, and Royal Oman Symphony.” **TURN TO P2**

Oman voices sympathy with South Korea over crush victims

MUSCAT/SEOUL: The Sultanate of Oman has expressed sympathy and commiseration with the Republic of Korea over Saturday's stampede in the capital Seoul. In a statement issued here on Sunday, the Foreign Ministry offered sincere condolences to the Korean government, people and families of the victims. It wished the injured a speedy recovery. Meanwhile, foreign leaders expressed condolences over the deadly crowd surge in Seoul's Itaewon district, with more than 20 foreign nationals from 15 countries among those killed in the crush in a popular nightspot. South Korea's President Yoon Suk-Yeol declared a period of national mourning on Sunday after the Halloween crush on Saturday night killed some 153 people. South Korea's foreign ministry put the total at 26 foreign nationals killed from 15 countries. A ministry official said the dead included people from China, Iran and Russia. Two Japanese nationals, a woman in her twenties and another woman between the age of 10 and 19, were also confirmed to have died in the crush, an official at Japan's foreign ministry said. **SEE ALSO P6**

Millions at risk of climate displacement in Middle East

CAIRO: Little rainfall, aggressive heatwaves and worsening drought make the Middle East the most water-stressed region in the world, with climate change threatening to displace millions of people. Hussein Abu Saddam, head of the farmers' syndicate in Egypt which is hosting the COP27 global climate summit in November, said he is already witness to a climate-induced exodus from the countryside. Agriculture in Egypt — “one of the most arid countries in

the world” — has grown even less profitable because of new climate-linked hazards such as “the appearance of new parasites”, he said. “Young people from rural areas are migrating abroad or to big cities to work in industry.” According to the UN refugee agency (UNHCR), “roughly 90 per cent of refugees come from countries that are the most vulnerable and least ready to adapt to the impacts of climate change”. “If people can't farm, if people



Little rainfall, aggressive heatwaves and worsening drought make the Middle East the most water-stressed region in the world. — AFP

can't work, if people can't find food, they have few alternatives to displacement,” Amy Pope, deputy director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said. In 2021, natural disasters forced “nearly three million people” to leave their homes in Africa and the Middle East, she said. “And the situation is only going to get worse.” By 2060, Egypt's already stretched agricultural sector could shrink by as much as 47 per cent, researchers predict. — AFP



WINNERS OF AGA KHAN AWARD FOR MUSIC HONoured



FROM PAGE1

SPECIAL MENTION

She made a special mention of the high-level of programmes being held at the opera house, orchestra and those who conducted the programmes, Maestro Hamdan al Shaely, for great spirit of collaboration.

“Judging by last night’s concert, we couldn’t have hoped for a clearer demonstration of what Prince Ayn Aga Khan described “the power of music to affect our emotions and our dreams.”

The musicians gathered, according to her, are exceptional in so many ways.

“It is truly a privilege to be able to recognise and support the work of such outstanding musicians and creators. For this magnificent gift that allows the music awards Programme to affect and change so many lives, our deepest gratitude to the Aga Khan Family.”

Peni Candra Rini, an Indonesian composer, improviser, vocalist and educator, termed the award an honour and said, “I’m blessed to win this award. It is a big honour not only for me but also for my culture and tradition.

This proves that traditions can grow and liked by those who may not even know about them. It is meaningful that our musical traditions are becoming popular”

TRADITIONAL SINGER

The musician pointed out that she composed pieces utilising her roots, and she was a traditional singer.

She was born into a family of traditional artists and musicians in East Java and studied gamelan music and performance practice (karawitan) at the Institute Seni Indonesia Surakarta, Central Java. Peni currently teaches there in the Department of Karawitan. She has created new musical works for the stage, dance, film, and theatre, combining her deep knowledge of Indonesian performing art, in particular, the art of the ‘pesindhen’ (female solo singer in a gamelan ensemble), with innovative musical projects around the world that represent a new vision for Javanese music.

The Turkish musician and oud player, Yurdal Tokcan, who is a member of Master Jury, said: “Aga

Khan Award for Music is very important for the cultural musical heritage. The big Islamic geography is unique in terms of arts and music. Through my experience as a jury, I realised that many musicians are very pure and seek to preserve their heritage through music. Out of hundreds of nominees, we select young talented musicians who are not well-known people and show their musical legacy. It is important to support them and help.”

He spoke about the Turkish music legacy, saying, “We have a rich heritage of music. During the Ottoman Empire, the Sultan supported cultural activities and invited the musician to the palace. It was a prosperous period where there were many composed pieces of Turkish music. That made the theoretical base for the music.”

Tokcan is known not only for his mastery of the oud, but for his explorations of intercultural composition and performance in the domains of both “East-West” and “East-East” collaborations, in particular through his adaptation of oud technique to the fretless guitar.

Stamps, symposium mark hosting of Aga Khan Awards ceremony

ZAINAB AL NASSRI
@zainabalnasseri

A symposium on the winners’ of architecture award and the release of postage stamps to commemorate the Aga Khan Awards ceremony marked the second day of the prestigious event on Sunday.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture Winners’ Seminar was held at Al Bustan Palace Hotel under the auspices of HH Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University (SQU). Those who attended the event included national and international experts, academics and architects.

The seminar began with inaugurating a stamp of the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) which symbolises Oman in the fields of architecture and music. ROHM was chosen due to its historic hosting of the Aga Khan Awards for Architecture and Music (2020-2022).

The stamp of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture holds the number 15 and it is considered the second stamp for the Aga Khan Award for Music.

Afterwards a film was presented on the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, highlighting the award’s focus on extraordinary architecture in terms of contemporary design and social aspects which enhance the society, repair historic sites, reuse resources, design natural scenery and improve the environment.

Shaikha Mai Mohammed al Khalifa, Chairperson of the Arab Regional Centre



The Aga Khan Award for Architecture does not felicitate architectural engineers only, but rather includes other parties involved such as municipalities, construction workers, clients, artisans and engineers



for World Heritage Board of Directors, gave a statement in which she highlighted the tasks of the Steering Committee of the Aga Khan Award (2020-2022).

She said that the Jury panel for the current cycle of the awards comprises architectural engineers, restoration specialists, artists and intellectuals from all over the world. The panel reviewed 436 submitted projects.

Shaikha Mai pointed out that six projects were chosen from the shortlisted 20 projects, which meant the process of choosing the winners was not easy.

Shaikha Mai told reporters that she is delighted by the fact that the award’s ceremony is held in the Sultanate of Oman. Oman, she added, is a beautiful country which embraces heritage and architecture.

The seminar discussed a spectrum of topics, namely infrastructure, introductions about the winning projects and the social effects of architecture, among others.

The award accords special attention to building blueprints which innovatively utilise local resources and technology.

The award does not felicitate architectural engineers only, but rather includes other parties involved such as municipalities, construction workers, clients, artisans and engineers.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), which operates in 30 countries with the aim of ameliorating livelihood and offering opportunities for people of all backgrounds.



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NEP launches self-employment initiative



MUSCAT: The National Employment Programme (NEP) organised an introductory workshop on self-employment in Oman. A number of government and private establishments took part in the workshop, held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

The initiative seeks to provide a set of incentives for self-employed persons. Legal and regulatory frameworks have been developed for this purpose, including funding services, platforms showcasing private business, accounts management services and social protection. The aim is to achieve sustainability and growth for self-employment ventures.

The workshop was held under the auspices of Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of

Economy, who said, in an opening speech, that self-employment is gaining momentum due to development in information and communications technologies, and that it accounts for more than \$1 trillion worldwide.

Meanwhile, Dr Mansoor bin Talib al Hinai, Chairman of Oman Authority for Public Services Regulation and Supervisor General of the NEP, said that the self-employment initiative constitutes a cornerstone for the development of sustainable solutions in the management of employment in Oman.

A visual display featuring the experience of young people in the field of self-employment was screened during the workshop. They spoke about the advantages and challenges of self-employment.

Projects to boost food security

KABEER YOUSUF

@kabeeryousef

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR) has announced as many as 107 food security initiatives currently in different stages of implementation as part of the Oman's Vision 2040 initiative.

The new initiatives include the establishment of a tissue culture project, which provides an opportunity to produce plants and seedlings with tissue culture techniques, the establishment of central slaughterhouses for the poultry sector, and a complementary initiative to provide the poultry sector's value chain.

The projects would have in-country value (ICV) with the scope of employment opportunities and increased business.

Speaking to the Observer on the sidelines of the Oman-India Business Forum at the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), Redha Bait Farg (pictured), Director General of Agricultural and Fisheries Marketing at the ministry, said that these projects would add value to the country's competitiveness in attracting foreign investments.

"These projects, which the ministry is implementing as part of the Oman Vision 2040 aim to fulfil its role in achieving the common goal of self-sufficiency



and ICV besides attracting more FDI to the Sultanate of Oman," he said.

The Sultanate of Oman has achieved a self-sufficiency ratio of 90 per cent in milk production and 65 per cent in eggs production; vegetables 77 per cent; 60 per cent in poultry; 53 per cent in red meat; and 26 per cent in fruits, while self-sufficiency rates in dates cultivation touched 100 per cent and fish 137 per cent.

One of the other major projects of the ministry is developing and operating the sea fishing port in Liwa and Sur. The project aims to improve and invest in the infrastructure of fishing ports with additional services. The fourth initiative is establishing factories to produce industrial salt, which aims to extract salt from the water



returned through a desalination process. Lastly, the MoAFWR will also use treated wastewater in the lands around the plants to take advantage of excess treated wastewater at sewage plants in various provinces of Oman.

"The Sultanate of Oman has all the ingredients that make it an attractive environment for investment in many sectors for

many factors. One of them is the country's strategic geographical location, political and economic stability, attractive opportunities for investment, legal and institutional framework, a world-class infrastructure, developed banking sector, and above all, adequate infrastructure in Agri and fisheries sectors."

He further added that the ministry has been keen on allocating lands for investment for food security projects, determining the crop composition of each site to be offered for auction or direct attribution, determining the cost of production inputs, the challenges associated with them, and the proposed solutions for each input for the best results for both domestic and international investors.



Al Kawthar Islamic Shariah Compliant Fund "Value added exposure to GCC Markets"

Board of Director Report For the Quarter ended September 30th, 2022.

Dear Unitholders,

On behalf of the board, I am pleased to present the results of Al Kawthar Fund (Shariah Compliant) for the Quarter ended September 30th, 2022.

The eventful first quarter which started with Russia- Ukraine war and its implications of recession fears (as the FED continued its aggressive strategy of hiking U.S Interest rate for the third consecutive time in order to tame inflation). This continued to weigh on investors' sentiment and the markets across the region. During the quarter, the markets were very volatile, thus, the Fund Manager took a conservative approach to help curtail losses.

Despite the higher volatility in the market, the Fund continues to outperform its benchmark on a YTD basis. Furthermore, the Fund has given an annualized 3-year return of 11.28%. The Fund value at the end of the period was RO. 6.39mn and the Net Asset Value per unit stood at RO 1.157.

Market Performance

Period	Al Kawthar
Last 3 Months 2022	-2.76%
YTD 2022	-0.49%
Full Year 2021	27.32%
Full Year 2020	5.49%
Full Year 2019	7.62%
Last 3 Years Annualized	11.28%

Global markets witnessed volatility and pressure during the quarter as developments on the Russia- Ukraine war are increasing risks of a global recession as inflation hit all-time highs. The regional markets found support from stronger oil prices, however, interest rate hike eroded sentiments. Oil prices witnessed volatility as it hit a low of \$84 before ending the quarter above \$88.

The performance of the GCC was volatile during the quarter, however, it ended on positive note. MSX was the biggest gainer with 9.8% gain, followed by Abu Dhabi and Dubai markets which increased 4.01% and 3.6%. Qatar and Bahrain markets ended

the quarter with 3.0% and 2.3% gain respectively. The Kuwait all shares Index was the biggest loser for the quarter, declining 4.1% , while Saudi declined 1.2% during Q3'2022.

Brief Summary of Accounts

Particulars	9 Months 30 SEP 2022 RO	9 Months 30 SEP 2021 RO
Revenues	193,862	1,665,669
Total Comprehensive Income	(893)	1,527,528
Net Asset Value	6,386,619	6,577,378
Fund Capital	5,521,207	5,407,077
NAV per unit	1.157	1.216

Outlook

The outlook for GCC markets remains challenging. While government budgets are in better standing as a result of higher overall oil prices. Trends in the housing market in Saudi Arabia and government spending in the UAE were also supportive of markets during this period. However, global events have clouded investors due to events ranging from rising rates in the United States to combat inflation, a recessionary outlook in Europe due to the Ukraine-Russia conflict and housing market concerns in China. Hence, we remain cautious of the intense systemic impact of global stress on GCC markets and position the portfolio accordingly to protect capital.

We pay our tributes to His Majesty, Haitham Bin Tarik, for his inspiring leadership and vision that will continue to lead us further on the path to greater prosperity.

On behalf of the members of the Board of Directors, I would like to acknowledge and thank our valued unit holders for their continued support.

Rawan Ahmed Al Said
Chairperson

Interim unaudited statement of financial position as at 30 September 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	30 Sept 2022 Unaudited	31 Dec 2021 Audited	30 Sept 2021 Unaudited
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5,900,515	6,064,160	6,412,812
Receivables	64,975	310,794	30,778
Cash and cash equivalents	588,003	391,954	247,399
Total assets	6,553,493	6,766,908	6,660,989
UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS			
Fund capital	5,521,206	5,408,300	5,407,077
Retained earnings	865,413	1,106,885	1,170,301
Total Unitholders' funds	6,386,619	6,515,185	6,577,378
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	122,048	35,208	40,034
Due to a related party	44,827	218,515	40,247
Total liabilities	166,875	253,723	80,281
TOTAL UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS AND LIABILITIES	6,553,494	6,766,908	6,657,659
Net asset value per unit	1.157	1.205	1.216

Interim unaudited statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine month period ended 30 September 2022 (Expressed in Omani Rials)

	Three-month period from 1 July 2022 to 30 Sept 2022 Unaudited	Nine-month period ended 30 Sept 2022 Unaudited	Three-month period from 1 July 2021 to 30 Sept 2021 Unaudited	Nine-month period ended 30 Sept 2021 Unaudited
INCOME				
Dividend income from financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	38,963	175,410	47,558	176,813
Realised gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	7,562	441,148	312,430	632,843
Unrealised (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(182,748)	(425,209)	120,368	849,740
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain	3,018	2,513	(425)	6,273
	(133,205)	193,862	479,931	1,665,669
EXPENSES				
Management, performance, custodian and fund administration fees	(35,379)	(108,838)	(34,754)	(95,040)
General and administrative expenses	(12,684)	(85,917)	(17,181)	(43,101)
	(48,063)	(194,755)	(51,935)	(138,141)
Net (loss)/ profit for the period	(161,268)	(893)	427,996	1,527,528
(Loss)/earnings per unit	(0.033)	(0.000)	0.079	0.283

Managed By:
Oman National Investment Development Company SAOC
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TANMIA GCC Diversified Equity Fund (TATHMEER)

Board of Director Report For the Quarter ended September 30, 2022.

Dear Unitholders,

On behalf of the board, I am pleased to present the report for the quarter ended 30th September 2022 of TANMIA GCC Diversified Equity Fund (TATHMEER).

The eventful first quarter which started with Russia- Ukraine war and its implications of recession fears (as the FED continued its aggressive strategy of hiking U.S Interest rate for the third consecutive time in order to tame inflation). This continued to weigh on investors' sentiment and the markets across the region. During the quarter, the markets were very volatile, thus, the Fund Manager took a conservative approach to help curtail losses.

Despite the higher volatility in the market, the Fund continues to outperform its benchmark on a YTD basis. Furthermore, the Fund has given an annualized 3-year return of 13.36%. The Fund value at the end of the period was USD 22.74mn and the Net Asset Value per unit stood at USD 1.263.

Performance

Period	TANMIA GCC Fund
Last 3 Months	-0.89%
YTD 2022	2.30%
Full Year 2021	32.90%
Full Year 2020	2.56%
Full Year 2019	11.87%
Last 3 Years Annualized	13.36%

Global markets witnessed volatility and pressure during the quarter as developments on the Russia- Ukraine war are increasing risks of a global recession as inflation hit all-time highs. The regional markets found support from stronger oil prices, however, interest rate hike eroded sentiments. Oil prices witnessed volatility as it hit a low of \$84 before ending the quarter above \$88.

Unaudited Interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine period ended 30 September 2022 (Expressed in US Dollars)

	Nine-month period ended 30 Sept 2022 Unaudited	Year ended 31 Dec 2021 Audited	Nine-month period ended 30 Sept 2021 Unaudited
INCOME			
Dividend income on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	702,365	648,837	608,644
Realised gain on sale of financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	1,322,726	4,253,414	3,077,504
Unrealised (loss)/gain on financial assets at fair value through profit or loss	(841,388)	2,568,874	3,499,743
Foreign exchange (loss)/gain	(61,103)	(40,075)	(20,437)
Finance & Other income	2,713	1,288	624
	1,125,334	7,424,338	7,164,078
EXPENSES			
Management and custodian fees	(332,110)	(427,121)	(318,495)
General and administration	(138,413)	(163,868)	(123,059)
	(470,522)	(590,989)	(441,554)
Net profit/(loss) for the period/year before taxation	654,811	6,833,349	6,722,524
Taxation	-	-	-
Net profit/(loss) for the period	654,811	6,833,349	6,722,524
Earnings per unit	0.04	0.34	0.33

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Japan Self-Defense Force band to perform in Oman



LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

The Japan Self-Defense Force (JSDF) band is making their first debut in the Sultanate of Oman to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Around 50 military personnel of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, Western Army Band, will attend the military tattoo 'Military Music: Oman and The World' hosted by the Royal Opera House Muscat in November.

As symbolised by the late prime minister Abe Shinzo's historic visits to the Sultanate of Oman in 2014 and 2020, the bilateral relationship has continuously grown.

The JSDF bands have missions

As symbolised by the late prime minister Abe Shinzo's historic visits to the Sultanate of Oman in 2014 and 2020, the bilateral relationship has continuously grown

that include raising the morale of JSDF personnel, providing music for official military functions and ceremonies, and serving public relations.

Their activities have expanded to the international arena, and they frequently joined military tattoo festivals worldwide. Their high professionalism also provides capacity-building assistance in music education to a military band in the Pacific.

Every three services of JSDF has their bands, and the Western Army Band (WAB), this year's

guest band of the Royal Opera House Muscat event, is the regional army band of the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force. Its area of responsibility is southwest of Japan's major islands called Kyushu and Okinawa. In addition to the above-mentioned missions, the WAB conducts another important operation to bring smiles to local people. Since their area of responsibility is prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods, the band organises concerts for temporarily displaced residents

in a shelter for the purpose of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

The stage at the Royal Opera House Muscat is WAB's first performance overseas, and all band members have been fully devoted and prepared to make Oman's biggest military tattoo successful. November is an important month for Omanis to celebrate their national day, but it is also a month to commemorate JSDF in Japan.

The "Military Music: Oman and The World" will take place at Royal Opera House Muscat from November 3 to 5. Their performance will include drills, singing and Japanese drums, and they will guarantee the audience a night to remember.

OMANI STUDENT WINS FIRST PLACE IN GULF HACKATHON CONTEST



Omani Grade 11 student Budoor bint Abdullah al Yafeiyah won the first place in the Gulf Hackathon competition for employing artificial intelligence in public education. The contest was organised by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (ABEGS) in the Saudi capital Riyadh. – ONA

30 Omani SMEs participate in Riyadh exhibition

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT. 30

With the participation of more than 30 Omani brands, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (Riyada) is organising an exhibition for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The activities of the Omani Small and Medium Enterprises Exhibition were launched in Riyadh Gallery in cooperation with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The Omani participation aims to strengthen trade relations and economic cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, promote and open new broad horizons for small and medium enterprises, and explore opportunities in the Saudi market.

More than 30 Omani small and medium enterprises participated in the exhibition, which continues until today, in addition to participating in the authority's online store.

The exhibition witnessed an impressive turnout of visitors to see Omani products such as ornaments, jewellery, fashion, cosmetics, antiques, gifts, food, creative handicrafts, perfumes and incense

The exhibition is SME Authority's plan to organise external exhibitions to showcase the quality of Omani products and their presence in regional and global markets.

The exhibition witnessed an impressive turnout of visitors to see Omani products such as ornaments, jewellery, fashion, cosmetics, antiques, gifts, food, creative handicrafts, perfumes and incense.

"We thank the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority for providing this opportunity to reach the Saudi market and explore available opportunities.

We consider our participation in the exhibition as positive," said Yaqoub al Rawahi, founder of the Karak Baytna project.

Zwaina al Rashidiya, founder and CEO of the international company for handicraft products Dar Al Harfiya, mentioned that participation in this exhibition allowed her to sign a partnership with Saudi institutions and Saudi entrepreneurs in the field of e-marketing. She said her products witnessed great interest from visitors, with some products being sold out as a result of the wide turnout.

The authority is preparing to participate in the World Travel Market exhibition in London from November 7 to 9. Such foreign exhibitions represent a unique opportunity for Omani small and medium enterprises to build external relations, meet importers and introduce their products. In addition, it is opening a new way for institutions and companies to explore foreign markets and enable them to export their products according to international standards and achieve high sales.



الشركة الوطنية العمانية للهندسة والاستثمار (ش.م.ع.ع)
Oman National Engineering & Investment Co. (S.A.O.G)

Company Report for the Third Quarter ended on 30/09/2022

The company has posted consolidated Profit after Tax of RO 1,581 k for the nine months period ended 30 Sep 2022 versus RO 770 k for Q3 2021.

Profit during current period has improved as compared to previous period. The company is taking many initiatives to improve the margins and diversify the business:

- E-Wallet system implementation is going on and management is targeting to go live at earliest;
- On boarding of multiple major customers is progressing well on different ONEIC channels;
- Cost cutting measures continue to be a priority to improve the performance of the Company;
- EPC is focusing on renewable energy which is expected to add good returns;
- The company has participated in multiple BOO & other new tenders and favorable results are expected in coming periods.

There are factors on the cost front which continue impacting the performance of the company:

- Delayed payment by major clients continue to remain a challenge as it impacts profit margins of the Company;
- Management is in touch with all its customers and taking all possible measures to improve the recovery.
- During the year, recovery activities of disconnection for private consumers were stopped due to revised billings and other factors which resulted in delayed recovery impacting profit margins of the Company.
- Increase of LME prices and vessel prices is impacting margins in engineering segment.

The company is taking all possible measures to overcome the above mentioned issues in order to improve profit margins of the Company which is apparent from current quarter results.

Your company is taking major steps in order to safe guard interest of all our shareholders and improve, to sustain positive growth, which shall play a remarkable role in companies future profits.

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF INCOME
FOR THE NINE MONTHS ENDED 30th SEPTEMBER 2022

	Parent Company Unaudited 30 th Sep 2022 R.O.	Audited 30 th Sep 2022 R.O.	Group Unaudited 30 th Sep 2022 R.O.
Revenue	49,011,785	45,288,760	49,011,785
Other Income	995,171	902,489	993,123
Total Revenue	50,006,956	46,191,249	50,004,908
Staff cost	(13,164,896)	(13,957,635)	(13,267,018)
Operating cost	(31,181,980)	(27,387,758)	(30,942,955)
General and administrative expenses	(592,766)	(559,998)	(601,932)
Impairment loss on trade receivables	(345,717)	(294,521)	(345,717)
Depreciation	(1,152,797)	(1,360,084)	(1,152,869)
Finance Cost - Net	(1,831,686)	(1,820,594)	(1,831,758)
Profit before Tax	1,737,114	810,659	1,862,659
Income tax expense	(267,153)	(100,650)	(281,178)
Profit after tax	1,469,961	710,009	1,581,481
Basic and diluted earnings per share	0.010	0.005	0.011

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 30th SEPTEMBER 2022

	Parent Company Unaudited 30 th Sep 2022 R.O.	Audited 31 st Dec 2021 R.O.	Group Unaudited 30 th Sep 2022 R.O.	Audited 31 st Dec 2021 R.O.
ASSETS				
Non-current assets:				
Property, plant and equipment	16,722,192	17,588,939	16,723,624	17,590,443
Investment properties	6,937,440	7,029,380	6,937,440	7,029,380
Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income	1,227,586	1,133,388	1,227,586	1,133,388
Investment in a subsidiary	300,000	300,000	-	-
Goodwill	-	-	150,000	150,000
Deferred tax assets	882,943	882,970	882,943	882,970
Long term contract assets	17,090,880	13,872,797	17,090,880	13,872,797
Total non-current assets	43,161,041	40,807,474	43,012,473	40,658,978
Current assets:				
Inventories	477,569	425,485	477,569	425,485
Debtors, prepayments and other receivables	99,596,566	99,753,675	99,574,266	99,747,163
Cash and bank balances	7,671,119	3,051,789	7,814,449	3,145,221
Total current assets	107,745,254	103,230,949	107,866,284	103,317,869
Total assets	150,906,295	144,038,423	150,878,757	143,976,847
EQUITY AND LIABILITIES				
Shareholders' equity:				
Share capital	14,000,000	13,000,000	14,000,000	13,000,000
Share premium	2,002,469	2,002,469	2,002,469	2,002,469
Legal reserve	3,252,495	3,105,499	3,252,495	3,105,499
General reserve	300,000	300,000	300,000	300,000
Fair value reserve	1,118,839	1,024,641	1,118,839	1,024,641
Revaluation reserve	3,740,630	3,793,724	3,740,630	3,793,724
Retained earnings	3,111,841	117,435,677	3,151,675	3,360,397
Equity attributable to owners of the Parent Company:	27,526,274	26,602,746	27,566,108	26,586,730
Non controlling interest	-	-	189,646	133,976
Total equity	27,526,274	26,602,746	27,755,754	26,720,706
LIABILITIES				
Non-current liabilities				
Staff terminal benefits	1,747,792	1,811,132	1,751,025	1,816,575
Bank borrowings	19,135,345	15,997,267	19,135,345	15,997,267
Deferred tax liability	641,643	651,011	641,643	651,011
Total non-current liabilities	21,524,780	18,459,410	21,528,013	18,464,853
Current liabilities:				
Bank borrowings	36,252,776	37,479,285	36,252,776	37,479,285
Trade and other payables	65,318,862	61,141,932	65,044,586	60,956,953
Income tax payable	283,603	355,050	283,603	355,050
Total current liabilities	101,855,241	98,976,267	101,594,990	98,791,288
Total liabilities	123,380,021	117,435,677	123,123,003	117,256,141
Total equity and liabilities	150,906,295	144,038,423	150,878,757	143,976,847
Net assets per share	0.197	0.205	0.197	0.205

Note:

- Details of Accounts are available with MSM
- The complete Accounts will be sent by mail to any Shareholder who requests them, in either Arabic or English, as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request."

Chairman

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RNO Commander receives CTF-151 commander



MUSCAT: Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Sunday Rear Admiral Nelson de Oliveira, Commander of the Combined Task Force (CTF-151).

The two sides exchanged views on naval matters of common interest. They also discussed means of enhancing cooperation between the two sides. The meeting was attended by Jasim bin Mohammed al Balushi, Director of Operations and Plans

at the RNO Command. Later the guest visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC). Upon his arrival, he was greeted by the Acting Head of the MSC. The guest and members of the visiting delegation were briefed on the roles and tasks carried out by the

centre in maintaining the safety of the maritime environment. They also toured the centre's facilities and viewed its latest equipment and technologies that are used in carrying out its national duties. — ONA

Workshop on fair competition among airlines

MUSCAT: A workshop on fair competition among airlines kicked off here on Sunday. It was organised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in cooperation with the Arab Civil Aviation Organization. Experts from Arab countries are taking part in the three-day workshop. Salim bin Hamad al Hussaini, Director General of Aviation Regulation at the CAA, underscored the significance of upgrading cooperation to enable national Arab air carriers to enter the market in a fair manner that achieves balance in competition and prevents monopoly. — ONA

Oman to host third AMR Ministerial Conference

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT. 30
The third high-level Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) Ministerial Conference hosted by the Sultanate of Oman to see participation from Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources (MoAFWR), and the Quadripartite Alliance formed

by the United Nations to monitor the antibiotic resistance, said a Ministry of Health press release on Sunday. Other participants are World Health Organisation (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the United Nations Environment Programme

(UNEP), and the Gulf Health Council. A press conference at the InterCity Hotel on Monday will throw light on the deliberations of the conference. Ministers of MoH, MoAFWR and Information along with the Director General of the Gulf Health Council and media professionals will attend the press conference.

Oman Air receives 5-Star Major Airline rating from APEX

MUSCAT: Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman, has been awarded the 2023 Five-Star Major Airline rating by the Airline Passenger Experience Association (APEX). The award was announced on October 26 2022 during the annual APEX/IFSA Expo in California, US. It's the third consecutive year the airline has received the award, which measures customer feedback in a range of metrics including seat comfort, cabin service, in-flight meals and in-flight entertainment. Eng Abdulaziz al Raisi, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Air, said, "The airline industry continues to evolve and with it, guest expectations. At Oman Air, our vision has remained constant. We continue to work hard to elevate our guest experience with new innovations in aircraft design and a greater focus on well-being, while staying attuned to their needs and feedback. Our guests are the reason we do what we do, and we are indebted to them for their support in making this achievement possible. This award is not just a win for us, but for all of Oman, building on our reputation as an all-round 'five-star' destination." The APEX Official Airline Ratings is the first airline rating programme based solely on certified passenger feedback and insights gathered through TripIt from Concur, the world's highest-rated travel-organising app. Using a five-star scale, nearly one million flights have been rated by passengers across more than 600 airlines from around the world and independently certified by a professional external auditing company. The award is the latest in a string of accolades Oman Air has received from APEX, including most recently the 2022 Passenger Choice Award for Best Seat Comfort in the Middle East, as well as the Five-Star Major Airline rankings for 2022 and 2021.



80 people nabbed on various charges

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) arrested 80 people last week on charges of drug smuggling in connivance with an international drug cartel, illegal entry into the country, money laundering and withdrawing a large amount of money from local banks using suspicious bank cards issued by foreign banks. The ROP commands in the governorates were able to foil many smuggling attempts last week. North Al Batinah Governorate Police Command in collaboration with the Coast Guard Police arrested an Asian infiltrator charged with smuggling and possessing 65 kg of hashish, 11 kg of crystal meth and 1,050 tablets of psychotropic substances in coordination with an international drug cartel. In Dhofar Governorate, the Coast Guard Police arrested four people of an Asian nationality while attempting to smuggle a large amount of khat into the country. The Directorate-General of Inquiries and Criminal



Investigation at Royal Oman Police, arrested 10 people of Arab and African nationalities on charges of money laundering after withdrawing a large amount of money from local banks using suspicious bank cards issued by

foreign banks. Thirty-six people of Asian nationalities were arrested from the wilayats of Saham and Al Seeb on charges of entering the country illegally. The police in Musandam Governorate arrested three people of an Asian nationality on charges of illegal entry into the country. Five people were arrested in South Al Sharqiyah Governorate in connection with a house theft and another five Asian people were booked on charges of stealing electrical wires and violating the Labour Law in South Al Batinah Governorate.

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Tender Announcement

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG invites Bidders to submit their proposal for the below detailed tenders:

Tender No.	Description	Tender Fee (Non-refundable)	Tender Purchase Deadline	Clarification Deadline	Tender Submission Date
TENDER/2022/10/IT/001	Microsoft Dynamics NAV 2018 Annual Maintenance Contract for 2023	OMR 50/-	04.11.2022	08.11.2022	09.11.2022

Bank Name & Account Number
Bank Muscat (0423005687760617)

The Conditions:

- Collection of Tenders:** Interested and specialized companies with a previous experience in the same field can collect the tender documents from the procurement department by sending a copy of the payment slip to procurement@almaha.com.om The tender may be collected on any working day between 08:00 AM – 03:00 PM.
- Bank Guarantee:** The bidder should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for an amount equivalent to (1%) of the tender value, with a validity of (90) days from the last date of submission and addressed to Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company SAOG.
- Offer Submission:** The tender bid should be submitted in a sealed envelope and addressed to the **Chairman of the Tender Committee**, Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG marked with tender number and subject. Other marks or any reference must not be printed outside the envelope. The exterior of the envelope containing the tender document must not reveal the identity of the bidder.
- Submission Location:** The bid should be deposited in the tender box at Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing SAOG head office located in Ghala before 01:00 PM on the submission date.
- Any bid received after the specified date or if it does not meet the conditions will not be considered.
- Each bid shall be signed and stamped with the signature of the authorized person.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to accept, reject or cancel the tender without giving any reasons.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG reserves the right to add or cancel some of the works mentioned in the tender if necessary.
- Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co SAOG is not bound to accept the lowest bid or any other bid without giving any reasons.
- For any enquiry email us at (procurement@almaha.com.om) or by calling 24610289/24610287

Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Co. (SAOG)
PO Box No: 57, PC: 116, Mina Al Fahal, Sultanate of Oman



PRESIDENT DECLARES NATIONAL MOURNING AND DESIGNATES ITAEWON A DISASTER ZONE

Seoul mourns, seeks answers after crush kills 153

SEOUL: Shocked family members collected bodies, parents searched for children and a country sought answers on Sunday after at least 153 people were crushed to death when a crowd in South Korea surged in an alleyway during Halloween festivities. President Yoon Suk-yeol declared a period of national mourning and designated Seoul's popular Itaewon district a disaster zone after the Saturday night disaster.

"This news came like a bolt from the blue sky," said a father who burst into tears as he collected his daughter's body from a morgue in the nation's capital.

A huge crowd celebrating in Itaewon surged into an alley, killing at least 153 people, most of them in their 20s, emergency officials said, adding the death toll could rise.

The partiers, some still in their

teens and many in Halloween costumes, were ready to enjoy the bars, nightclubs and restaurants where the revelry routinely spills over into narrow and often steep side streets.

Instead, the street became filled with people crying for help, while emergency workers desperately sought to free trapped bodies and perform CPR on people splayed across the debris-littered ground.

Choi Sung-beom, head of the Yongsan Fire Station, told a briefing at the scene 82 people were injured, 19 of them seriously. The deaths included 22 foreigners, he said.

Families and friends desperately sought word of loved ones at community centres turned into facilities for missing people. At least 90 per cent of the victims had been identified by midday, with delays affecting some foreign



People look at the scene of the Halloween stampede in the capital's popular Itaewon district in Seoul on Sunday. — AFP

nationals and teenagers who did not yet have identification cards, the Interior Ministry said.

Makeshift memorials began appearing near the site, with onlookers leaving flowers and

and the world's worst stampedes in decades.

"This is truly tragic," he said in a statement, vowing an investigation into the cause of the disaster. "A tragedy and disaster that should not have happened took place in the heart of Seoul last night."

UNRULINESS, THEN CHAOS

South Korean tech and mobile game firms including Kakao and NCSoft pulled their Halloween promotions after the tragedy, while amusement park Everland cancelled Halloween-themed events. Many regional governments and organisations have cancelled or reduced festivals and other celebrations.

The crush of partygoers came as Itaewon, a symbol of freewheeling nightlife in the South Korean capital for decades that was just

starting to thrive after more than two years of Covid-19 restrictions, with trendy restaurants and shops replacing seedy establishments.

It was the first Halloween event in Seoul in three years to be virtually free of Covid-19 restrictions and social distancing. Many of the partygoers were wearing masks and Halloween costumes.

Twenty-four hours before, there were already warning signs that the festivities were attracting dangerous numbers of people, and victims and their relatives questioned an apparent lack of crowd control.

Early on Sunday costumes and personal belongings mingled with blood spots in the narrow street. Survivors huddled under emergency blankets amid throngs of emergency workers, police, and media. — Reuters



Residents waded through a flooded street as they head home after they were stranded overnight in Kawit town, Cavite province on Sunday. — AFP

Tropical Storm 'Nalgae' batters Philippines capital before exit

MANILA: Emergency workers scrambled to rescue residents trapped by floods in and around the Philippine capital on Sunday as Tropical Storm Nalgae swept out of the country after killing at least 48 people.

Several neighbourhoods in towns and cities just outside Manila remained under water after the storm raked across the main island of Luzon overnight, cutting power supplies and inflicting damage.

The death toll from the storm rose to 48, the national disaster agency said on Sunday, most of them from a series of flash floods

and landslides that destroyed villages on the southern island of Mindanao on Friday.

In the Manila suburb of Paranaque, rescuers swam through three-metre floodwaters overnight to reach 60 people including children marooned on an upper floor of a building, a local official said.

"They were shouting and crying in panic because they really have no way out" after floodwaters rose as they attended a party, village chief Noel Japlos said.

"We did not expect the water to go this high. If we weren't able to rescue them all, some of them

could have died," he added.

Video footage taken by the rescue team showed emergency workers in life vests using a rope to lead them out of the building while children were put on improvised floats.

In nearby Kawit town, a corpse in a white coffin floated on a flooded street, an AFP photographer saw.

Residents said a flash flood overnight likely carried it off from a nearby cemetery.

Kawit residents emerging from receding floods were cleaning up and trying to dry their wet belongings. — AFP

Lebanon's Aoun leaves as political crisis deepens

BAABDA, Lebanon: Lebanon's outgoing head of state, Michel Aoun, vacated the presidential palace on Sunday, cheered on by thousands of his loyal supporters, a day before his mandate expires without a designated successor.

Aoun also said he had signed a decree formalising the resignation of Najib Mikati's caretaker government, deepening a political crisis in a country where the economy has all but collapsed.

Thousand of cheering well-wishers came to pay tribute to Aoun, former army chief and head of the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM), which is allied with the Hizbullah.

Aoun's six-year term was marred by mass protests, a painful economic downturn and the August 2020 mega-explosion of ammonium nitrate that killed hundreds and laid waste to swathes of Beirut.

"This morning, I sent a letter to parliament and signed a decree that considers the government resigned," Aoun, in his late 80s, told supporters before leaving the palace in the hills above Beirut.

Experts say the move will likely not impact the work of Mikati's government, which has remained in a caretaker role since legislative elections in the spring.



Lebanese outgoing President Michel waves to his supporters as he leaves the presidential palace in Baabda, Lebanon, on Sunday. — Reuters

But it was part of ongoing political arm-wrestling between Aoun and Mikati, who is also in charge of forming a new government. Aoun told parliament in a letter that Mikati was "uninterested" in forming a new government to deal with

Lebanon's myriad problems and called on him to resign.

Mikati retorted that Aoun's decision had "no constitutional basis" and that his cabinet will "continue to carry out all its constitutional duties, including its caretaker functions". — AFP

SHORT TAKES

HONG KONG

China passes new women's protection law

China passed legislation on Sunday aimed at giving women more protection against gender discrimination and sexual harassment, days after the bill was submitted to the country's top legislature after a third revision and extensive public input.

The legislation comes as activists have expressed concern about increasing government rhetoric on the value of traditional women's roles, and what some see as setbacks for women's rights. It's not yet clear to what



extent those more conservative attitudes will be reflected in the new law.

No details on the legislation beyond its adoption were immediately available.

NEW DELHI

'Lot of progress' in India trade talks: UK

Britain's foreign minister has insisted during a visit to India that "a lot of progress" has been made in talks on a post-Brexit free-trade deal despite negotiators missing a recent deadline.

"We have made a lot of progress in the negotiations, and we continue to work for an agreement that works for both countries," James Cleverly said in an interview published on Sunday. "We have been very, very explicit that our partnership with India is one that matters to us



and one we want to enhance and develop," he was quoted as telling the paper during the two-day visit. India and UK have been negotiating for around 18 months on a trade deal.

TOKYO

Japan plans new joint command for armed forces

Japan will set up a new joint command to manage the operations of its land, sea and air forces, the Nikkei newspaper reported on Saturday, as part of a major defence overhaul in the face of China's increasing assertiveness. The government aims to have the joint command functioning by 2024. It will be tasked with coordinating strategies and boosting Japan's defence cooperation with the US military, Nikkei reported.

The defence ministry could not be reached for comment out-



side regular business hours.

Prime Minister Fumio Kishida's government is boosting its military spending in response to China's growing might and geopolitical uncertainty.



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In brief

■ MOGADISHU



DEATH TOLL FROM SOMALIA BOMBINGS CLIMBS TO 100

The number of people killed in twin car bombings in the Somali capital Mogadishu, claimed by Al Shabaab militants, has risen to 100, President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud said on Sunday.

“So far, the number of people who died has reached 100 and 300 are wounded, and the number for both the death and wounded continues to increase,” he said after visiting the blast location. Two cars packed with explosives blew up minutes apart near the busy Zobe intersection, followed by gunfire in an attack targeting Somalia’s education ministry.

The afternoon explosions tore through walls, shattered windows of nearby buildings.

■ JERICHO



ISRAELIS KILL PALESTINIAN AFTER ALLEGED CAR RAMMING

Israelis on Sunday shot dead a Palestinian who, according to the army and medics, had rammed his car into soldiers in the occupied West Bank.

The incident near the city of Jericho comes amid mounting violence across Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem and the occupied West Bank.

“An assailant accelerated his vehicle towards IDF (Israeli army) soldiers who were at a bus station adjacent to the Nabi Musa Junction,” the army said, before he continued and drove at other soldiers nearby. “A police officer and a civilian who were at the scene responded with live fire towards the assailant and neutralised him.”

■ DOVER



MAN ATTACKS UK MIGRANT PROCESSING CENTRE

A man threw petrol bombs attached with fireworks at a centre for processing migrants in the southern English port of Dover on Sunday and then killed himself, a Reuters photographer said.

The attacker, a white man in a striped top, drove up to the centre in a white SEAT sports utility vehicle. He got out and threw three petrol bombs, one of which did not go off, the photographer said.

He then drove to a nearby petrol station, tied an improvised noose around his neck, attached it to a metal pole and drove off, killing himself, the photographer said.

■ NEW BEGINNING FOR BIG BEN



Britain’s Speaker of the House of Commons Lindsay Hoyle visits the Big Ben in London. The UK’s most famous clock will be put back to Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) for the first time since 2017. Hoyle said the clock change ‘heralds a new beginning’ for the London landmark. — Reuters

Brazil votes in white-knuckle Bolsonaro-Lula showdown

RIO DE JANEIRO: Brazil was on a knife-edge on Sunday as voters chose between far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro and his leftist arch-rival, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, in a presidential election seen as too close to call.

Both candidates cast their ballots in the morning, expressing confidence in victory in the runoff election, after a dirty and divisive campaign that has deeply polarised the nation of 215 million people.

Some Brazilians voted with gusto, while others merely picked the candidate they least disliked.

“I think this has been the best government Brazil has ever had,” said Afro-Brazilian lawyer Eliane de Oliveira, 61, who voted for Bolsonaro in Rio de Janeiro’s Copacabana neighbourhood, saying he was happy to have a government “that is not corrupt”, in a dig at the graft-tainted Lula.

Standing nearby, physical education teacher Gustavo Souza voted for Lula, who he hoped



A woman wearing a jersey of the Brazilian national football team votes at a polling station in Brasilia, on October 30, 2022, during the presidential run-off election. After a bitterly divisive campaign and inconclusive first-round vote, Brazil elects its next president in a cliffhanger runoff between far-right incumbent Jair Bolsonaro and veteran leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. (Photo by EVARISTO SA / AFP)

would “improve the lives of many people.” Like many he is nervous about the outcome, reflecting fears that Bolsonaro would not accept the result after months of attacking the electoral system.

“I admit I am a little scared about the result today.

People have become so radical.

They will need some maturity... or it will turn into the third or fourth world war,” he said, laughing nervously.

Lula, 77, narrowly won the first-round election on October 2, and enters the finale the slight favourite with 52 per cent of voter support, according to a final poll

from the Datafolha institute on Saturday. However, Bolsonaro, 67, who scored 48 per cent in the poll, performed better than expected last time around, and the result this time is anyone’s guess.

The president cast his ballot wearing a T-shirt in the yellow-and-green of the Brazilian flag — a symbol he has adopted as his own.

“God willing, we’ll be victorious later today.

Or even better, Brazil will be victorious,” said the ex-army captain, grinning as he greeted supporters in Rio de Janeiro’s Vila Militar neighbourhood.

Lula voted in Sao Bernardo do Campo, the southeastern city where he got his start as a union leader, saying he was “confident in the victory of democracy,” and that he would seek to “restore peace” in a divided nation if elected. The electoral showdown caps months of mud-slinging and personal attacks, in a campaign plagued by disinformation. — AFP

Ukraine blames Russia for collapse of grain deal

KYIV: Russia’s blockade of grain exports makes it “impossible” for fully loaded ships to leave port, Ukraine charged on Sunday after Moscow claimed drone attacks on its Crimea fleet had exploited the grain corridor safe zone.

Kyiv’s maritime grain exports were halted after Russia pulled out of a landmark agreement that allowed the vital shipments.

The July deal to unlock grain exports signed between Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the United Nations, is critical to easing the global food crisis caused by the conflict.

“(A) bulk carrier loaded with 40 tonnes of grain was supposed to leave the Ukraine port today,” Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov tweeted.

“These foodstuffs were intended for Ethiopians, that are on the verge of famine. But due to the blockage of the ‘grain corridor’ by Russia the export is impossible,” the Ukrainian minister said.

The agreement had already allowed more than nine million tonnes of Ukrainian grain to be exported and was due to be renewed on November 19. Russia’s defence ministry alleged on Sunday the attack drones had “Canadian-made navigation modules”, saying it had recovered debris from some of the weapons in the sea.

Specialists had “conducted an examination of Canadian-made navigation modules installed on the marine unmanned vehicles”, the ministry said. — AFP

British prime minister blasted for ‘failure of leadership’ by snubbing COP27

LONDON: New British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has been accused of a “massive failure of leadership” after backing out of attending the COP27 climate summit in Egypt next month.

Former premier Liz Truss was set to attend the United Nations climate conference in Sharm El-Sheikh but Downing Street said on Thursday that Sunak would instead focus on “pressing domestic commitments”.

Downing Street also confirmed the demotion of the position of environment minister as Graham Stuart was reappointed to the role but stripped of his entitlement to attend Cabinet.



British Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak

Downing Street insisted the PM remains “absolutely committed” to supporting the climate conference hosted in Glasgow last year, denying he was downgrading the importance of tackling the

climate crisis. But Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer criticised the Prime Minister, tweeting: “Britain showing up to work with world leaders is an opportunity to grasp. Not an event to shun.”

Shadow climate change secretary Ed Miliband said: “This is a massive failure of climate leadership.

We were the COP26 hosts and now the UK Prime Minister isn’t even bothering to turn up to COP27.

“What Rishi Sunak obviously fails to understand is that tackling the climate crisis isn’t just about our reputation and standing abroad, but the opportunities for lower

bills, jobs, and energy security it can deliver at home.”

Green MP Caroline Lucas said “shame on” Sunak, adding: “The first test of leadership is to turn up.

The new PM’s decision not to attend COP27 makes a mockery of any government claims on continued climate leadership - and what a shameful way to end the UK’s Cop presidency.”

Rebecca Newsom, the head of politics at Greenpeace UK, said the move suggests Sunak does not take climate change “seriously enough”.

“The UK government is supposed to hand over the COP

presidency to their Egyptian counterparts at next month’s summit. For Rishi Sunak not to show up is like a runner failing to turn up with the baton at a crucial stage of the relay,” she added.

A Downing Street spokeswoman said Sunak was focusing on domestic issues including preparations for the autumn budget, which has been delayed from Monday to November 17.

“The Prime Minister is not expected to attend COP27 and this is due to other pressing domestic commitments including preparations for the Autumn Budget,” she told reporters. — dpa

Preserving living cultures for posterity



Sandhya Rao Mehta

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

The ongoing Aga Khan Awards ceremony being hosted by Oman brings focus on the need to encourage and dwell on the study of living cultures in an age which is being rapidly being taken over by virtual reality and artificial intelligence. In fact, technology could be harnessed towards documenting and protecting living cultures.

Living cultures refers to the oral traditions of traditional communities which reveal cultural customs and practices. It is often used in the context of Aboriginal knowledge coming from Australia and New Zealand. Of late, there have been projects linking indigenous communities across Peru, Kenya and the Philippines.

By focusing on everyday customs and traditions, it is possible to reflect on the priorities

of a community, their knowledge and skills, as well as their core beliefs. This lends a country its particular identity.

Documenting such communities is done through outreach, using local oral stories and songs to understand a social group for posterity. Giving the community members a chance to tell their stories gives them agency and confidence. It also informs them that their stories are worth telling.

In our world which is facing massive environmental challenges, the knowledge of traditional communities is vital.

Listening to them, documenting the ways in which they access traditional information and follow time tested preservation techniques will be vital to fighting climate change.

BY FOCUSING ON EVERYDAY CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS, IT IS POSSIBLE TO REFLECT ON THE PRIORITIES OF A COMMUNITY, THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS, AS WELL AS THEIR CORE BELIEFS. THIS LENDS A COUNTRY ITS PARTICULAR IDENTITY

So will documenting their challenges, the difficulties they face and the way in which they have traditionally overcome obstacles.

Living cultures include everything that surrounds us: lullabies sung by grandparents, songs sung by children at playtime, harvest songs, songs orally handed

down over generations and even rhymes or songs sung while cooking.

Most community culture is taken for granted, but it is so fragile that it will soon be forgotten if it is not recorded. In their work “Vanishing community, vanishing cultures”, social workers Chaudhry and Mushtaq, for example, have shown how globalisation, migration and urbanisation have effected nomadic tribes in Tibet, Kashmir and Turkey.

This kind of documentation is vital to retain traditional knowledge. Ethnographic studies on language, customs and traditions can now be done by recording, digitising and disseminating.

Earlier fears that knowledge of entire communities would disappear are now much less, considering the many opportunities to document and preserve them for posterity. All that it takes

is for interested researchers to highlight disappearing languages and societies, and find ways of documenting them. This will ensure that successive generations will stay aware of their history and culture.

Technology can go a long way in helping preserve cultural histories and artefacts, including traditional music. Media created by the community itself could include audio visual formats. Engaging the community will make the exercise inclusive and accessible.

Intangible history is a large part of living culture as it includes everything that surrounds us – stories, music and much more. Efforts to preserve them will include various stakeholders and is a vast task. But it is essential if we want to leave our cultural footprints for the future.

Egypt cautions against backtracking on climate pledges

RAMADAN AL FATASH AND JOHANNES SADEK

Egypt, which is hosting UN climate talks next month, has warned the participating nations not to use global tensions and economic gloom as a pretext for potential backsliding on climate pledges.

“There has been apprehension (about) the current status that countries might backtrack,” Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry said.

“Backtracking because of the political adversarial postures that exist... because of the pressures of the general global economic circumstances, and thereby utilise what would be extenuating circumstances to justify their backtracking... This would be, I think, a very self-defeating posture,” Shoukry said in an interview.

The UN climate summit, known as COP27, is due to be held in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Sharm el-Sheikh on November 6-18 against the background of the Ukraine war that has sent food and energy prices soaring.

The conference also comes after climate-related freak events wreaked havoc in some parts of the globe.

Representatives from around 200 countries will grapple with how global warming can still be contained and how climate damage can be financed. Egypt has promoted COP27 as a summit of action.

“We view COP27 as the COP of implementation where states, parties would highlight their commitment to implementing their previous commitments, and setting the stage for the future in terms of additional commitments that would deal with the challenges,” Soukry said.

For him, success hinges on the determination and political will of the parties involved as well as the realisation that the rich and poor countries are equally affected, “no matter what seas might divide them.”

The official cited recent devastating floods in Pakistan, heatwaves in Europe and hurricanes in the US as a catalyst for climate stakeholders to act.

“People are losing their lives,” said Shoukry, who is the COP27 president-designate.

“If the international community of the parties don’t rise to the occasion, then they will be responsible for the deteriorating situation and continuing suffering for a large segment of the world’s population.”

Shoukry hoped divergence over geopolitical tensions “will not be imported” to the COP process.

“There are other venues to deal with these issues. And certainly, here, the concentration must be focused on climate change.” — dpa



Thomas L. Friedman

The writer is an American political commentator and author

Russian President Putin is onto us

As the Russian army continues to falter in Ukraine, the world is worrying that Vladimir Putin could use a tactical nuclear weapon. Maybe — but for now, I think Putin is assembling a different weapon. It’s an oil and gas bomb that he’s fusing right before our eyes and with our inadvertent help — and he could easily detonate it this winter.

If he does, it could send prices of home heating oil and gasoline into the stratosphere. The political fallout, Putin surely hopes, will divide the Western alliance and prompt many countries — including ours, where both MAGA Republicans and progressives are expressing concerns about the spiralling cost of the Ukraine conflict — to seek a dirty deal with the man in the Kremlin, pronto.

In short: Putin is now fighting a ground war to break through Ukraine’s lines and a two-front energy war to break Ukraine’s will and that of its allies. He’s trying to smash Ukraine’s electricity system to ensure a long, cold winter there while putting himself in position (in ways that I’ll explain) to drive up energy costs for all of Ukraine’s allies. And because we — America and the West — do not have an energy strategy in place to dampen the impact of Putin’s energy bomb, this is a frightening prospect.

When it comes to energy, we want five things at once that are incompatible — and Putin is onto us:

1. We want to decarbonise our economy as fast as we can to mitigate the very real dangers of climate change.
2. We want the cheapest possible gasoline and heating oil prices so we can drive our cars as fast and as much as we want — and never have to put on a sweater indoors or do anything to conserve energy.
3. We want to tell the petrodictators in to take a hike.
4. We want to be able to treat US oil and gas companies as pariahs and dinosaurs that should pump us out of this current oil crisis and then go off in the woods and die and let solar and wind take over.
5. Oh, and we don’t want any new oil and gas pipelines or wind and solar transmission lines to spoil our backyards.

I understand why people want all five — now. I want all five! But they involve trade-offs, which too few of us



A Ukrainian carries water home to the high-rise apartment where he lives with his wife and their newborn baby. In a battered city on Ukraine’s southern coast, salt water runs from the taps and electricity is sporadic. Residents curse Russia, but also express frustration with their own leaders. — NYT

PUTIN WANTS AMERICA TO USE UP AS MUCH OF ITS STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVE CUSHION NOW — JUST LIKE THE WAY THE GERMANS GAVE UP ON NUCLEAR ENERGY AND HE GOT THEM ADDICTED TO RUSSIA’S CHEAP NATURAL GAS

want to acknowledge or debate. In an energy war like the one we’re in now, you need to be clear about your goals and priorities. As a country, and as a Western alliance, we have no ladder of priorities on energy, just competing aspirations and magical thinking that we can have it all.

If we persist in that, we are going to be in for a world of hurt if Putin drops the energy bomb that I think he’s assembling for Christmas. Here’s what I think is his strategy: It starts with getting the United States to draw down its Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

It is a huge stock of crude oil stored in giant caverns that we can draw on in an emergency to offset any cutoff in our domestic production or imports. Last Wednesday, President Joe Biden announced the release of 15 million more barrels from the reserve in December, completing a plan he laid out earlier to release a total of 180 million barrels in an effort to keep gasoline prices at the pump as low as possible — in advance of the midterm elections. (He didn’t say the last part. He didn’t need to.)

According to a report in The Washington Post, the reserve contained “405.1 million barrels as of October 14. That’s about 57 per cent of its maximum authorised storage capacity of 714 million barrels.”

I sympathise with the president. People were really hurting from \$5- and \$6-a-gallon gasoline. But using the reserve — which was designed to cushion us in the face of a sudden shut-off in domestic or global production — to shave a dime or a quarter off a gallon of gasoline before elections is a dicey business, even if the president has a plan for refilling it in the coming months. — The New York Times

Invest in youth as in nation

Youth, and youth, this word is becoming a trend nowadays all over the world! With all its connotation and denotation, it is being promoted in every occasion, whenever and wherever youth are involved. Yes, youth marks the future heroes of any nation, rather they are the real future investment. Countries worldwide are endorsing youth empowerment in all walks of life as an investment that never fails to provide a great return to individuals, families and nations alike.

When youth are empowered, they are able to fulfil their dreams for they get access to the opportunities, skills, and resources they need to reach their full potential. Youth empowerment is about giving young people equal opportunities and the courage to track their passions. They need not only to get the chance to chase their dreams, but to boost their sense of self-confidence. As Franklin Roosevelt, a former US President, said, “We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future”.

The future holds promises and dreams for the youth, which can be fulfilled through hard work, dedication, planning, education and words of wisdom. Youth must keep their eyes wide open and work towards bringing a brighter future for themselves and their nations. Further, youth must always remember they are never alone, and shall understand their critical role in the development of society. As youth are regarded torchbearers, it is really important that they are directed to the right path.

Metaphorically speaking, every society is like a collection of charmingly beautiful flowers, where each one’s uniqueness, especially youth, makes the whole bouquet come to life. Flowers are different in fragrance, size, and colour, but when combined, they undoubtedly make the bouquet more fascinating. Similarly, youth differ in their talents and distinctiveness that thrive society’s mixture. In order to get the value of such outstanding blend, youth should always be engaged,



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METAPHORICALLY SPEAKING, EVERY SOCIETY IS LIKE A COLLECTION OF CHARMINGLY BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS, WHERE EACH ONE’S UNIQUENESS, ESPECIALLY YOUTH, MAKES THE WHOLE BOUQUET COME TO LIFE

groomed and empowered. Likewise, to get properly invested on, youth should be well informed of the current affairs and the crises that the world is going through. They should be updated on the national struggles and achievements of their countries. Further, youth should be enlightened of their rights, and responsibilities and thus lead by example too. In this regard, the Government of Oman is constantly stressing the significance of empowering youth and endorsing their involvement in building the nation and decision-making process. On the other hand, dedicated youth-concerned bodies have been established and directed to work on this mission. Therefore, these entities need to reconsider their efforts in presenting the possible opportunities where Omani youth can be involved and empowered. Youth need to be given more opportunities to play their role and share their contributions in building Oman. Probably, a council for youth experts could be formed and consulted when necessary to support the government and private parties.

This will truly encourage youth to shoulder the responsibility with the authorities concerned in the country. Always having youth onboard is a thriving advantage and a rewarding experience. Youth need to be very well empowered, trusted and capitalised in strategically; otherwise their potential abilities would be lost and directed on a wrong track. There are exemplary Omani youth who could be invested towards supporting government authorities or corporates and stand as models to empower other youth in the country. As the country has observed the Omani Youth Day, we commemorate the day with full pride and honour of all Omani youth who are greatly sparing no effort to contribute in building the beloved nation. All have proved their responsibility to part take along with the government in the decision-making process and build the modern Oman. With all the different achievements they have accomplished in various spheres, Omani youth have proved their excellence to the whole world.

MAKING THEIR WAY!



Boatmen make their way through hyacinth in the Buriganga River in Bangladesh, on Sunday. – AFP

How Congress might look for Biden post midterms

JEFF MASON, RICHARD COWAN AND HEATHER TIMMONS

The midterm elections in the United States on November 8 will determine whether Republicans or Democrats control each house of Congress, and the results will have a profound impact on the next two years of President Joe Biden’s White House tenure.

This best-case scenario for the Democrats was always considered a long shot, and forecasters like FiveThirtyEight say there’s now just about a one-in-five chance of Democrats keeping the House of Representatives.

Biden promised to pass an assault weapons ban if his party kept control of Congress, and he would likely double down on plans to fund child care and community college and revamp immigration.

However, the first two years of Biden’s presidency proved one-party control of Congress and the White House does not mean the president gets what he wants.

Votes on non-budget issues like immigration would still likely need 60 Senate votes to pass the ‘filibuster’ rule, and Democrats are divided on funding

social programmes.

This scenario would hobble Biden’s presidency by ushering in a flood of House-led investigations, and likely prevent the passage of any big new spending bills, which the House can block with a simple majority.

When one political party takes control of a majority of the House’s 435 seats, lawmakers from that party become heads of House committees, and set their agenda.

House Republicans likely to head committees on everything from homeland security to the judiciary have already said they plan to investigate Biden cabinet members and Covid-19 funds; others want to take aim at his son Hunter’s overseas work and the FBI’s investigation of former President Donald Trump.

The House can start impeachment proceedings, and some Republicans have said they’d like to impeach Biden, though the “treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors” he would be charged with are unclear.

Any impeachment would then progress to a trial in the Senate, where a Democratic

majority is likely to shut it down. Republicans have also pledged to flex their new muscles in the House by proposing spending cuts to Biden priorities such as multibillion dollars’ worth of military aid to Ukraine or environmental initiatives.

They would likely use the threat of partial government agency shutdowns or refuse to raise the debt ceiling if a Democratic-led Senate spurns their initiatives.

The first shots could be fired early in the 118th Congress that begins January 3 over funding the government for the

remainder of the fiscal year, or through September 30. A more heated fiscal battle comes later in 2023 when the US Treasury Department is expected to breach its \$31.4 trillion borrowing limit.

If a debt limit increase is not enacted by Congress in a timely way, Washington would descend into an historic default that could send global financial markets and economies reeling. Retaining their hair-thin control of the Senate would give Democrats the power to keep appointing judges at a rapid clip and curb House Republicans’ ability to roll back

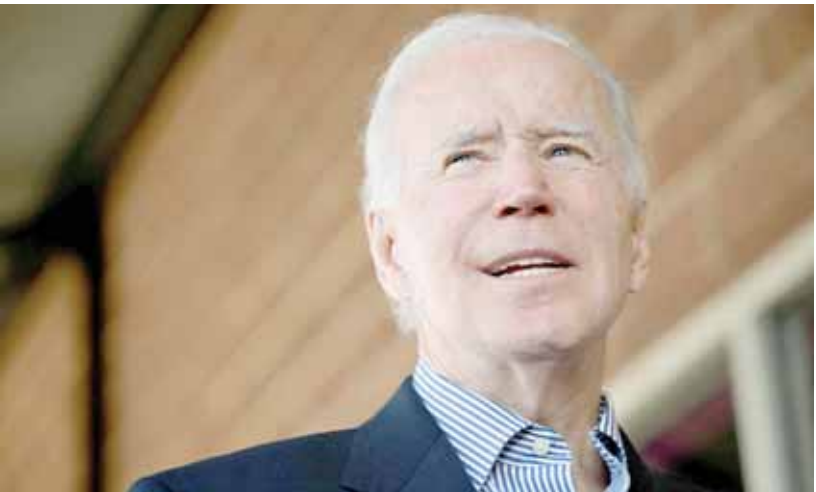
Biden’s agenda and pursue their own. The Senate Majority Leader, picked from the party that holds a majority of the Senate’s 100 seats, decides what the chamber votes on, or never considers.

The worst-case scenario for Biden and his party would likely see his agenda completely frozen for the next two years, a Republican focus on unwinding legislation passed during his first two years and maybe an impeachment trial.

Republicans likely would push hard for deep domestic spending cuts and making some tax cuts from the 2017 tax bill set to expire at the end of 2025 permanent. Some have suggested “reforming” the gigantic Social Security programme for retirees and Medicare health insurance for the elderly and disabled.

Tempering those efforts, Biden will have the power of the presidential veto to block legislation and attempts to roll back his agenda.

Bills that pass Congress go to the US president to sign into law, and he has already pledged to use the veto, including on any bill that makes abortion illegal nationwide. — Reuters

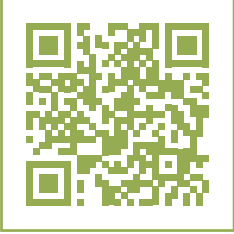


US President Joe Biden speaks to the press after voting early in Wilmington, Delaware, on Saturday. – AFP

THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF BIDEN’S PRESIDENCY PROVED ONE-PARTY CONTROL OF CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE DOES NOT MEAN THE PRESIDENT GETS WHAT HE WANTS

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Max Verstappen takes Mexico GP pole position

MEXICO CITY: Two-time world champion Max Verstappen gave Red Bull reason to smile again on Saturday when he secured pole position for Sunday's Mexico City Grand Prix with an authoritative late qualifying lap.

After 24 hours of arguments and derision following the announcement of Red Bull's penalty for breaching Formula One's \$145 million cost cap last year, it was a sweet return to success with his sixth pole this year and the 17th of his career.

The 25-year-old Dutchman clocked a best lap of 1min 17.775sec to finish 0.304 seconds ahead of George Russell and his Mercedes' team-mate, seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

Verstappen took control on his first run in Q3 and then trimmed his time to resist the threat from the much-improved Mercedes team. He will be hunting a record

14th win in a single season on Sunday.

"That was a good qualifying," the Dutchman said. "It was a close one, but we made a few adjustments to the car and got into a better rhythm so to be on pole here is, of course, amazing."

"It's a very long run down to Turn One here, so we need a good start, but I think we have a quick car and that's what is most important. The passion of the fans here is really incredible and, in the stadium, it is just amazing to drive there."

His Red Bull team-mate and local hero Sergio Perez was fourth ahead of Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and a resurgent Valtteri Bottas of Alfa Romeo.

Verstappen said he was sure Perez "will be there in the fight tomorrow".

Charles Leclerc, who crashed heavily on Friday, was seventh



Red Bull Racing's Dutch driver Max Verstappen celebrates after taking the pole position in the Formula One Mexico Grand Prix qualifying session at the Hermanos Rodriguez racetrack in Mexico City. — AFP

in the second Ferrari ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris and the Alpines of two-time champion Fernando Alonso and Esteban Ocon.

Russell was disappointed. "Sorry, sorry, sorry," he said on his team radio, after running wide on his final lap. "The team deserved more today. They've produced a really great car this weekend and it felt like our pole to have and I did a terrible lap at the end."

Hamilton, who had harboured hopes of doing better, was philosophical.

"This is the best qualifying we've had all year. It just shows that perseverance and never giving up can pay off. I'm quite happy with that position - it's a long way to Turn One."

The session came after many leading teams reacted negatively to Red Bull's \$7 million fine and 10 per cent reduction in permitted aerodynamic research for overspending last year.

Ferrari said they were deeply "unhappy" and Mercedes said Christian Horner's description of his team's punishment as 'draconian' was "an exaggeration" while McLaren said it was "not harsh enough."

HOME HERO PEREZ

All that was set aside, when qualifying started at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez where the air temperature was 25 degrees Celsius and the track 49,

near perfect conditions.

The opening Q1 period saw Hamilton maintain Mercedes' much-improved form in the rarefied atmosphere, at 2,200 metres altitude, by topping the times ahead of Verstappen and Leclerc.

Four-time champion Sebastian Vettel was among those eliminated.

After a turbulent start to the season, when they were beset by 'porpoising' problems, Mercedes had made steady progress and the Russell-Hamilton one-two was their best session result of the year.

Hamilton, in 1:18.552, took command ahead of Russell by 0.013 seconds, the pair heading Bottas and Verstappen on their first runs before Perez emerged alone to a roar from the sell-out crowd.

'Checo, Checo,' they chanted as he took third on a set of new soft tyres. — AFP



Sultanate of Oman
MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH, Muscat, hereby give notice of tenders for the following projects

Tender No.	Project Category	Location	Fees R.O	Grade In Tender Board Registration
RE- TENDER 20/2021	Construction and Maintenance	MAINTINANCE WORKS AT SAHAM SPORT CLUB	25/-	Third Grade
24/2022	Construction and Maintenance	REFURBISHMENT, RECTIFICATION & GROUND STRENGTHENING OF EXISTING BUILDING AT AL AMAL CLUB AT BOUSHAR	46.2	First Grade
25/2022	Construction and Maintenance	CONSTRUCTION OF CAMEL TRACK RACE AT BIDYHA NORTH SHARQYAH GOVERNORATE	25/-	Second Grade

Companies, which are registered with the Tender Board and engaged in same category with experience in and same Grade as noted above, can obtain the Tender Documents at the Tender Board E-tendering digital portal link (<http://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) until 11/12/2022.

The last date of tender submission on above E-tendering site at 09:00am 12/12/2022.

A Tender Bond equivalent to 1% of the tender sum issued from a registered bank, in the prescribed form, in Sultanate of Oman and valid for 90 days should enclosed with the tender.

Any tender without the bond will be reject and the tender committee is not bound to accept the lowest or any tender received.

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE OF MINISTRY OF CULTURE, SPORTS and YOUTH

Any participants have doubt in adopting e-tendering can contact over the phone 24402200 or through email: etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Vingegaard wins inaugural Singapore Criterium

SINGAPORE: Jonas Vingegaard put on a blistering show in the final lap to win the inaugural Tour de France Singapore Criterium cycling race on Sunday.

The reigning Tour de France champion broke away in the crucial last kilometre of the 65 km (40.4 miles) street race in Singapore's Marina Bay district.

Battling against a hot tropical sun, the Danish cycling star threw both hands in the air in triumph as he crossed the finish line.

Briton Chris Froome, a four-time Tour de France winner, came in second while Italy's Vincenzo Nibali, who has announced he will retire at the end of the year, finished third.

"It was a very hard race, and luckily, I was in the final breakaway," Vingegaard, 25, of the Jumbo-Visma team, told reporters.

He said he had not been bothered by the 30-degree Celsius (86 Fahrenheit) heat, the race having taken place under clear skies following weeks of monsoon rains.

"It's not like I am not used to it because I



think in the Tour de France this year, it was also very hot," Vingegaard added.

The last of the race's 20 laps proved the most crucial around the 3.2-kilometre circuit, part of which was used in the Singapore Formula One Grand Prix less than a month ago.

"That's where you really have to fight for it, and yeah that's what I did," Vingegaard said. But Froome, 37, of the Israel-Premier Tech team, said he struggled with the conditions and the biggest challenge was the humidity.

"It was a tough race. In the final I just tried to follow the best guys and Jonas... I was just not able to follow. It's as simple as that," he said.

"The heat was really a big factor today. The humidity out here is something else... that made the race a bit harder as well."

Singaporean rider Yeo Boon Kiak initially took the lead in the earlier laps but failed to sustain his pace in the first Tour de France Criterium in Southeast Asia. — AFP

Crowe secures Masters, Open places with Asian amateur golf crown

BANGKOK: Australia's Harrison Crowe booked himself a place at next year's US Masters and British Open when he sank a knee-knocking final four-foot putt on Sunday to win golf's Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship in Thailand.

The 21-year-old's last-round 72 at Amata Spring Country Club near Bangkok proved enough to win by one stroke from China's Bo Jin, Crowe having led the field by two overnight.

The Australian said he had considered turning professional straight away if he had not won the tournament, but that was on hold now after he secured a place in two of next year's majors as an amateur.

"It means so much," said Crowe. "I came out here this week with something to prove and proud of the way I handled myself.

"I didn't really have too many expectations. I wanted a solid week and then on to the next chapter."

Now Crowe will play at Augusta in April, following in the footsteps of former Asian amateur champion Hideki Matsuyama, who went on as a professional to win the US Masters Green Jacket a decade later in 2021.

"This is how I wanted to delay things, for sure," Crowe said.

He will also tee up at the British Open at Royal Liverpool next July.

"It's an awesome feeling and an extremely good reason not to turn professional right this minute." — AFP



Atalanta back in second place after 2-0 win over Empoli

POLAND: Atalanta regained second place in Serie A with goals from defender Hans Hateboer and Ademola Lookman giving them a 2-0 away win over Empoli on Sunday.

The visitors took the lead after 32 minutes when Hateboer reacted instinctively and knocked a loose ball into the net from inside the box.

Empoli had a chance to equalise shortly after, but Tyrone Ebuehi's shot after 34 minutes was blocked by Rafael Tolo with a well-timed slide.

Atalanta were awarded a penalty shortly before the end of the first half when Mattia Destro handled the ball, but keeper Guglielmo Vicario saved Teun Koopmeiners's kick with his legs.

Lookman nevertheless doubled the lead in the 59th minute with a well-placed shot inside the box that went past both defenders and keeper and into the lower left corner. Gian Piero Gasperini's squad are in second place on 27 points, five behind leaders Napoli and one ahead of AC Milan, who play at Torino later on Sunday. — Reuters

UK colts cricket club eager to play in Oman every year

MUSCAT: Over the past week, youngsters from the Mote Colts Cricket Club were at home at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds in Al Amerat. So impressed were the visitors with the top-class facilities that they have begun talks with Oman Cricket (OC) to have a trip organised every year.

The U15 team from the Mote Colts Cricket Club concluded a week-long camp in the Sultanate of Oman during which they played three matches, including two T20 games and a 40-over-a-side match.

While the honours were shared by the OCA lads and the Mote Colts in the T20 matches, the other match was won by the hosts.

The director of Mote Colts Cricket Club, Ian Hume, said: "For a club based in Maidstone, Kent in England, this has been a unique experience for all the touring party. The facilities at the Oman Cricket Academy are superb – from the



Oman and Mote Colts Cricket Club players and support staff at the Oman Cricket Academy grounds

indoor nets to Test grade wickets. Our boys have been lucky enough to experience all the facilities. We had a good series of matches and excellent cricket was displayed by both the sides.

"We would like to say a big thank you to Oman Cricket Academy and we look forward to coming back next year."

OCA and national U19 coach Adeel Shafique said: "The world-class facilities at the OCA grounds left a lasting impression on the visiting side. Their visit is a culmination of talks over the past two and a half years. The talks were initiated by Late Iqbal Ariwala of

Oman Cricket during his tenure as OC administration manager. He had introduced me to the local contact [Gavin] who then put me through to Ian Hume at the Mote Colts Cricket Club."

"After a series of discussions, the trip was finalised. We are happy to have the Mote colts arrive in Oman

with a contingent of 42. The squad including 14 young cricketers and their parents and guardians," he said.

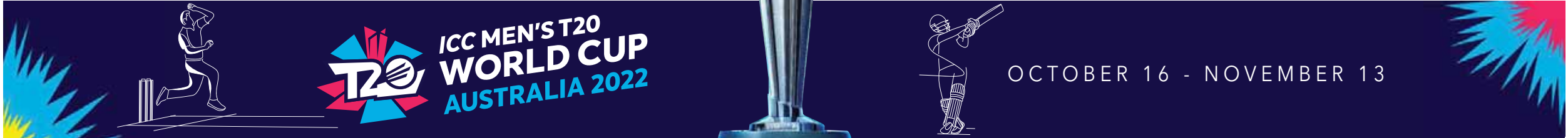
Duleep Mendis, OC chief development officer, said: "We are delighted to have played host to Mote Colts. It was nice to watch our boys at the OCA, under coach

Evert Laubscher, play against the talented bunch from Kent. It was a good experience for our boys."

Mote Colts Cricket Club was formed in 1997. The club began with one side in the Maidstone and District Under 13 League and coaching to a small group of boys with ages ranging from 12 to 15.

Sixteen seasons later the club is now a thriving section of the Mote Cricket Club where over 70 boys are now coached in various age groups from six to 15 and sides compete in three leagues throughout Kent.

Shafique added: "After the conclusion of their trip, Hume has expressed his strong interest to bring his club colts to Oman every year and also suggested to have a bilateral series. We plan to take our academy boys to UK in May-June next. It will be good to know how our boys fare against them and vice-versa."



Bangladesh edge Zimbabwe in last-ball

BRISBANE: Bangladesh got their Twenty20 World Cup back on track on Sunday with a thrilling last-ball win over Zimbabwe, aided by opener Najmul Shanto's maiden half-century and Taskin Ahmed's three wickets.

Shanto (71) helped steer Bangladesh to 150-7 at Brisbane's Gabba ground in a match that went to the wire with Zimbabwe needing 16 off an incredible last over.

It saw two wickets fall, a big six and the teams walking off thinking the match was over, only to be recalled.

Bangladesh believed they had won when Blessing Muzarabani, needing five to win, was stumped trying to hit a six off the last ball with the fielding team celebrating as the players shook hands and left the field.

But a review showed wicketkeeper Nurul Hasan's gloves taking the ball in front of the stumps, which is illegal, and it was called a no-ball.

The teams had to return for a free hit with four needed to win, but Muzarabani swung and missed again leaving Zimbabwe

short on 147-8.

"It's a totally new experience for us, but we knew we could do well in this pressure situation," said Shanto.

"Honestly, it was a little bit nervous, but we believed we could do it.

"For me, it was my best innings. And everyone bowled well, we all supported each other."

Man-of-the-match Ahmed, who took 3-19, added that "I've seen something like that for the first time", referring to the last-ball drama.

Victory pushed Bangladesh to four points in Group 2 with two games remaining, level with India who face South Africa, who have three points, in Perth later on Sunday.

Pakistan meet the Netherlands in a must-win game, also in Perth, with neither side having yet scored a point.

Defeat left Zimbabwe, who stunned Pakistan by one run on Thursday, still in the hunt for a semifinal place with three points.

The top two in each group advance to the last four. — **AFP**

Miller fifty powers South Africa to last-over win against India

PERTH: Fast bowler Lungi Ngidi decimated India's top order and David Miller blasted a vital fifty on Sunday as South Africa triumphed by five wickets against the 2007 champions in a low-scoring Twenty20 World Cup clash at Perth Stadium.

India recovered from losing four early wickets after winning the toss, guided by Suryakumar Yadav (68 off 40 balls) to a modest total of 133-9 in 20 overs.

South Africa responded by scoring 137-5 with two balls remaining, spearheaded by Miller's 46-ball 59.

"Pretty nerve-wracking when games get that close", said man-of-the-match Ngidi.

"This is probably one of my biggest dreams to be honest, to get something like this (award) at a World Cup and help my country win a game."

India's defence got off to a perfect start when Arshdeep Singh (2-25) produced a lovely outswinger on the first ball of the second over, kissing the outside edge of Quinton de Kock's bat to send the aggressive opener on his way for one.

Two balls later, Rilee Rossouw had to depart for a duck after a successful lbw review.

Mohammed Shami joined the act when he had Proteas skipper Temba Bavuma caught behind for 10, leaving Aiden Markram (52) and Miller to restore order to the chase.

Requiring 94 from the final 10 overs on a pitch offering plenty of bounce, South Africa came out firing against spinner Ravichandran Ashwin after the drinks break, although Markram almost came unstuck on 35 when he was dropped by Virat Kohli.

When Markram was caught pulling Hardik Pandya to Yadav, Miller's role shifted from anchor to finisher, striking back-to-back sixes off Ashwin to take some sting out of the match.

The 33-year-old struck Bhuvneshwar Kumar through the covers to score the winning run.



Earlier, Wayne Parnell started proceedings with a maiden, but India openers Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul both blasted sixes to get off the mark and bring the crowd to their feet.

India lost their first wicket when skipper Sharma popped a return catch to Ngidi (4-29), before the fast bowler also accounted for KL Rahul (9) and Kohli (12) in quick succession.

The relentless pace assault continued when Anrich Nortje found the outside edge of Deepak Hooda for a duck, and when Kagiso Rabada held on to a diving



catch at fine leg to dismiss Pandya (2) to deliver Ngidi his fourth wicket, India were reeling at 49-5.

A counter-attacking half-century by Yadav brought India back into the game in the middle overs, but when he skied Parnell into the safe hands of Keshav Maharaj in the penultimate over, the top-ranked side lost momentum.

South Africa currently lead Group Two while India drop to second, but the table has tightened following Pakistan's six-wicket triumph against the Netherlands in a Perth double-header. — **Reuters**



Pakistan hammer Netherlands to keep T20 World Cup hopes alive

PERTH: Pakistan's bowlers, led by spinner Shadab Khan, helped them hammer the Netherlands by six wickets in Perth on Sunday for a first win at the Twenty20 World Cup which kept their faint hopes of reaching the semifinals alive.

Pakistan restricted the Dutch to 91-9, and then cruised to 95-4 with 37 balls to spare as Mohammad Rizwan made 49.

But it was the bowlers set up victory for a side that lost their opener to India and then were shocked by Zimbabwe in Group 2.

Shadab returned figures of 3-22 and pace bowler Mohammad Wasim took two wickets to set the tone for their team's domination against a Dutch side who are out

of the semifinal running after losing a third straight Super 12 match.

"Very happy. Performed very well in the bowling and in the batting," Pakistan captain Babar Azam said after the team's first ever T20 victory in Australia.

"In my opinion we could chase better than this. But a win always gives you confidence. We'll try to do our best in the next matches and win."

Pakistan lost Azam, for four, in the second over of their chase when he was run out by a direct throw from Roelof van der Merwe.

But Rizwan attacked from the start, hitting five fours and putting on 37 with the returning Fakhar Zaman.

NERVES CALMED

Fast bowler Brandon Glover had Zaman caught behind for 20 as a crowd of over 10,000, dominated by Pakistan supporters, feared for the worst at a venue where Pakistan fell short by one run in their chase of a modest 130 against Zimbabwe on Thursday.

But Rizwan and Shan Masood calmed the nerves with stand of 30 and, despite both falling near the end, Pakistan sailed past their target as bowling hero Shadab hit the winning four.

Netherlands captain Scott Edwards won the toss and chose to bat first but Pakistan's new-ball bowlers kept a disciplined line and only three runs came from the first two overs.

Returning opener Stephan Myburgh broke the shackles with a boundary off Shaheen Shah Afridi only to fall next ball, caught at fine leg attempting another big hit to be out for six.

There was no respite from the Pakistan quick bowlers.

Wasim took two wickets in two balls only for Paul van Meekeren to survive the hat-trick delivery, and Haris Rauf made good use of the bounce on offer.

A nasty bouncer from Rauf got through Bas de Leede's helmet grill, forcing the batsman off the ground with a bruised cheek bone.

He returned from a medical check to sit out the rest of the match in the dugout sporting a nasty-looking black eye. — **AFP**

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Festival to showcase economic potential of Oman’s date farming sector

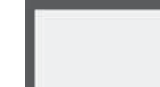
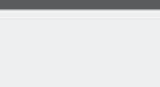
الأموريات النورية

Omani Dates festival

31 Oct - 6 Nov 2022

from 10 Am-10 Pm

Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre

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QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, OCT 30

The eighth edition of the Omani Dates Festival opens today, October 31, 2022 at Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre – an annual event that showcases the increasingly important economic potential behind date cultivation and processing in the country.

The week-long festival will be inaugurated by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion. Besides attracting visitors and tourists to the venue, the festival aims to promote Omani date products, introduce new types of Omani dates and encourage farmers and date processors to unlock new value and markets for their products.

The festival, organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, in cooperation with the SME Development Authority, will also feature a number of creative events and competitions, including an exhibition of photographs on date palms, children’s theatre, and amusement activities for kids.

Joining date farmers at the venue will be representatives of date processing units from the different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman. They will display varieties of fresh Omani dates, their innovative products and creative marketing tactics.

According to National Centre for Statistics & Information (NCSI), date production reached around 374 thousand tonnes across multiple varieties in 2021. Oman enjoys the longest date production season in the world, extending a total of seven months.

The country is home to 9.1 million date palms, representing 9

THE GROWTH OF A ROBUST DATE-BASED ECONOMY IN OMAN IS EXEMPLIFIED BY TWO MAJOR INITIATIVES – THE MILLION DATE PALMS PROJECT, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED IN 2017 WITH THE AIM OF ACHIEVING SOCIOECONOMIC RETURNS ON DATE PALM CULTIVATION THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF THE LATEST SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS IN AGRICULTURAL PROCESSES, COMMERCIALISATION OF DATES THROUGH MODERN PROCESSING AND INNOVATIVE VALUE-ADDING TECHNIQUES AND ENHANCEMENT OF THE COMPETITIVENESS OF OMANI DATES IN FOREIGN MARKETS.

per cent of the world’s total number of date palms. Around 325 varieties of dates are cultivated in Oman.

The growth of a robust date-based economy in Oman is exemplified by two major initiatives – the Million Date Palms Project, which was launched in 2017 with the aim of achieving socioeconomic returns on date palm cultivation through the application of the latest scientific developments in agricultural processes, commercialisation of dates through modern processing and innovative value-adding techniques and enhancement of the competitiveness of Omani dates in foreign markets.

As part of the initiative, hundreds of thousands of date palms have been planted in 11 sprawling farms distributed across the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman Chromite invests in low-carbon ferrochrome plant in Suhar

JOMAR MENDOZA
[@JmObserver](#)

Publicly traded Oman Chromite Company SAOG (Oman Chromite), in a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA), has announced the signing of a purchase agreement worth RO 500,000 for a 20 per cent stake in a low-carbon ferrochrome plant under development in Sohar Port and Freezone.

The company said, “Oman Chrome Company SAOG has signed an agreement on Thursday 27/10/2022 for a 20 per cent share of a low-carbon ferrochrome plant for RO 500,000.

The plant is currently under construction in Sohar Port and Freezone, which will be an addition to the value-added



projects for chrome ore, and it is expected that the company’s profits will be supplemented around 10 per cent of this investment.”

The company, in its unaudited financial statements for the third quarter ended on September 30, 2022, managed to produce 55,550 tonnes of chromite ore, compared to 22,849 tonnes in the same period last year. It achieved a revenue of RO 3.121 million compared to RO 2.161 million in the same period last year.

On the other hand, Oman Chromite posts a profit after tax of RO 1.267 million during the third quarter compared to RO 368,547 for the same period last year, an increase of 344 per cent.

Humaid al Maqbali, Chairman of Oman Chromite said, “The company will continue its efforts to improve and to achieve good financial results to take advantage of the expected high raw materials prices during the coming period.”

تاجير للتحويل Taageer Finance Co. SAOG			
Board of Directors’ Report for the period ended 30 September 2022			
 Dear Shareholders, On behalf of the Board of Directors of Taageer Finance Company SAOG, I am pleased to present the un-audited financial statements for the period ended 30 Sept 2022. Performance Summary Gross portfolio registered a growth of 17.60 % YOY and stood at RO 295.521 million as on 30 Sept 2022 (Sept 2021 RO 251.296 million). Cumulative provisions as at Sept 2022 is RO 23.831 million (Sept 2021 – RO 19.730 million) as per IFRS 9 requirements. ECL has increased by 20.78 % YOY basis reflecting prudence judgement on ECL. The borrowings including unsecured non-convertible bonds stood at RO 149.307 million (Sept 2021 – RO 129.930 million). As per the financial results for the period ended 30 Sept 2022 the revenue of RO 16.653 million (Sept 2021-RO 13.947 million) is reported, an increase of 19.40% YOY. The Interest Expenses for the period stood at RO 6.810 million (Sept 2021 – RO 6.221 million) and the overhead expense at RO 4.347 million (Sept 2021 – RO 3.517 million) The Company registered Profit of RO 5.496 million before Expected Credit Losses (ECL) charge and taxation for the period (Sept 2021 - RO 4.209 million) an increase of 30.57 %. The Net Profit after ECL charge of RO 3.135 million and RO 0.354 million Taxation stood at RO 2.007 million for the period ended 30 Sept 2022 vis-a-vis RO 1.512 million as on 30 Sept 2021 an increase of 32.73%. Market Outlook High oil prices and fiscal consolidation have improved fiscal and external balances and will enable the Government to start spending on the infra projects which in turn will have a positive benefit for the overall economic growth. The broad array of structural reforms under Oman Vision 2040 helps achieve strong, job-rich, and sustainable private sector- growth. The Company is continuously working to support the SME sector and improve the overall growth parameters. With timely support from the regulator combined with strong leadership and management team and Company is committed to maintaining high standards of business operations and profitability. Acknowledgement On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to express sincere gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik bin Taimour for his vision and wise leadership. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincere appreciation and acknowledgement for the guidance and support from the Central Bank of Oman, Capital Market Authority and Muscat Securities Market. We are also grateful to our shareholders, bankers, dealers and customers for their continued trust, confidence and support. Finally, the Board would like to appreciate and thank the management and the staff for all their hard work and efforts. On Behalf of the Board of Directors Rashid bin Saif Al Saadi Chairman Note: The complete accounts will be sent by mail to any shareholder who requests them in Arabic or English as requested, within 7 days of receipt of the request.	UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022		
	Sept-22 RO'000	Sept-21 RO'000	2021 RO'000
ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	9,308	7,082	16,655
Net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	187,510	166,695	165,064
Other receivables and prepayments	729	340	582
Deferred tax asset – net	89	88	89
Vehicles, equipment and right-of-use assets	587	446	440
Statutory deposit	250	250	250
Total assets	198,473	174,901	183,080
LIABILITIES AND EQUITY			
LIABILITIES			
Creditors, accruals and other liabilities	3,205	1,495	2,216
Bank overdrafts and short-term loans	55,167	62,379	60,603
Unsecured non-convertible bonds	13,585	-	13,351
Tax payable	368	310	471
Corporate and security deposits	13,459	11,836	9,820
Long-term loans	67,096	55,715	52,272
Total liabilities	152,880	131,735	138,733
EQUITY			
Share capital	25,866	25,359	25,359
Legal reserve	5,395	5,141	5,395
IFRS 9 impairment reserve	2,222	2,222	2,222
Fair value reserve	(441)	(441)	(441)
Retained earnings	12,551	10,885	11,812
Total equity	45,593	43,166	44,347
Total equity and liabilities	198,473	174,901	183,080
Net assets per share (baizas)	176	170	175
UN-AUDITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2022			
	Sept-22 RO'000	Sept-21 RO'000	
Income			
Finance income	15,066		13,046
Interest expense	(6,810)		(6,221)
Net finance income	8,256		6,825
Other operating income	1,587		901
	9,843		7,726
Expenses			
Operating expenses	(4,054)		(3,176)
Depreciation	(293)		(341)
Impairment in net investment in finance leases, working capital finance and factoring receivables	(3,135)		(2,421)
	(7,482)		(5,938)
Profit before taxation	2,361		1,788
Taxation	(354)		(276)
Profit for the period	2,007		1,512
Basic and diluted earnings per share (baizas)	10.35		7.95

Bank Muscat holds special event for Asalah Priority Banking customers in Salalah

MUSCAT: In line with Bank Muscat’s customer-centric vision and commitment to further strengthen its partnership and communication channels with its customers, Asalah Priority Banking recently hosted a special event for its customers in Salalah, which was attended by Abdulnaseer al Raisi, General Manager — Personal Banking and a number of bank officials. The event saw a large turnout of customers who shared their appreciation and feedback on the bank’s cutting-edge services and facilities.

On this occasion, Taya Eid Bait Sabea, Deputy General Manager — Interior Regions, Bank Muscat expressed his happiness and thanked the attendees for making the event a success. He further thanked the customers for their continuous support and confidence in the services, products and special offers that the bank is constantly developing as a



translation of its customer-centric vision of “serving you better, everyday.”

He stressed that the bank continues to focus on its customers as part of its growth and development strategy and added that the bank would continue to innovate and provide them with an exclusive experience that matches

their aspirations.

Customers having a monthly salary of RO 5,000 or those who maintain a savings balance of RO 30,000 are eligible for Asalah Priority Banking and enjoy a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 39 Asalah Centres across Oman and a

dedicated 24/7 Asalah Call Centre.

Asalah customers also enjoy access to an integrated wealth management platform that allows them to invest in global asset classes through a single touchpoint. They also get the latest updates and reports on local and international investment opportunities, across asset classes.

Asalah Priority Banking offers exclusive lifestyle benefits for its clientele including the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 “Buy 1, Get 1 Free” offers in Oman and at international destinations as well as rewards and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments.

The Asalah Debit Card offers access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO 1,000 per transaction. Asalah Visa Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000

lounges worldwide, and a 24/7 global concierge service.

The credit card also offers 1% cashback on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members. Cardholders can also enjoy complimentary chauffeur service to and from the Muscat International Airport.

In order to enhance services to customers, Bank Muscat had earlier launched its Customer Referral programme, which offers guaranteed cash prizes for confirmed referrals to Asalah Priority Banking. A reward of RO 100 per successful referral will be paid out once the referred customer meets the eligibility criteria for a minimum of three months after opening an Asalah account with the bank.

Existing Asalah customers can win up to RO 2,000 by making up to 20 successful referrals during this year.

Shell Oman launches ‘Fuel and Win’ campaign



MUSCAT: Shell Oman Marketing Company SAOG (Shell Oman) has announced the launch of its ‘Fuel and Win Campaign,’ beginning from October 25, as part of its celebrations of Oman’s 52nd National Day.

The campaign will cover all Shell service stations, offering motorists an opportunity to be one of 52 winners of the grand prize of two MG5 cars, as well as 50 Shell V-Power fuel cards, each worth RO 50, to experience Shell V-Power, our best performance fuel.

All that the customers need to do is simply fuel their vehicles with Shell V-Power, Shell Mogas 95, or Shell Mogas 91, for RO 8 or more, to enter the draw.

In order to enter the campaign draw, participating customers need to SMS the unique code on their receipt generated at Shell Oman’s point of sale machine to the mobile number 90171717. This will enable the entry to the campaign draw.

The 52nd National Day theme campaign is scheduled to run until December 8, and will have weekly draws for fuel cards, starting from November 1. The final draw, for the winners of two MG5 cars, will be held on December 20.

Khalid al Awaisi, Mobility General Manager, Shell Oman, said “As the nation prepares to celebrate the 52nd National Day, we at Shell Oman want to make it special for our customers who play a pivotal role in our long and successful journey in the country. It is our expression of gratitude to our customers and a demonstration of our commitment to partner with the nation on our National Day.”

SEZAD holds environmental awareness campaign for students in Duqm



DUQM: The Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD) continues its efforts towards spreading environmental awareness among the local community at Duqm within its “Together for Sustainable environment in Duqm” programme.

With this, the environmental sustainability department of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) & Oman Company for the Development of Special Economic Zone at Duqm (Tatweer) organised an environmental awareness

programme for a number of students at Duqm Basic Education School, which included 45 elementary level students. The programme included a presentation on the importance of protecting environment and nature.

The awareness programme also included a field visit to the sewage treatment plant in SEZAD. The students were briefed on solid and liquid waste disposal mechanisms and the importance of water rationalisation in order to create a sustainable environment in Duqm.

Alizz Islamic Bank announces winners of 2nd Hiyya awards for women

MUSCAT: As part of its leading efforts to honour women on Omani Women’s Day, which corresponds to October 17 of each year, Alizz Islamic Bank held a festive celebration on this occasion at the Sheraton Hotel Muscat under the patronage of HH Dr Taghreed bint Turki al Said, and in the presence of the bank’s CEO Sulaiman bin Hamad al Harthi, and Hani al Zubair, The Deputy Chairman of the Board of Directors of the bank.

“This token of appreciation for women is designed to make them feel proud by providing the appropriate environment for their participation in various aspects of life, and enhances their status and enables them to actively participate in the comprehensive and sustainable development efforts in the country.

Our glorious history, throughout all of its eras and phases, is a witness of the exceptional contributions of Omani women in various fields, thus confirming that success is not attributed to gender, but to giving. We, at Alizz Islamic Bank,



have been and still partner with various parties to promote and empower women with firm belief and conviction in the importance of their participation in every aspect of life.

Therefore, Alizz Islamic Bank continued its path to launch the second edition of the ‘Hiyya’ awards for women, because giving is what remains in the memory.

Out of responsibility, we have undoubtedly continued our efforts to place Omani woman in a high position, whether through the

products and services we provide, or through paving the way for them and creating the appropriate atmosphere that leads to their unceasing creativity wherever they set foot, and this is what we resolved to do”, said Sulaiman bin Hamad al Harthi, CEO of Alizz Islamic Bank.

During the ceremony, Alizz Islamic Bank unveiled the winners of the Hiyya awards for women in its second edition. The awards were classified into several categories.

KR announces winners for Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022

MUSCAT: Khimji Ramdas — Air conditioning and Appliances Division-(KR AC & Appliances) a part of the Khimji Ramdas Group, a leading business conglomerate in Oman, stirred up the excitement for football fans earlier this month by launching an exciting campaign that offers Kelon customers an opportunity to win a match tickets to the Fifa World Cup 2022 in Qatar.

In line with the same, the company announced the Second round of match ticket winners on October 27. The remaining draws are planned for November 3 and 10. So far, 8 lucky winners have won match tickets to the Fifa World Cup 2022.

The campaign commenced



on October 10 and will run until November 10, giving individuals ample time to participate in the

upcoming draws and win match tickets to experience the thrilling Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022.

To participate, customers are simply required to purchase any Kelon home appliance during

the campaign period and scan the QR code to be directed to the registering website where they can enter their unique invoice number to be eligible for the draw.

Commenting on the campaign, Sunil Vishnu, General Manager-KR AC & Appliances said, “The Fifa World Cup Qatar 2022 is the first-ever event of its kind in the region and we are indeed thrilled to provide this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to witness the match in person to our valued patrons.

At KR AC & Appliances, we don’t only focus on bringing quality brands like Kelon to Oman but also ensure that we spearhead engaging, rewarding campaigns that add value to our customer’s lives. On that note, we’d also like

to congratulate all the winners and encourage everyone to further explore and make the most of Kelon’s extensive range of products to participate in the draw.”

Under KR AC & Appliances, Kelon, which is one of the largest manufacturers of household appliances, has become a popular brand in Oman.

With innovation at its core, Kelon offers a plethora of home appliances, including, but not limited to domestic air conditioners, chillers, refrigerators, chest freezers and washing machines. These are retailed through over a hundred KR AC & Appliances channel partners as well as its own showrooms across Oman.



In brief

■ LONDON



UK COMPANIES SEE TOUGH CONDITIONS ENDURING IN MONTHS AHEAD: CBI

British businesses think the gloom hanging over their prospects will persist in the coming months, according to an industry survey published on Sunday.

The Confederation of British Industry's (CBI) gauge of private sector growth in the three months to October rose to -15 from -19 in the three months to September, still in contraction territory.

For the next three months, services and distribution companies expect a further downturn, although manufacturers were more optimistic. — **Reuters**

■ CAIRO



UAE TARGETS CLEAN PROJECTS AT 50% OF ENERGY MIX BY 2050

The United Arab Emirates aims to increase the share of clean energy projects to 50 per cent of its overall energy mix by 2050, state news agency WAM cited its energy minister as saying on Sunday.

Suhail al Mazrouei (pictured) also said the Gulf state would start revising its energy strategy at the beginning of 2023 to align it with the goal of achieving climate neutrality by 2050. It was not immediately clear how the state would accomplish that goal with fossil fuels still accounting for half of its energy supply. He added that the UAE aimed to reach a 25 per cent share of the hydrogen export market and that Japan, South Korea and Germany would be top destinations for it. — **Reuters**

■ DOHA



QATARENERGY IN TALKS FOR 30% STAKE IN LEBANON OFFSHORE GAS PROJECT, SAYS CEO

State-owned QatarEnergy is in talks with the Lebanese government to take a 30 per cent stake in an offshore exploration block and is also negotiating with TotalEnergies and ENI on this matter, Chief Executive Officer Saad al-Kaabi confirmed on Sunday.

Two sources said last week that TotalEnergies and the Lebanese government have reached a deal handing the French oil major temporary majority control of the block and paving the way for negotiations with Qatar over a stake in the gas project. — **Reuters**

State entities to play key roles in Oman's hydrogen economy

Hydrogen value chain: Roles for OQ Networks, Asyad Shipping, Majis Industrial, Marafiq and OETC envisioned as well

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, OCT 30

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals has outlined the different roles that various Omani state-owned entities will play in the country's mega-scale hydrogen value chain that was unveiled for the first time last week.

A total of four different roles are envisioned in the development of the country's future hydrogen economy, the success of which is pivotal to delivering on the Omani government's commitment to achieving Net-Zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Playing the lead role is the Ministry itself which, as Policymaker & Regulator, will chalk out the country's green hydrogen strategy, as well as formulate the underlying



regulations.

A key role has assigned to the newly established state-owned hydrogen-centric company, Hydrogen Oman (Hydrom) – an affiliate of Energy Development Oman (EDO). Hydrom's remit as 'Orchestrator' includes, among other things, tendering and award of the land concessions, development and management of the common infrastructure, coordinating product offtake with investors and markets, liaising between developers and utilities (power, water and gas networks), and working alongside the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).

In addition to serving as the industry's 'Orchestrator', Hydrom will also play a role in the development and management of the transport and storage

infrastructure linked to the green hydrogen industry.

Supplementary roles are also envisioned for OQ Networks (which owns and operates the country's gas network), Majis Industrial Services (MIS) – the state-owned integrated water utility, Marafiq Oman – a centralised utilities provider, and Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) – part of Nama Group.

The role of the investor / developer is broad-based. In addition to financing the project, the developer will also invest in the upstream renewables-based power generation component, the midstream electrolyser facilities, and downstream production of hydrogen or its derivatives.

OQ Alternative Energy, a fully owned arm of OQ Group,

Cumulative investments in Oman's green hydrogen economy are estimated to total around RO 54 billion by 2050, according to the Ministry.

is expected to represent the government's stake in all hydrogen projects developed in Oman.

Finally, Asyad Shipping – part of state-owned Asyad Group – will be involved in the maritime transportation of green ammonia and other hydrogen-based derivatives that will emerge from this nascent industry.

Cumulative investments in Oman's green hydrogen economy are estimated to total around RO 54 billion by 2050, according to the Ministry. This will include investments necessary for the massive quantities of key infrastructure components and hardware, notably solar panels, wind turbines, electrolyzers, derivative synthesis systems, storage, water, transport, water desalination, and other equipment.

Food packaging firm expands operations in Oman

MUSCAT: Hotpack Global, a UAE-based company engaged in disposable food packaging products, unveiled its fourth sales centre in Oman and its 47th overall in the Middle East. The sales centre located in Barka, was inaugurated in a grand ceremony in the presence of Muntaser bin Salam bin Saleh al Harrasi, the Director of the Consumer Protection Department in South Al Batinah, Barka.

Commenting on Hotpack's expansion in Oman, Abdul Jebbar PB, said, "We are pleased to unveil our fourth sales centre in Oman. With Oman's current economic trajectory, consumer demand will continue to rise in the future. We are making Hotpack products more accessible to consumers through our outlets in Oman. They will have more options for high-quality food packaging products available in the market. It is going to support our omnichannel strategy in the region."



"We will continue down our current path for expansion in the GCC region as it is among the fastest growing markets for food packaging products in the world. The industry is witnessing a growth of five to seven per cent, which is above the global average of three to five per cent. With these new sales centres, we will be able to optimise our operational costs, increase our volume capability and

streamline our supply chains enabling faster order fulfilment for our customers in Oman," he added.

Further elaborating on Hotpack's expansion strategy in the GCC region, Rethish V Pillai, stated, "We have an aggressive expansion plan ready for Oman and we will be launching more outlets in the region moving forward. We also have plans to launch new retail stores in Nizwa, Sur and Suhar soon. We are keen to strengthen our strategic position in Oman and establish Hotpack as the premium food packaging brand in the country and region. We are also in the process of completing construction on the factory in Suhar."

In keeping with the company's global vision, Hotpack also recently launched its webstore in Oman to complement its sales centres. Further, the company had previously launched retail centres in Seeb Souq, Salalah and most recently in Ruwi, as well as a fulfilment centre.

OMRAN, OQ pledge cooperation in tourism, In-Country Value

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

Oman Tourism Development Company (OMRAN Group) signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MoC) with OQ to explore potential opportunities in the areas of research, training, exchange of expertise and knowledge, human resource development and to discover various initiatives aimed at encouraging sustainable practices, as well as promoting activities related to In-Country Value and empowering SMEs in the tourism sector.

The agreement was signed by Hashil bin Obaid al Mahrouqi, CEO of OMRAN Group, and Ashraf bin Hamad al Maamari, Chief Executive People, Technology & Culture in OQ, in the presence of several officials from both parties at OCEC.

The MoC covers exploring



collaboration opportunities in training and capacity building through knowledge and experience transfer between parties. It aims to boost sustainability through social, economic, environmental, and cultural initiatives.

The MoC also covers cooperation in research development and the exchange of expertise in projects.

Furthermore, the MoC focuses on social investment projects, local community development activities, boosting ICV and sponsoring SME development programmes.

Commenting on the MoC, Hashil al Mahrouqi said, "The OMRAN Group seeks to implement the principles of sustainability and enhance ICV through strategic initiatives and

partnerships as well as empower national competencies and SMEs. We believe that a collaborative approach such as this plays an effective role in achieving national development; therefore, we are keen to leverage it to achieve our goals in line with the National Tourism Strategy and Oman Vision 2040."

Ashraf al Maamari, Chief Exec. People, Technology & Culture in OQ, said, "The OQ Group seeks to cooperate with the OMRAN Group in key research and development areas within the OQ Group to establish initiatives that boost economic diversification and sustainable practices."

He added, "We strongly believe in our national competencies and their essential role in achieving national development; therefore, we are working with many parties to supplement these competencies with a wide range of professional skills."

Siemens appoints new CEO in Oman



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 30

Global technology powerhouse Siemens has appointed Jamie Hoyzer (pictured) as Chief Executive Officer in Oman, effective October 1, 2022.

Hoyzer replaces Franco Atassi, who led the business in Oman for a year and remains the CEO of Siemens Smart Infrastructure in the Middle East.

Hoyzer joined the Siemens apprenticeship programme in 2002 and continued to work for the company in various roles in Germany, the UAE and Oman over the course of his career. He became the General Manager of Siemens in Oman in 2021.

Hoyzer is a seasoned manager with broad experience across the Siemens portfolio. In the past two decades, he has held multiple positions of increasing responsibility in management, production, finance, sales, customer relationships and project management.

"I'm excited to lead a great team and build on the successes achieved in Oman over Siemens long history in the country. Siemens is working hard to help Oman develop and diversify its economy, preserve its environment and achieve its social goals," Hoyzer said.

"I'm honoured to have the opportunity to support Oman's journey to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, digital transformation through technology and partnership-building, as well as driving in-country value contribution and building up the local workforce in the Sultanate of Oman."

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"We are confident that Jamie will lead Siemens in Oman to even bigger achievements at this pivotal moment in the Sultanate of Oman's development. We look forward to deepening our partnership with Oman ensure that Siemens continues to contribute to the digital transformation necessary for the country to prosper in the decades to come," said Franco Atassi, the CEO of Siemens Smart Infrastructure in the Middle East.

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Observer

HIS MAJESTY ADMINISTERS OATH TO NEW MINISTER

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NEW RO SO BANQUETTE FROM THIS MONTH



A Day For Grandparents

KABEER YOUSUF

The role of grandparents in the success of a child is often not recognised. In fact, commonly these days, they remain in the background only silently celebrating the achievements of their grandchildren which would have not been possible without their important inputs.

Other than being playmates and caretakers to their grandchildren, grandparents are important role models and mentors for the younger generations having paved the easier way for those that follow in their footsteps.

They are great pillars of support when a family issue pops up, they are source of solutions and are also historians who teach values, instil heritage and pass on family traditions to the generation next.

The kindergarten section and the section for Children with Special Needs at a school recently hosted all grandparents and honoured them for the path they covered in life, for the values they instilled in their children and grandchildren and for being the umbrella for the family for their life.

Al Injaz Private School celebrated the life of grandparents as they are a family's greatest treasure, the founders of a loving legacy, the greatest



storytellers, and the keepers of traditions as part of the Grandparents Day on October 24.

"Just like parents, grandparents love unconditionally, which helps a child feel safe and secure. The benefits go both ways and relationships such as these can help grandparents have happier and longer lives. Grandparents help teach family culture, tradition and history," said Radhwan al Hasani, Principal

It was a sight to behold as the tiny tots welcomed their grandparents. The children were excited to showcase their love for their grandparents, which was evident on their faces while they performed various events. The exemplary performance of the students of Kindergarten and Section for Special Needs on various songs and poems tied the entire show and left everyone spellbound with cheerful faces.

"It is the grandparents who help us



connect ourselves with our roots and help us understand more about who we are and where we came from. We are an accumulation of generations past, and sometimes learning more about them can unearth similarities and clear up things about ourselves," added Amita Sharma, Director.

The teachers said that the role of grandparents in family life is ever-changing as they play many roles, from mentor, to historian, to loving

companion and to child-care provider. Their grandchildren will be inherited with a sense of security of belonging to the extended family as the strong intergenerational connections nurtured by their grandparents is really powerful.

The event culminated with more joyous moments as the tiny tots showed their grandparents their School, and their parents captured these moments on the camera.

READ

DEMON COPPERHEAD BY BARBARA KINGSOLVER

A reimagining of Charles Dickens's "David Copperfield" set in the mountains of southern Appalachia.



ENTERTAINMENT

After six years without releasing a solo song Rihanna on Friday dropped "Lift Me Up," the lead track off the Marvel sequel "Black Panther: Wakanda Forever." Her label said the song is a tribute to Chadwick Boseman, who played the title character in the first "Black Panther" film and died of cancer last year.

— AFP



ART ATTACK

A painting by Dutch abstract painter Piet Mondrian has been hanging upside down for 77 years, says a curator at the German museum. A large retrospective of the avant garde artist's work went on display on Saturday at the Kunstsammlung museum in Dusseldorf, and one of the pieces on show is "New York City I", painted in 1941. — AFP





Scottish blueberry farmer donates ‘unviable’ crop to charity

A SCOTTISH FARMER is giving away his entire crop of blueberries, worth £2 million, to charity, saying cheap imports and high labour costs have made harvesting the fruit economically unviable.

Peter Thomson has been growing blueberries at his farm in Blairgowrie, northeast Scotland, for more than four decades, producing 300 tonnes of fruit per year.

But now, he said, growers in Peru and South Africa can sell their berries in the UK at a far lower price, while a shortage of pickers caused by Brexit has made the harvest unviable.

"They've started planting huge areas of blueberries in the subtropics like Peru and South Africa," said Thomson, who started growing blueberries in 1976.

"Their costs of production are so low that we can't compete."

Normally, said Thomson, 200 workers would have picked around 300 tonnes of blueberries this year with 50 more working in the packhouse.

In 2014, the price paid to Scottish farmers for blueberries was £17.50 per kilo, he said. Today however, supermarkets pay less than £7.

Labour costs meanwhile have risen from £7 an hour five years ago to £10.10 today, even before state pension contributions and holiday pay are taken into account.

This meant that the value of crop of berries, which would once have been worth £3 million or more, fell to £2 million this year.

Retailers are unwilling to pay a premium for Scottish produce as shoppers target bargains during the cost-of-living squeeze, Thomson said.

THE BREXIT FACTOR

The cheaper imports started last year after countries including Peru and South Africa, where pickers are paid substantially

less, started using a new cultivar of the blueberry plant.

The sweet juicy berries grow densely on bushes with scarlet leaves that are planted in rows.

Blueberries usually require a frost before they flower, which meant farmers in Scotland had the market to themselves in September and October and could command a higher price.

The new cultivar, however,



does not need a frost to thrive.

The new blueberry variety is also popular with supermarkets as the fruit are larger and firmer and can be shipped – rather than airfreighted – to UK supermarkets over a number of

weeks without spoiling.

Another economic impact has come from Brexit, which has pushed up the price of labour and made it difficult to find skilled pickers.

Before Brexit, said Thomson, the farm's village of caravans was filled with skilled European pickers, who were experienced and harvested the berries at a faster pace.

Today the caravans stand empty.

"Brexit has had the consequence of making our labour more expensive," Thomson said.

"We have to get labour now

from places like Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, and it comes from so far that it is expensive."

IT IS DEVASTATING

Thomson said he had invited the public to fill up buckets of blueberries in exchange for a donation to a cancer charity. A portion of the berries is also being given to food banks.

Hundreds of local residents have responded to Thomson's invitation to pick for charity, many of them arriving at the farm with buckets and boxes.

Local resident Amanda Taylor, who was one of those picking berries at the farm, said it was devastating to see the crops rotting in a field when so many cannot afford food.

"It's quite an emotional thing actually, that we're having to fly produce from Peru when I have this on my doorstep," she said.

Pauline Cropper, who is volunteering to organise pickers at the farm, said people were finding it difficult to afford their shopping bills and were picking the cheapest options available.

"Meanwhile, the berries here are sitting on the bushes and going to waste – they're falling off the bushes, there's so many of them, because it's not viable for the local farmer to pay a decent wage," she said.

Thomson said his plants could have kept producing berries for another 50 years, but continuing to prune and maintain them was too costly.

"It is devastating for us, but it doesn't make economic sense to take the fruit to the shops," he said.

"We have no realistic prospect of making money unless the supermarkets are prepared to pay (more) for Scottish blueberries."

He plans to continue farming his other crop, cherries, but may build houses on some of his land.

HEALTH

Pinktober sees more awareness being raised about breast cancer in Oman



A NUMBER OF EVENTS had been taking place across the country in celebration of Pinktober or the Breast Cancer Awareness month.

For a lot of companies, women have become front and centre in numerous Corporate Social Responsibility activities with the

by Avani Muscat.

Al Tobi said that in his experience as a hotelier and his deep knowledge of Oman and the region, it is important to ensure that the community benefits from the different CSR programmes introduced by differ-



hope that more awareness can be made about this deadly disease.

In Muscat, Dr Rajyashtree N Kutty presented a Breast Clinical Examination and Awareness Talk, attended by a number of local women and esteemed guests. A mobile mammogram was also set onsite by Oman Cancer Association, which accommodated over 60 women during October as introduced and spearheaded by Avani Muscat and supported by the hotel's leadership.

Recently joining as the new general manager of the Avani property, Ismail al Tobi is eager to support and involve the local community in CSR initiatives run

ent organisations.

"Opened for a little under a year now, our team at Avani Muscat is eager to make a positive impact on our guests, visitors and to serve the wider community that we are part of. It was a great honour to host Dr Kutty and provide the audience an opportunity to learn more about their health," Al Tobi said.

"It is my personal mission to give back to those who have supported us since opening, but also to seek out local projects that are deserving of our help. I look forward to making a difference in Muscat and Oman, wherever we can," he added.

FOOD SCENE

The kick comes at the end - world's hottest chili flavours French chocolates



IT IS HARD to come up with something new at Paris' annual chocolate fair, but French chocolatier Damien Vidal found a way to put a mouth-tingling twist on his confectionary: incorporating the world's hottest chili.

Besides traditional ingredients such as raspberry, cassis and passion fruit, his marble-shaped "Bille en tete" (a play on a French idiom for "headfirst") chocolates are flavoured with Carolina Reaper, the world's hottest chili pepper according to Guinness World Records.

He managed to put just enough chili in them to give them a kick, but not too much so as to make them unpalatable.

Two Japanese tourists and other visitors at the chocolate fair gamely tried the shiny chocolate-chili balls and nobody spat them out.

"Mmm, it is both sweetie and spicy, not too spicy, the spicy taste is mild," said Japanese student Hitomi Ebitani.

French fair visitor Justine

Bonneau agreed.

"It's really nice, it's a good surprise, the heat comes at the end. First it's fine, then it heats up and it gets hot," she said, making fun of her companion who she said was looking flushed after eating one.

Vidal – an award-winning pastry chef who has worked in top Parisian restaurants and was invited as "young talent" at the Paris Chocolate fair – said this delayed effect was exactly what he was looking for: sweet and gentle at first, then a taste explosion, which eases off after a few minutes.

"We've had to go through several recipes, several attempts to find the right balance, one that allows to please most people," he said.

French households on average eat 13.2 kilos of chocolate per year, but leave enough for France to export more than 245,000 tonnes of chocolate, worth nearly one billion euros, each year, Paris chocolate industry data show.

— Reuters



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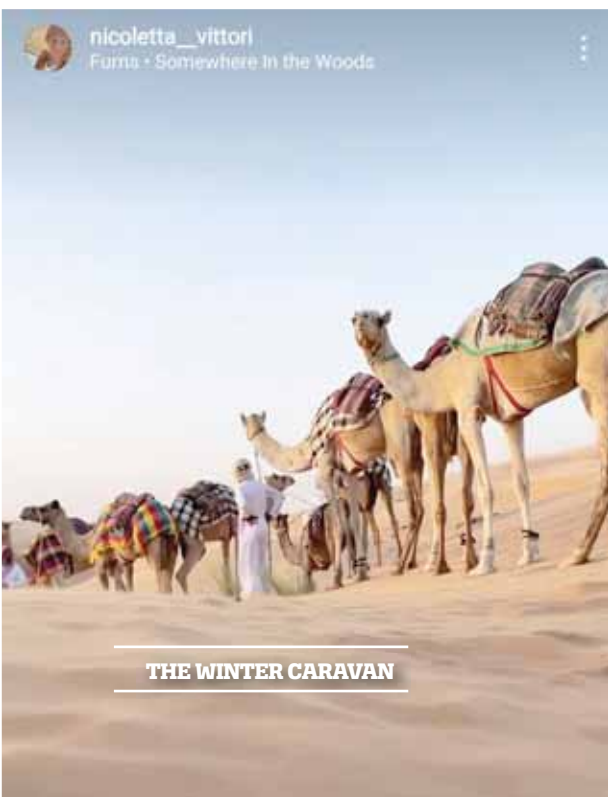


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AROUND THE WORLD

BOOK LAUNCH

'Spare' — Prince Harry to release memoir in January



PRINCE HARRY WILL release a tell-all memoir in January, his publisher said on Thursday, with the highly-anticipated account of life in the British monarchy and after he quit royal duties landing just four months after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. The book by Harry — who now lives in California with his wife Meghan Markle — comes at a sensitive time.

There has been intense speculation that prince could draw back the veil on palace life and offer damaging revelations, or pull his punches in the aftermath of Elizabeth's death as Britain adjusts to its new head of state, King Charles III.

Titled "Spare," the memoir will hit the shelves on January 10, 2023.

"We are excited to announce the remarkably personal and emotionally powerful story of Prince Harry, The Duke of Sussex," Penguin Random House said on Twitter.

On its website, the book is described as a window into how the prince responded to the death of his mother Diana 25 years ago, and how his life has been affected since.

"With its raw, unflinching honesty, Spare is a landmark publication full of insight, revelation, self-examination, and hard-won wisdom about the eternal power of love over grief," Penguin Random said.

Diana, Princess of Wales, died in a high-speed car crash in Paris on August 31, 1997. Britain was plunged into an outpouring of grief that jolted the monarchy, which was seen by some as out of touch.

In addition to the title referring to Harry's apparent bid to lead a more simple, less ritzy lifestyle, it also alludes to his status as the "spare" to his older brother Prince William's role as "heir" to the British throne.

Harry and Meghan stunned his family by announcing they were quitting royal duties and moving to the United States in early 2020.

From there, they launched a series of broadsides criticising their life in the institution, including claims of racism and the Crown's failure to support them amid relentless tabloid attacks.

Their public criticisms exacerbated tensions with William — with whom he is reported to be barely on speaking terms — and their father, King Charles.

Harry and Meghan now live with their two children, Archie and Lilibet, in Santa Barbara, California.

HIGHS AND LOWS

In July last year, Harry announced he was penning a memoir that would expose the "mistakes" and "lessons learned" across his life.

"I'm writing this not as the prince I was born but as the man I have become," Harry said at the time.

"I've worn many hats over the years, both literally and figuratively, and my hope is that in telling my story — the highs and lows, the mistakes, the lessons learned — I can help show that no matter where we come from, we have more in common than we think." He said he was "excited for people to read a firsthand account of my life that's accurate and wholly truthful."

But any additional unflattering and candid remarks — beyond those Harry made during a high-profile interview with Oprah Winfrey last year — about the royal family after the queen's death might backfire.

"Prince Harry has gotten cold feet about the memoir's contents at various points, book industry executives with knowledge of the process told *The Times*, and the project has been shrouded in rumours, delays and secrecy," *The New York Times* reported.

Harry will use proceeds from the memoir, which will be released in 16 languages, to donate to British charities, the publisher added. — AFP

ENTERTAINMENT

Here's what is coming to Royal Opera House Muscat this November



THE ROYAL OPERA House Muscat is delighted to announce a jam-packed programme for November: from military pageantry to world class virtuoso pianist Nikolai Kuznetsov in concert with ROSO, this is a stupendous month of performances.

Military Music: Oman and the World is back! With exciting guest appearances from France and Japan, let the line-up of military, police and national bands packing the Maidan al Bahri at the opera house stir and inspire you to appreciate the power of music and the value of global friendships. (Nov 3, 4 & 5, 7pm)

Calling all Jazz lovers and discerning culture vultures, we are privileged to welcome the Grammy award winning artist, Chris Botti, who has become the best-selling American instrumental artist of all time. Botti's unique style begins in jazz and expands beyond the limits of any single genre. In concert he is innovative and brilliantly entertaining. (10 & 11 Nov, 7pm)

The month continues with a special new concert showcasing the richness of Omani traditional music, demonstrating the variety of genres from the different regions and corners of Oman. Enjoy a vibrant evening, bright with the cultural history of Oman in Omani Traditional Music. (14 Nov, 7pm)

In the lead up to the opera of the month we invite you to enjoy our second Lunch Music of the season. Enjoy arias from the singers of the Rossini Opera Festival in the informal setting of the Opera Galleria. Free and fantastic! (19 Nov, 11.30)

The Rossini Opera Festival has a reputation for producing Rossini's repertoire faultlessly. In *La Cambiale di Matrimonio* a beautiful young woman in love with a penni-



less young man fights back against her father's scheme to marry her to a wealthy foreign business associate. Directed by Laurence Dale, conducted by Alessandro Bonato, the production will be sparkling with wit and talent. This is a good opera to begin your relationship with the genre as well as to indulge in the quick lightness of Rossini's music. (Nov 24 & 26, 7pm & 4pm)

The month draws to a close with the exciting pianist Nikolai Kuznetsov and the



Royal Oman Symphony Orchestra led by Alessandro Cadario in a collaboration with the world-famous concert hall 'Salle Gaveau' of Paris. Don't miss a dazzling programme of Beethoven and Rachmaninoff. (Nov 28, 7pm. ROHMA)

For more details on what events are taking place at the opera house over the season and to book tickets for you and your family please visit the ROHM box office, website or app.

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Gloomy but no boring moments in *Manto*

IF YOU'RE NOT familiar with classic Indo-Pakistani writers, I'd like to invite you to watch Nandita Das's film *Manto* (2018). Born in 1912, Saadat Hassan Manto was an author and a playwright who had produced 22 collections of short stories, radio series and movie scripts.

His translations into Urdu include the works of Chekov, Tolstoy, Oscar Wilde, and Victor Hugo. He was a member of the Progressive Writers Movement that included prominent names such as the poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Ismat Chughtai.

Manto was one of the many intellectuals who opposed the partition of India in 1947 and ironically had to leave to Pakistan as he feared prosecution for being a Muslim. His best stories were written at that period such as Thanda Gosht (cold meat) and Toba Tek Singh. He died of alcoholism in 1955 aged 42 and was buried in Lahore.

In Das's movie, Nawazuddin Siddiqui — the genius actor — succeeds in embodying the tormented writer. The movie period is set after the partition of India and highlights Manto's migration to Lahore that deeply affected him and led to his premature death.

His life in Bombay before the partition is shown in few scenes, where he's depicted as a loving family man who keeps fighting for his right to reflect society through his writings.

He was charged for obscenity six times: three in India and three in Pakistan and fined in one case only. His close circle of friends included writers and movie actors. All this suddenly changes when the partition happens. His family moves first to Lahore where his wife's family are. He follows later after seeing the violence erupting and people getting killed for belonging to what's considered a wrong religion. However, his life in Lahore is a struggle as the city is filled with refugees just like him.

Censorship follows him to his new city as he's charged once again with

obscenity after the publication of Thanda Gosht. The best scenes in the movie are of acts taken from four of his famous short stories including Thanda Gosht. However, the viewer must pay attention not to mix reality with fantasy, the way *Manto* seems to do at times. Das's feminine touch is evident when presenting Manto's relationship with his wife and his close friend actor Shyam Chadda. Despite both relationships being turbulent at times, yet love and loyalty keeps prevailing.

There is no boring moment in this movie even with its gloomy backdrop. Attention to details and set and costume designs transfers you instantly into the era; as well as the movie's soundtrack of songs composed from classic poems of the 40s and 50s. One sad thing to note: despite being in the 21st century, things haven't changed much in India since the partition: tension still exists between different sects and writers still struggle with freedom of expression.

Other than Siddiqui's flawless acting, the rest of the cast's performance was excellent too, especially Rasika Dugal who plays Manto's wife Safiya who strifes between her duties as a mother of two and a wife of an alcoholic. The movie competed in many film festivals including Cannes.

It won Best Actor and Best Producer in the Asia Pacific Screen Awards in 2018. It also won Best Costume Design in Filmfare Awards the following year. An interesting trivia about the movie is that the director had Irfan Khan in mind to play the role of Manto as he looked like him. But her final choice came to Nawazuddin Siddiqui who worked for free. *Manto* is a must-watch emotional odyssey for all classic and literature lovers. Available on Netflix.

Rasha al Raisi is a certified skills trainer and the author of: *The World According to Bahja*. rasha-books@yahoo.com

ESO marks Oman Tree Day with a publication celebrating Frankincense

As the nation today celebrates Oman Tree Day, the Environment Society of Oman (ESO) in collaboration with the Environment Authority and with funding from the British Embassy in Muscat has published an infographic celebrating Oman's native frankincense species, *Boswellia scara*. The infographic highlights important information about *Boswellia scara*, including ecological information as well as key threats and necessary conservation actions. The full infographic is available for download (www.esofundraiser.com/resources).

Boswellia sacra, a species of frankincense native to Oman, Yemen and Northern Somalia, is considered to produce a fine quality resin. A population assessment of *Boswellia sacra* was last completed over 20 years ago in 1998, giving it a Near Threatened status on the IUCN Red List.

The infographic published

today, forms part of a wider programme funded by the British Embassy in Muscat which also saw a field team from ESO, in collaboration with the Environment Authority, Wageningen University & Research, FairSource Botanicals LLC, and Mendel University in Brno undertake a three-month survey of the *Boswellia sacra* trees in Dhofar to help support an updated population and distribution assessment.

Suaad al Harthi, Executive Director of ESO, said, "Frankincense, also known as Luban, plays an integral part in the Omani heritage and culture and has been a main source of income for Dhofari communities for centuries. The funding provided by the British Embassy has allowed us to undertake important survey work enabling us to map the distribution of frankincense trees in Dhofar while also establishing permanent study sites to evaluate the long-term population ecology.

This also means we can assess the threats to the species and engage with local stakeholders to build local capacity to survey and protect the trees in the future."

His Excellency Bill Murray, British Ambassador to Oman, said "It is our pleasure to support Environment Society of Oman's efforts to conserve Oman's frankincense trees. Frankincense is an essential part of Omani heritage and culture. We all need to be aware of its vulnerability and the steps we can take to ensure its survival".

Conservation of *Boswellia sacra* will continue to be a central focus for the work of ESO. Moving forward, the team will be working closely with the Environment Authority to recommend a variety of approaches for conserving these unique trees, including targeted research to further elucidate population dynamics, potential impacts of climate change, and social drivers of tree management.

