

P13

CARBON CAPTURE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT NET ZERO STRATEGY



P19

FIVE NOT SO FAMOUS THINGS ABOUT THE BEATLES



P12

ZAMAN KEEPS PAKISTAN ALIVE IN RAIN HIT TRIUMPH



MUSCAT

DEAL SIGNED FOR SCHOOL BUSES

Karwa Motors Company has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Education and Oman Development Bank to supply school buses. The MoU aims to replace old vehicles with Karwa school buses with specifications at the rate of 1,000 buses per year, which will also be available in the local market from the beginning of 2024. Dr Saad bin Ahmed al Munnadi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the company, said, “The company’s signing of this memorandum paves the way for Karwa Motors Company to provide transportation solutions in the Sultanate of Oman”. **SEE P3**

OMAN POST NETWORK COVERS 215 LOCATIONS

The number of post offices serving licensed companies across various governorates has grown to 215, with a further 169 correspondence deposit boxes installed as well, according to recent statistics from the National Centre for Statistics and Information. These statistics reveal that among the correspondence deposit boxes, there are 129 personal boxes and two company boxes. Moreover, the combined total of mobile mailboxes with personal dedicated mailboxes stands at approximately 24,954 boxes for individuals and 3,642 boxes designated for companies. **DETAILS ON P13**

OPINION

P8



Dr Hamed al Sinawi

Why we should all boycott

P16



Stefano Virgilli

Oman’s innovation in virtual assets

THE MAGICAL BAHLA



Bahla, one of Oman’s oldest oasis towns and once the capital of the country, is home to many myths and legends of magic. **DETAILS ON P20**

Oman flays Israel’s massacres

CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE END TO THE BRUTAL WAR



Palestinians gather at the site of Israeli strikes on a residential building in Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip on Saturday. – Reuters

OMAN CONDEMNS BRUTAL MASSACRE IN SCHOOL

TARGETING PUBLIC UTILITIES A WAR CRIME

REQUESTS ICC TO PROBE ISRAELI WAR CRIMES

TOP PRIORITY TO ENABLE DELIVERY OF URGENT AID

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman voiced its deepest denunciation and condemnation for the continued massacres and war crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people and the targeting of civilians and healthcare facilities, including the horrific and brutal massacre on the Osama Bin Zaid School of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in northern Gaza Strip where hundreds of Palestinian families took refuge from the devastating bombing by the occupation forces, the bombing of the UNRWA Al Fakhoura School in Jabalia, the strikes at the entrance of Al Nasr Children’s Hospital in western Gaza Strip and the targeting of a public water tank that supplies several neighbourhoods east

of Rafah and south of the Gaza Strip. In a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry, the Sultanate of Oman stressed the need for a real awakening by the international community based on its moral, legal and humanitarian responsibilities, to put an end to this clear recklessness and arbitrariness of Israel and its violation of international laws and conventions.

The statement reiterated the Sultanate of Oman’s request to the International Criminal Court (ICC) to form a court for war crimes committed against the Palestinian people in Gaza and to prosecute war criminals for all the massacres that were committed. The statement affirmed that an immediate end to this brutal war is an urgent necessity. **TURN TO P2**

AIR TROUGH MAY BRING RAINS FROM SUNDAY

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH
@lakshmioman

Low clouds and fog formed over parts of South Al Sharqiyah and Al Dakhiliyah governorates. Formation of high clouds has also been noticed over parts of Al Dhahirah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates. Friday witnessed the beginning of thunderstorm activity, which is currently near the Strait of Hormuz, and it expanded later on Saturday over parts of Musandam and Al Batinah governorates. The latest weather

update and analysis of the National Multi Hazard Early Warning Centre indicate that an upper air trough will likely affect the Sultanate of Oman from Sunday until Thursday. There could be cloud advection with chances of thunderstorms of varying intensity associated with active downdraft winds and hail expected over the governorates of Musandam, Al Buraimi, North Al Batinah, South Al Batinah, Al Dhahirah, Muscat, Al Dakhiliyah, North Al Sharqiyah and South Al Sharqiyah.

157 dead in Nepal earthquake

JAJARKOT: At least 157 people were killed in an overnight earthquake that struck a remote pocket of Nepal, officials said on Saturday, as security forces rushed to assist with rescue efforts.

The force of the 5.6-magnitude tremor jolted households awake and flattened mud houses in communities across isolated western districts of the Himalayan republic late on Friday.

“There was a very big noise when the houses came down. It felt like a big explosion,” Shiva Prasad Sharma, 65, said from outside the destroyed remnants of his home in Jajarkot, the district hit worst by the quake. “I thought we were going to die,” he added. “No one has anything left. There are no houses left to stay in.” — AFP



An aerial picture shows damaged buildings in Jajarkot district on Saturday. – AFP



Oman reaffirms Palestinians' right to self-determination

NEW YORK: In its address delivered at the United Nations General Assembly meeting to discuss the International Court of Justice's report, the Sultanate of Oman commended the pivotal and significant role played by the ICJ in promoting peaceful settlement to disputes in accordance with the provisions and principles of the United Nations Charter.

Second Secretary Mohammed bin Ali al Shuhi, member of the permanent delegation of the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations, delivered the Sultanate of Oman's address in which it affirmed its commitment to the United Nations principles and the United Nations Charter which stipulates respect for international laws, non-interference in the internal affairs of countries, and the settling of disputes between countries by peaceful means, preventing use or threatened use of force, supporting cooperation between countries and enhancing opportunities for dialogue among them.

The Sultanate of Oman affirmed



Second Secretary Mohammed bin Ali al Shuhi delivers Oman's address at UN General Assembly

its stance supportive of the ICJ contributions aimed at adhering to the provisions of international law and the established principles of the United Nations Charter, and its role in reinforcing the relationship between the various United Nations bodies particularly the International Court of Justice, the UN's main judicial body.

In his speech, Al Shuhi explained that the Sultanate of Oman reiterates its firm attitude on the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes and preventing use or

threatened use of force as set forth by the United Nations Charter and its principles.

The Sultanate of Oman endorsed the United Nations General Assembly Resolution No 247/77 dated on December 30, 2022, in which the General Assembly, in accordance with Article 96 of the United Nations Charter, requested the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from Israel's continued violation of the right of the Palestinian people to

self-determination and also with regard to its long-term occupation, settlement construction and annexation of the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, and on the impact of the Israeli policies and practices on the legal status of the occupation and the legal implications resulting from this status for all countries and the United Nations.

The Government of the Sultanate of Oman submitted its written argument before the International Court of Justice in The Hague, pursuant to United Nations General Assembly Resolution No 247/77 requesting the International Court of Justice to issue an advisory opinion on the consequences of Israel's continued violations of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, confirming the solid stance of the Sultanate of Oman backing the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital. — ONA

Oman condemns massacres by Israel

FROM P1

It added that the international community should, without tolerance, demonstrate a firm stance towards the ongoing Israeli violations against the innocent, defenceless civilians and enable the delivery of urgently needed humanitarian aid to Gaza.

The Sultanate of Oman stressed on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the firm Omani attitudes towards the Palestinian cause calling for Israel's withdrawal from the entire occupied Palestinian territories to the 1967 borders and enabling the Palestinian people to establish their independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital in accordance with the principle of the two-state solution and on the basis of international law.

TOP PRIORITY

Meanwhile, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, and Yoko Kamikawa,

Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, during a phone conversation, stressed that an urgent truce to the war in Gaza is a top priority to enable the delivery of humanitarian assistance and relief materials to the inhabitants of Gaza in a greater and faster manner. They called for an end to the killing of civilians.

They also called for dialogue to find a final and lasting settlement to the Palestinian cause based on the two-state solution and the international law which will lead to breaking the cycle of violence and extremism.

Regarding the friendship and cooperation relations between the two countries, Sayyid Badr and his Japanese counterpart expressed their support for more partnership relations in the trade, economic and tourism fields and encouraging cooperation in various fields.

— ONA

Ensure donations reach right beneficiary: OCO

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO) said it ensured that relief aid bound for the State of Palestine reaches its beneficiaries.

Responding to concerns raised in social media, OCO said it directly supervises all the projects it implements in the State of Palestine through

its representative offices in the cities of Jerusalem and Gaza and in direct coordination with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Ramallah.

OCO also ensures that all donations reach those who deserve it.

OCO has been implementing many projects in Palestine, such as schools, hospitals, colleges, homes, health laboratories, and others. Recently, the

organisation handed over to the Afghan Red Crescent in Afghanistan around 88 tonnes of various relief and medical aid in the wake of the damage they sustained from the recent earthquakes.

The organisation recently launched donation platforms for the benefit of the Palestinian people.

Various methods to make donations include 'Donate'

via ONEIC automated payment machines or bank transfers - Bank Muscat (0423010869610013) and Oman Arab Bank (3101006200500).

Omantel users can send the word "donate" to 90022, while Ooredoo users can send the word 'Palestine' to 90909. OCA also said that donations are possible via www.jood.om or www.oco.org.om.

Muscat: Oman, represented by the Civil Aviation Authority, participated in the celebration of World Tsunami Awareness Day, which falls on November 5 of each year.

On this occasion, the CAA is implementing programmes to raise awareness of the dangers of tsunamis in cooperation with the National Committee for Civil Defence and the Ministry of Education by organising lectures for school students for raising the level of community awareness, preparedness and response, through which information on

the dangers of tsunami waves is reviewed.

The National Multi Hazard Early Warning Centre and the CAA play a vital role in dealing with tsunami risks, in addition to preparing future plans.

The Authority participated in the regional exercise Indian Ocean Waves 2023 (IOWave23), in October this year, along with National Committee for Emergency Situations Management, the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority, the Ministry of Information, and the Royal Oman Police.

Department of Orthopedics and Spine Health

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MOH NO: 384/2023

Expo of productive families begins

MUSCAT: An exhibition featuring products made by social security and low income families began in Muscat Grand Mall on Friday. The expo, organised by the Ministry of Social Development, will continue till November 7. It includes ready-made clothes, silverware, jewellery, food, incense and perfumes.

Mohammed al Naabi, an entrepreneur, said, "I am happy to be at this exhibition, through which I can display my products and sell them in the local markets. Such exhibitions motivate entrepreneurs like me to expand my market beyond Oman. Support should be provided to these productive families by the authorities through such exhibitions and marketing outlets."

Ahmed bin Badr al Yahmadi, another participant, said, "I sell daggers, rings, sticks and jewellery. The aim of my participation in this exhibition is reviving Omani heritage from extinction. Currently, I have a small store in the Wilayat of Bidiya and another in Muscat. I aspire to have a branch in one of the commercial centres."

Samia bint Juma al Qasimiyah, a food seller, said,



The exhibition, held at MGM, will continue till November 7

"This is my first participation in the productive families exhibitions. I hope to market my products in this exhibition and expand to more

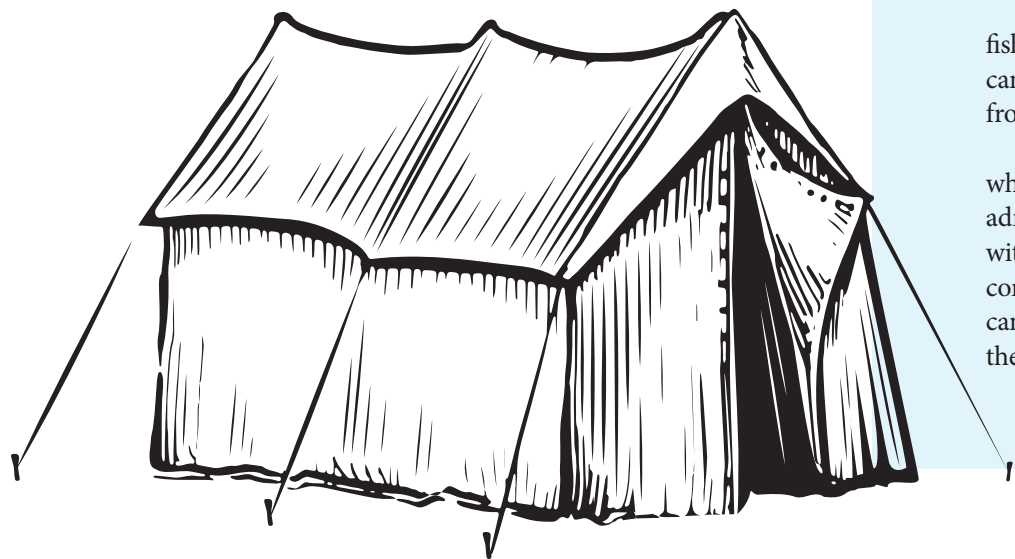
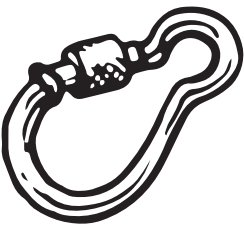
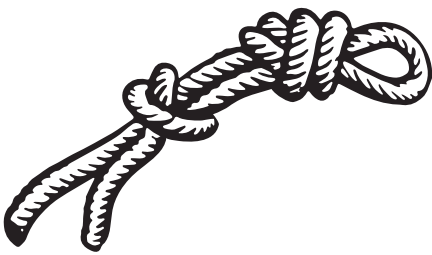
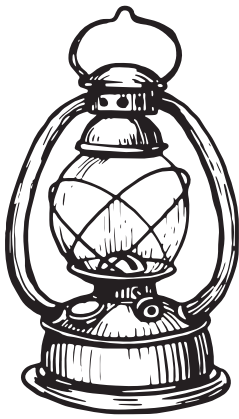
governorates in the Sultanate of Oman and abroad."

Naima bint Ibrahim and Salma bint Nasser al Wardiyah, boutique owners, said, "We

can showcase our products including abayas and other ready-made clothes. We hop there will be a demand for these products."



IT'S CAMPING TIME



SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
@shadadm

After spending the past few months in the summer, the urge to get out and explore great outdoor activities is becoming stronger with winter fast approaching and temperatures getting pleasant.

It is that time of the year to prepare for camping while enjoying the upcoming cool weather under the stars and making full use of the pleasant climate. However, watch out and do it right, say civic authorities, so hygiene and safety are maintained in public places. Abdul Ameer al Shaibani, an avid camper, told the Observer that Oman is a very safe country for camping.

“In case of any eventuality, people here are always on hand to help. That is the beauty of camping in Oman. Normally, December to March is always the perfect time to camp, but because people have been indoors for some months now and the weather is cooling down, the urge to go camping gains pace from November and sometimes before,” he said. Al Shaibani assured that wild animals don't tend to approach campsites, except for goats, which might visit you and explore your bags and belongings. “Being endowed with natural beauty with mountains, deserts and beaches, Oman becomes a destination to explore during the winter,” he said.

Organising camping trips in Oman begins by choosing the best place to pitch your tent. To camp in the mountains, Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and Jabal Shams are the top spots for camping in Oman, but for those who prefer spending a beautiful night on the beach, either Ras Al Hadd, Salalah in the south, Al Mughsail in Dhofar or Masirah Island are ideal locations.

For desert lovers, the Rimal Al Sharqiya and Rub Al Khali are the best-known deserts for camping in Oman, where you must spend at least a few days and nights.

Anwar Jamal, another avid camper, said, “Once you have decided where you want to pitch your tent, you'll need to find equipment and tools, including firewood, mattresses if you plan to camp in the mountains and other camping equipment which are available in the big supermarkets in Oman.”

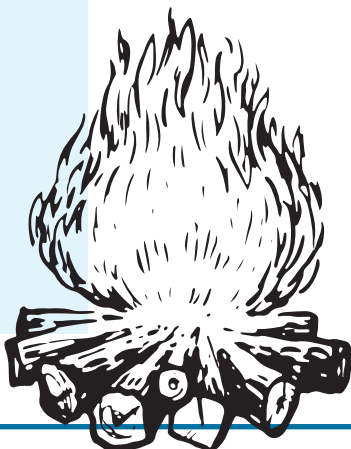
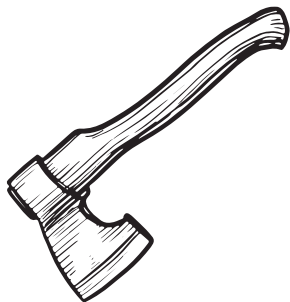
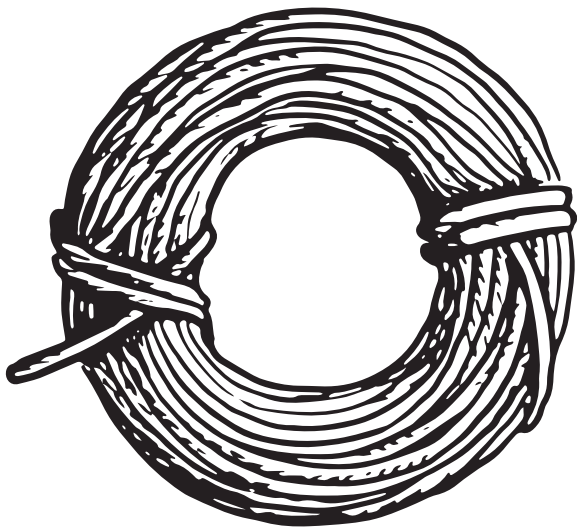
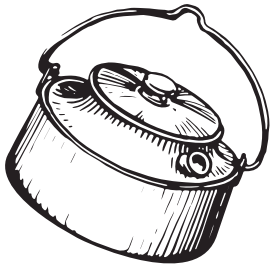
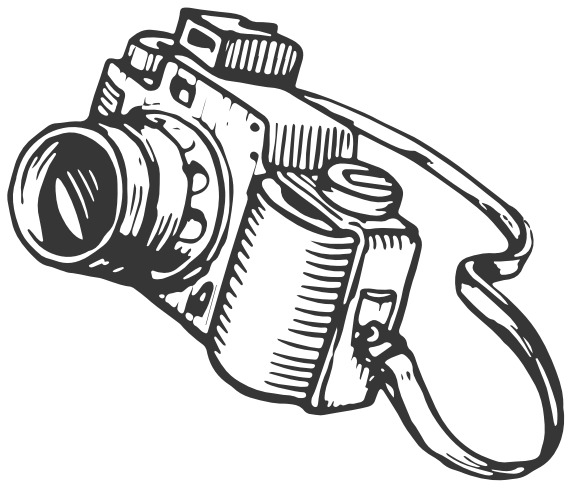
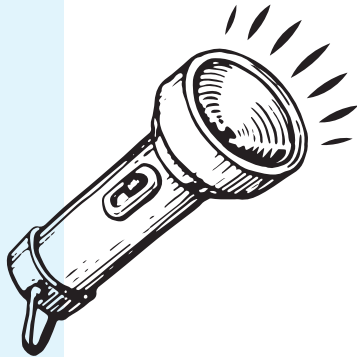
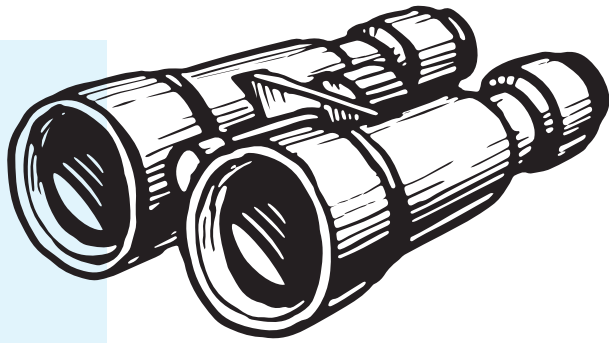
He said that the White Beach in Fins, known for its rocky coastal wall, captivating sea scenery and beautiful white sands, is one of the other best locations for camping. “Ras Al Hadd and Wadi Shab are other ideal camping areas. This is in addition to many camping spots within Muscat,” he said.

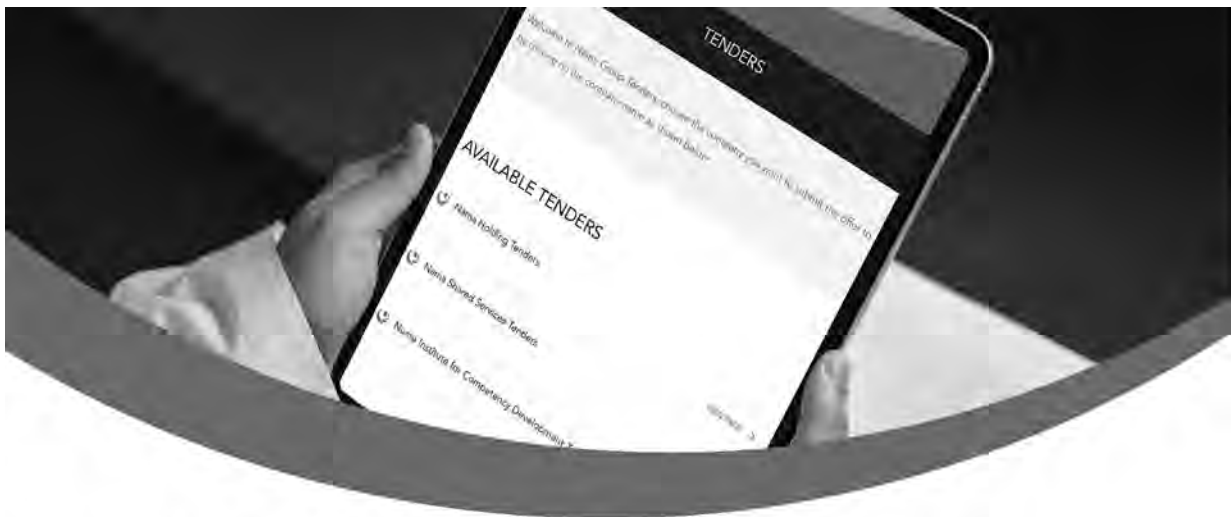
According to Muscat Municipality, there are rules and conditions for camping in Muscat Governorate. Camping is only allowed in a caravan or tent or sitting for more than 48 hours, with obtaining a prior permit from the competent service directorate.

Also, campers must pay a security deposit of RO 100, valid for seven nights extendable. “In Muscat, camping should be in the places specified by the municipality, leaving a distance between each site of not less than five metres and a minimum distance of 10m between the campsite and the beach,” a civic body said.

Also, the camping site should be away from the fishermen and security-restricted areas, and the camping site should be at least 100 metres away from residential neighbourhoods.

According to Muscat Municipality, anyone who violates the requirements shall pay an administrative fine of RO 200 for camping without obtaining a permit and RO 50 for non-compliance with the rules or requirements for camping. Also, the camp or caravan is removed if the violation is repeated.





TENDER

Nama Holding invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
EHC/2023/24	Call of Agreement for the Provision of Procurement, ICV and Other Support Services for Nama Group	12-Nov-2023	26-Nov-2023	100 (Plus, VAT amount: 5 OMR)

- Interested party may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om). Supplier user guide is available to be downloaded at the same page.
- Payment of the tender fees to be done online through the link available in website. The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00 pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through I-supplier portal before 03.00 pm time of the Sultanate on Sunday 26 November 2023.
- Each bid should be accompanied with a temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (3000) OMR and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date for submission of offers. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Holding reception area.
- NH is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.



Nama Holding
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TO ENSURE A SMOOTH OPERATION, UPDATE YOUR DETAILS



Workshop on best practices for teaching nuclear science and technology concluded in Muscat last week.

Workshop on teaching nuclear science ends

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, NOV 4

The Ministry of Education, in cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, concluded a regional workshop on best practices for teaching nuclear science and technology in Muscat last week.

The five-day-workshop was attended by 81 participants from 22 countries, in order to empower secondary school teachers and enhance their teaching skills related to nuclear science and technology and raise their level of awareness about the wide and diverse applications of nuclear technology in various areas of life.

During the five days of the regional workshop, a number of sessions included various

presentations on topics related to the best practices and experiences in teaching nuclear sciences and technology. On the last day, moderators of all the sessions held the workshop days, presented the outcomes of the papers presented in these sessions.

The strategy for building teachers' skills with regard to facilitating learning of nuclear science and technology subjects in a sustainable manner was also approved.

The posters displayed in the workshop included teaching nuclear science and technology from the perspective of Bangladesh; linking nuclear science and technology with secondary school curricula in Syria; developing curricula and teaching tools in nuclear science and technology in Jordan; placing

atomic energy and nuclear science in secondary science curricula in Nepal; introducing nuclear science technology into the upper secondary school curricula in Sri Lanka; and supporting secondary education by sending nuclear science and technology experts to schools.

It also included developing the Ene Hyakka information website, and applying radiological detection in order to apply best practices in linking nuclear science and technology in secondary education applications to the nuclear devices laboratory, using Learner Guided Activity Sheets (L-GAS; break down stereotypes about nuclear science and technology, and enhance their benefit to society and the environment through curriculum design and evaluation.



TENDER

Nama Shared Services LLC invites the specialized companies to participate and submit their best offers for the tender below:

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR)
NSS/2023/10	Multi-Cloud and Data Centre Strategy Consultancy	12 November 2023	26 November 2023	25/- (Plus VAT amount: 1.25 OMR)

- Interested party may purchase the tender through the company website (www.nama.om). Supplier user guide is available to be downloaded at the same page.
- The tender fees should be paid online through the link provided on the website. The deposit must be made before 1:00 pm on the last day of purchase.
- Bids shall be submitted online through I-supplier portal before 03:00 pm Sultanate of Oman Standard Time on Sunday, 26th November, 2023.
- Each bid should be accompanied by a temporary insurance, in the form of a bank guarantee from one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, covering (1%) of the total bid value and valid for a period of (90) days from the last date of submission offered. Tenders that do not include the required temporary insurance will not be considered. The original hard copy of the bid bond should be dropped in the tender box at Nama Holding reception area.
- NSS is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event that you receive a tender document on behalf of another company, it is essential to accurately record and provide the details of the interested purchaser. This includes the person's name and the relevant company information.



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TO ENSURE A SMOOTH OPERATION, UPDATE YOUR DETAILS



Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

Tender No.	Tender Subject	Grade	Last date for obtainment of Tender Document	Last date for Tender Submission	Tender Document Price (non-retundable)	
					Small and Medium Companies	Local Companies
283/2023	Implementation of an introductory campaign on the services of the Ministry of Social Development	Companies specialized in the field of design, installation and maintenance services of programs and information systems registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the excellent, first, second or third degree or fourth degree	Thursday 23-11-2023 02:00 PM	Thursday 14-12-2023 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O
296/2023	Supply of desktop Macs to employees of the Ministry of Social Development	Companies specialized in the field of supplying communications and information technology equipment and accessories registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board with the excellent, first, second, third or fourth degree	Thursday 23-11-2023 02:00 PM	Thursday 14-12-2023 10:00 AM	10 R.O	25 R.O

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>). On **Sunday 5/11/2023**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact though the e-tendering website (reg@tenderboard.gov.om) tel. (24402200).

" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry"

www.mosd.gov.om



UAE: US SHOULD PUSH FOR QUICK END TO WAR

ABU DHABI: The diplomatic adviser to the president of the UAE on Saturday said the United States needs to push for a quick end to the war and that a new process must be found for the decades-long Israeli-Palestinian issue or the United States would be seen as ineffective.

Anwar Gargash also said that Israel's policy of containment that has been the "hallmark" of the Palestinian issue for the past two decades had failed and called for a new approach that addresses refugees, borders and East Jerusalem. "US involvement will be seen by when we end this war, the quicker the better, and whether we can have another you know, sort of process at problem solving, at issue solving," he said at a policy conference in the capital Abu Dhabi.

"If this crisis continues, and especially the humanitarian side, and if this crisis, brings us back full circle, to the old containment policy of pre-Seventh of October, I think the American role here is not going to be, forget right and wrong, is not going to be seen as effective," he added. — Reuters

DEPARTURE OF FOREIGNERS FROM GAZA STRIP HALTED

AL ARISH, Egypt: The departure of injured Palestinians as well as foreigners and Palestinians with dual citizenship from the Gaza Strip was apparently halted on Saturday, sources said. A source close to the Egyptian Red Crescent confirmed that employees of the Palestinian Red Crescent had been ordered by the authorities to stop transporting wounded Palestinians for the time being. Security sources in Egypt said the Palestinians were calling for safe routes for ambulances carrying the wounded from the Gaza Strip to the Rafah border crossing with Egypt. Security sources in Gaza also said that foreigners will not leave the Gaza Strip until the wounded can be brought to Egypt.

The US broadcaster CNN, citing Egyptian authorities, reported that around 730 people were due to leave the Gaza Strip on Saturday, including 386 US citizens and 151 Germans.

— dpa

PALESTINIANS S
STRIKE HITS UN-

GAZA/AMMAN: Palestinians reported a deadly Israeli air strike on a UN-run school in northern Gaza serving as a shelter on Saturday as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken met regional Arab leaders to discuss how to contain the conflict.

Palestinian witnesses said Israel hit Al Fakhoura school in Jabalia, where thousands of evacuees were living in the morning. At least 15 people died and dozens more were wounded, said Gaza health ministry official Mohammed Abu Selmeyah.

Footage of the aftermath showed broken furniture and other belongings lying on the ground, patches of blood spilled on the ground and over food and people crying.

"I was standing here when three bombings happened, I carried a body and another decapitated body with my own hands," a young boy said in video obtained by Reuters, crying in despair. "God will take my vengeance."

Nearby, a resident comforted a woman in shock. One man asked angrily: "Since when has it become normal to strike shelters? This is so unfair."

Juliette Touma, director of communication for the UN Palestinian refugee agency (UNRWA), confirmed that the UN-run school, which is in the Gaza City area, had been hit. She said there were children among the casualties, but that UNRWA had not yet been able to verify the exact death toll.

"At least one strike hit the schoolyard where there were tents for displaced families. Another strike hit inside the school where women were baking bread," Touma said by phone.

A series of reported air strikes over the past week have devastated parts of the Jabalia refugee camp, the largest of several refugee settlements in Gaza, killing at least 195 people, according to Palestinian authorities.

The ministry of health in Gaza said another Israeli missile strike killed two women at the door of the Nasser Children Hospital. Several more people were injured, it said. The Israeli military had no immediate comment on either incident.

Israel's ground forces encircled Gaza City on Thursday after stepping up a bombing campaign it says aims at wiping out Hamas.

Gaza health officials said on Saturday that more than 9,488 Palestinians have been killed so far in

*UN agency says evacuees hurt when one of its schools was hit

*Blinken meets Arab leaders demanding ceasefire

*US says it has 'indirect engagement' in efforts to free hostages

the Israeli assault.

Israel last month ordered all civilians to leave the northern part of the Gaza Strip, including Gaza City where it says Hamas are hiding in tunnels, and head to the south of the enclave.

It has continued to bomb the whole enclave, saying the fighters are hiding among civilians, and many people have stayed in the north, where they say they now feel trapped.

The military said it would enable Palestinians to travel on a main Gaza Strip highway, the Salah a Din road, during a three-hour window on Saturday afternoon. "If you care about yourself and your loved ones, heed our instruction to head south," it said in a social media post in Arabic.

Several residents said they were too afraid to use the road due to Israeli forces and many posted warnings on social media that Israeli tanks were stationed on it.

US Special Envoy David Satterfield said in Amman that between 800,000 to a million people had moved to the south of the Gaza Strip, while 350,000-400,000 remained in northern Gaza City and its environs.

Qatari Foreign Minister Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani told Blinken at the meeting in Amman with the Saudi, Qatari, Emirati and Egyptian foreign ministers that efforts to mediate the release of hostages in the Gaza Strip were complicated by the continued bombardment of the enclave, Qatar's foreign ministry said.

Ahead of the meeting, Jordan said the Arab leaders would stress the "Arab stance calling for an immediate ceasefire, delivering humanitarian aid and ways of ending the dangerous deterioration that threatens the security of the region". — Reuters



▲ A boy walks past a shrapnel-riddled wall at the Jenin camp in the West Bank on Saturday. — AFP



‘I WANT MY LEGS BACK’, SAY THE CHILD A

KHAN YUNIS: Layan al Baz cries in agony when the effect fades of the painkillers she receives after her legs were amputated — the result of a strike on Gaza. "I don't want a false leg," the 13-year-old Palestinian tells in Khan Yunis's Nasser hospital, in the southern Gaza Strip, where getting artificial limbs was nearly impossible anyway.

The Palestinian territory, under a crippling Israeli-led blockade for years and besieged since war erupted on October 7, suffers severe shortages of food, water and fuel, and medical supplies are scarce.

"I want them to put my legs back, they can

do it," Baz says in desperation from her bed at Nasser's paediatric ward. Every time she opens her eyes as the painkillers wear off, she sees her bandaged stumps.

Her mother, Lamia al Baz, 47, says Layan was wounded last week in a strike on Al Qarara district of Khan Yunis, part of Israel's unrelenting military campaign in response to attacks on October 7 that killed more than 1,400 people, most of them civilians.

According to the health ministry, nearly 9,500 people have been killed in Gaza since the war erupted, including at least 3,900 children.

Four of them were Baz's relatives, killed in

the strike that cost the 13-year-old's legs, her mother says.

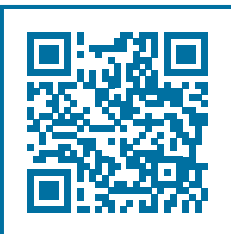
Lamia says two of her daughters, Ikhlas and Khitam, and two grandchildren including a newborn baby were killed when the Israeli strike hit Ikhlas's home. The family were there to support Ikhlas who had just given birth.

"Their bodies were in shreds," says Lamia, who had to identify her daughters' bodies at a morgue. "I identified Khitam by her earrings and Ikhlas by her toes."

Layan, her face and arms dotted with injuries, asks: "How will I return to school when my friends walk and I can't?"



Amputee Layan al Baz, aged 13, receives treatment at the Nasser hospital in Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. — AFP



SAY ISRAELI -RUN SCHOOL



GUTERRES 'HORRIFIED' BY AMBULANCE STRIKE OUTSIDE HOSPITAL



United Nations' Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

NEW YORK/GAZA: UN Secretary-General António Guterres has expressed his horror at the shelling of ambulances in the Gaza Strip by Israeli forces.

"I am horrified by the reported attack in Gaza on an ambulance convoy outside Al Shifa Hospital. The images of bodies strewn on the street outside the hospital are harrowing," Guterres said in a statement issued.

Guterres said that he had "not forgotten" the attacks and once again called for the release of hostages. At the same time, he added that for nearly one month, civilians in Gaza, including children and women, have been besieged, denied aid, killed, and bombed out of their homes.

"This must stop," he said, describing the humanitarian situation in Gaza as "horrific." The UN secretary-general once again called for a humanitarian ceasefire and emphasised that international humanitarian law must be respected. — dpa

GERMANS IN GAZA CALL ON GOVT TO DO MORE TO HELP THEM

TEL AVIV: German citizens stuck in the Gaza Strip since Israel sealed off the coastal area following attacks have said their government is not doing enough to help them to leave. "Nothing is happening, enquiries to the embassy go unanswered," Mazen Eldanaf said from Gaza.

Eldanaf has been living in the western German city of Bonn for 43 years with his wife and recently travelled to Gaza for one week to visit family there.

He had seen hundreds of foreign citizens leave Gaza over the past few days — but hardly any Germans. "I'm just disappointed in our government," he said.

He and his family are deeply rooted in Germany, he said. "We have businesses, employees, pay taxes, vote, but when it comes to our salvation: nothing," said Eldanaf. His four adult children

in Germany were also getting nowhere in their appeals for help, he added, nobody was listening to them.

Jamal Abdel Latif, 75, has also been waiting in vain to hear from the German diplomatic mission in Ramallah, in the West Bank. He fled his home in Gaza City with his wife and two children, and the family are now staying with relatives in the city of Dir Al Bala in southern Gaza.

"Only temporarily," said Latif. He is determined to leave Gaza. "As soon as our names are on the list, we'll make our way to the border crossing."

"Answering an e-mail can't be too much to ask in a situation like this," said Latif, who studied at the Technical University in Berlin in the 1980s and is now seeking to leave Gaza with his wife and two children. — dpa

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Jordanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi hold a press conference in Amman, Jordan. — Reuters



Demonstrators carry a giant Palestinian flag during a protest in support of Palestinians under the slogan 'Free Palestine' with the TV Tower in the background in Berlin. — AFP

MPUTEES OF WAR

Due to the massive number of casualties and dwindling resources, medics are often left with no choice but to amputate limbs to prevent life-threatening complications

NAHED ABU TAAEMA
Hospital director

Lamia tries to reassure her: "I will be by your side. It will all be fine. You still have a future ahead of you."

At the hospital's burns unit, 14-year-old Lama al Agha and her sister Sara, 15, lie in adjacent beds. They are treated after an October 12 strike that killed Sara's twin Sama and brother Yahya, 12, says their mother, sitting between the two hospital beds and struggling to hold back tears.

Stitches and burn scars are visible on Lama's half-shaved head and her forehead. "When they transferred me here, I asked the nurses to help me sit up and I

discovered that my leg was amputated," the 14-year-old recalls.

"I've been through a lot of pain but I thank God that I'm still alive."

Lama is determined not to let her injury decide her future. "I'll get an artificial leg and continue my studies, so I can achieve my dream of becoming a doctor. I will be strong for me and for my family," she says.

Hospital director Nahed Abu Taaema explains that due to the massive number of casualties and dwindling resources, medics are often left with no choice but to amputate limbs to prevent life-threatening complications. — AFP



Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre

TENDER ADVERTISEMENT

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre (SQCCRC) announces the following Tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Last Date for Collection of Tender Document	Bid Submission Closing	Tender Specification Fees
CCRC/T/674/2023	Retender - Water Treatment Plant for The Well Water at SQCCRC	16/11/2023	23/11/2023	70 OMR

Qualified companies interested in participating in this tender shall collect the tender specifications from the date of this advertisement from the following address:

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre – Purchase Department.

Biddings that meet the above requirement should be submitted (Hardcopy & Softcopy) in a sealed envelope by an Omani National from your company addressed to the head of Purchase Committee in the tender box.

Please note:

- Bids received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, will not be considered.
- Queries/clarifications should be submitted on email with tender title subject immediately, but not later than One week before the date of tender submission.
- For Queries you may Contact via e-mail: purchase@ccrc.gov.om
- The committee is not obliged to accept the lowest price of the bid or any other bid.
- Site visit on 08/11/2023 at 08:30AM, Meeting point: SQCCRC Main lobby.

Why we should all boycott



Dr Hamed al Sinawi
@alsinawi

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

THE war in Gaza is changing everything in our lives even though we live miles away from the place of the real conflict we feel the pain of our brothers and sisters who are being slaughtered while the whole world is watching.

Therefore the recent call to boycott some Western companies who support the Israeli regime is the least we can do, especially with some of these companies bragging about donating free burgers to the soldiers who kill babies and civilians while others used wrapping papers with the Israeli flag.

Yet this in-your-face bias is only part of the picture which included banning protesters from holding demonstrations in support of Palestinians and ignoring calls for a ceasefire.

The worst part is that such actions came from countries that always talked about freedom of speech.

There is no doubt that the current war exposed the double standards expressed by some countries and the helplessness of the United Nations in coming up with any form of action to protect the lives of millions trapped in Gaza.

They are living with no electricity or clean water, even foreign aid is limited despite the warning of nongovernmental organisations of the critical humanitarian situation in Gaza.

So why should we boycott companies that stand with the Israeli regime? The simple answer is that by continuing to buy from such companies you are funding the war against your brothers and sisters even though such companies clearly announced that they are feeding the soldiers for free from your money.

Some would say these companies have huge profits from other countries and boycotting it may not achieve much, well this notion is false as big companies care more about making more profits and getting more money plus when you announce your intentions to boycott you are encouraging others to follow you for the good cause.

Some people may think your decision to boycott is simply to punish the companies, but it is more than that.

It is about standing for your values and making an impact even if it is at a smaller scale for your action to make an impact. Do not stop at boycotting

‘BOYCOTTING
A COMPANY
THAT SUPPORTS
ISRAEL IS ABOUT
STANDING FOR
YOUR VALUES
AND MORAL
BELIEFS AND
NOT JUST
PUNISHMENT FOR
THE COMPANIES’

small companies that sell food but think about changing your holiday destination since the country that you plan to visit and spend money is funding the government that kills babies and destroys hospitals and schools unless you want to be part of that.

From a psychological perspective, there are three conditions for a boycott to be successful, it needs to be organised with a clear message sent out through petitions, and messaging on social media.

So, the boycotted companies attribute their scale decline to consumer outrage.

Second, the boycott must have a clear goal which in this case is to stop supporting the war against Gaza.

Third, boycotts should send the message that a behaviour is morally unacceptable, rather than merely disagreeable.

Viewing boycotts as a matter of expression can change our understanding of why we should join a boycott.

Remember that people in some Western countries are actively searching for the maker of certain products and making sure not to buy those supporting Israelis so what is your excuse?

Ukrainians reel from war chief’s stalemate warning

ANATOLII STEPANOV

In eastern Ukraine, where another gruelling winter is descending — along with it a likely freeze in major frontline movements — one Ukrainian soldier had a grim assessment of the conflict.

The 35-year-old fighting near the war-battered town of Bakhmut went further than comments from Ukraine’s most senior military official, who conceded this week that the war with Russia had reached a stalemate.

“I’ve been saying that for some time now already. Step by step we’re losing the war,” the serviceman, who uses the call sign “Mudryi” (Wise), said. “The longer this static war continues, the worse it is for us,” he said in a phone interview.

The frontline between the Ukrainian army and Russian forces occupying the east and south of the country has barely moved since last November, despite repeated Russian strikes and a Ukrainian counteroffensive. Ukraine’s General Valery Zaluzhny surprised observers of the attack this week with an unusually candid assessment that the warring parties had reached a deadlock along the sprawling front.

“Just like in the First World War, we have reached the level of technology that puts us into a stalemate,” he told the British magazine, The Economist. “There will most likely be no deep and beautiful breakthrough.”

The comments poured cold water on the highly-touted counteroffensive that Ukraine launched this summer after stockpiling Western weapons and training new recruits.

But the push gained little ground and journalists found last month that Ukraine was still battling Russian forces in one key village it had claimed to recapture weeks earlier.

In response to Zaluzhny’s comments, a senior Ukrainian official said the country was facing a turning point, and would need to decide on a strategy on how to win the conflict with Russia.

Presidential aide Mykhailo Podolyak meanwhile conceded in turn that this period of fighting had run into “difficulties”.

And Oleksiy Danilov, the head of Ukraine’s security council, acknowledged that, “new approaches are needed.”

Ukrainian forces have urged Western allies to provide F-16 fighters jets and long range missiles as infantry crash into deep Russian defensive lines they have struggled to penetrate.

As a teen, she loved video games. Now she’s using AI to try to quash malaria



Dionne Searcey

The writer won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for international reporting as part of a team for NYT

LIKE MANY OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE IN AFRICA’S TECH BOOM, DIAGNE IS AT THE CENTER OF OVERLAPPING PHENOMENA ON THE CONTINENT

When she was in her early teens, Rokhaya Diagne would retreat to her brother’s room, where she played online computer games for hours, day after day, until her mother finally got fed up.

“My mom said, “This is an addiction,” Diagne said. “She said if I didn’t stop, she would send me to the hospital to see a psychiatrist.”

Her mother’s interventions worked. While Diagne’s passion for computers has, if anything, intensified, she has redirected her energies to higher pursuits than levelling up at Call of Duty.

Now her goals include using artificial intelligence to help the world eradicate malaria by 2030, a project she is focused on at her health startup.

Video games “taught me a lot of things,” said Diagne, 25, a Senegalese computer science major who lives in Dakar, the capital. “They gave me problem-solving skills.

“I don’t regret playing those things,” she added.

A fast talker in bluejeans and hijab, Diagne is part of a subset of Africa’s enormous youth population whose lives have been shaped by screens and the internet — and who are connected to the world to a degree that no generation before them could have imagined.

For young Africans interested in technology-related careers, the internet has offered a powerful addition to an education system that some experts worry is hobbling Africa’s ability to take advantage of its young people. While graduating more students than ever before, schools still rely heavily on stand-and-deliver lectures.

The wealth of free online coding boot camps, robotics lessons and lectures from the likes of Stanford, Oxford and Massachusetts Institute of Technology are having a big impact across Africa, inspiring careers in engineering and seeding ideas for startups.

While some of her cohorts are most passionate about sensor fusion



Rokhaya Diagne, right, a computer science major, works on a project for her internship at the Institute for Health Research, Epidemiological Surveillance and Training in Dianiamdio, Senegal.

or robotics, Diagne is into AI and machine deep-learning. She helped create an award-winning networking app to meet others with similar interests — like Tinder but for tech nerds. And she founded a startup called Afyasense (she borrowed “afya,” or health, from Swahili, an East African language) for her disease-detection projects using AI.

“She is someone with whom talking is a pleasure due to the quality of the questions she asks and also the answers she gives,” said Ismaila Seck, a leader in Senegal’s growing AI community.

Like many other young people in Africa’s tech boom, Diagne is at the centre of overlapping phenomena on the continent — a growing, educated middle class raising even more educated children who, with each tap on a keyboard, have adopted a sense that the continent’s biggest problems can be solved. Diagne wants to use AI to improve health outcomes in the region, a choice she made after a range of childhood illnesses landed her in Dakar hospitals, which struggled to provide consistent, quality care.

“I know the mistakes that are unfortunately made,” she said.

Diagne’s drive has earned her recognition. Her malaria project recently won an award at an AI conference in Ghana and a national award in Senegal for social entrepreneurship, as well as \$8,000 in

funding.

As a child, she said she was reserved but always has had a huge appetite for research, fed by her father, a retired literature professor and writer. When faced with his daughter’s questions about how the world worked or about her Muslim faith, he would make her try to find the answer herself. He rewarded her with apples, still her favourite fruit.

She enrolled at the École Supérieure Polytechnique de Dakar as a biology major and scored an internship at the Principal Hospital of Dakar. But days of reviewing lab samples helped her realise that kind of work wasn’t for her.

“I wanted way more challenges than fearing the bacteria in my body,” she said. “What I wanted was innovation and being able to create and use my brain for something instead of predictive results that I just followed.”

Dejected that she had made the wrong choice, Diagne dropped out of school and spent a year plotting her next steps.

She recalled something her brother used to tell her: Do things that are harder because there’s less competition. She picked bioinformatics, the science of both the storing of complex biological data and of analysing it to find new insights. The options for studying it in Senegal were extremely limited.

— *The New York Times.*

Destroying a forest for economic gain...

We so often hear about saving the South American rainforests, and the Amazon, don't we? Yet, how much do we know or understand about why, and what it offers the world?

The realities of tropical rainforests are also difficult to visualise, and properly appreciate, from the geographical contradiction of the Sultanate of Oman, with its arid landscapes; to the harsh icebound perspectives of the Arctic and Antarctic regions; from the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro to the Great Barrier Reef, or from the noise, hustle, and bustle of the famed Camden Market in London to the incessant chatter of a Delhi call centre. Yet, we should know, and we should understand that continued deforestation, mining, and urbanisation, will have consequences for us all.

Rainforests are critical to the well-being of the earth's freshwater retention, with the Amazon rainforest alone storing nearly a quarter of the planet's total fresh water. Their greenery produces a fifth of our planet's oxygen output, absorb significant amounts of solar radiation, and stores massive amounts of carbon dioxide, to stabilise our climate, global warming notwithstanding, and regulate global regional temperatures, acting as the planet's thermostat.

Ironically perhaps, given the world's deserts are also mainly within the same global zones, tropical rainforests are located between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, their flora is mostly evergreen, and they have significant high rainfall and averages 83 per cent humidity. In another irony, science tells us that 50 million tonnes of nutrient rich sand are carried from the Middle East by prevailing winds and dumped on South America and the Amazon rainforest each year. Who knew huh?

The Amazon rainforest features four distinctly different, yet vastly interdependent layers, that each contribute remarkably to the others in a textbook symbiosis. The emergent layer



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The writer is a media consultant

features trees as tall as 80 metres, with bare trunks, broad, yet sparse foliage, mainly Brazil Nut and Kapok trees which are inhabited by a diversity of exotic creatures such as eagles, macaws, and parakeets; capuchin, and squirrel monkeys.

Beneath this is the canopy, a deeper layer of leaves and branches that forms a roof over the jungle below, blocking much of the wind, rain, and sunlight, creating a humid, darker, more still environment below. With glossy leaves that repel water, these trees are largely deciduous, which means they shed their leaves each autumn, their seeds, and fruits, in the spring, mulching the lush forest floor far below. Animals inhabiting this environment are active and noisy, with monkeys chattering, macaws and toucans howling and screeching amongst the darker vegetation, where small reptiles thrive, and beetles, butterflies, and insects abound. Below the canopy, the understory is a darker still, and very much more humid. Plants like palms, heliconia, philodendrons, and fragrant exotics such as orchids, catch minimal sunlight, but thrive in their 'hothouse' environment. The fruits, berries, and seeds of the understory plants feed small snakes, and small rodents and reptiles, who are preyed upon by much larger snakes. Here, the mamba, anaconda, python, and boa constrictor blend in with foliage as they slither along the low branches in search of their prey.

The Amazon is a biologically diverse terrestrial ecosystem, its unique environment home to an estimated 40,000 plant species, nearly 1,300 birds, 3,000 different fish, 400 mammals, and a ridiculous 2.5 million different insects. It is nature's playground, and for humanity, a unique scientific laboratory. We need it more than it needs us, and we should be doing more to guard against our fickle complacency. Famed biologist and naturalist Edgar Owen Wilson, is renowned, among his many achievements, for writing, "To destroy a forest for economic gain, is like burning a renaissance painting to cook a meal." How succinct!

50 MILLION TONNES OF NUTRIENT RICH SAND ARE CARRIED FROM THE MIDDLE EAST BY PREVAILING WINDS AND DUMPED ON SOUTH AMERICA AND THE AMAZON RAINFOREST EACH YEAR

A TRADITION AT ITS BEST



A Balinese dancer performs a Legong Kraton traditional dance in front of Jagatnatha temple in Denpasar, on the resort island of Bali on Saturday. – AFP

When do we die?

What is it you don't understand? She's dead, dead, dead. That is how David Durand,

Chief Medical Officer of Oakland's Children's Hospital, attempted to convince the family of Jahi McMath that the standard medical tests for brain death had shown that their teenage daughter was no longer alive.

The family stood firm in opposing this view, and the hospital eventually allowed them to take her to New Jersey, the only US state that requires hospitals to accommodate patients whose families object, on religious grounds, to regarding brain death as death. For more than four years, she remained a functioning (though radically disabled) member of the species Homo sapiens: fighting off infections, reacting to bodily trauma by increasing her heartrate, and getting her first period.

Jahi's case revived interest in (and debate over) what it means to die. A few years earlier there appeared to be a consensus that brain death is death. But if such a consensus ever existed, it no longer does.

Until the 1960s, death was indicated by the irreversible cessation of a person's heartbeat. But the invention of a ventilator that could keep severely brain-damaged humans alive, combined with the success of organ transplants, led a Harvard Committee to recommend "brain death" as a new standard for determining when



Peter Singer,
Professor of Bioethics at Princeton University, is Founder of the nonprofit organisation The Life You Can Save



Charles Camosy,
Professor of Bioethics at the Creighton University School of Medicine, is Monsignor Curran Moral Theology Fellow at St Joseph Seminary

someone has died.

That decision led, by 1980, to the Uniform Law Commission proposing a new Uniform Determination of Death. Soon after, "brain death" would be considered death in all 50 states.

Astonishingly, this substantial shift in our understanding of when a human being dies occurred with very little public discussion or scrutiny. Few knew, for instance, that, as archival research has revealed, the Harvard Committee explicitly discussed the need to change the definition of death so that more organs would be available for transplant.

Brain death became a virtually unquestioned concept — hence Durand's frustration at the McMath family's refusal to accept that, notwithstanding Jahi's beating heart and warm body, she was dead. But that case played a key role in breaking the consensus, as did several cases in which a "dead" woman gestated a living child to birth. One of these cases produced the headline, "Brain-Dead Woman Gives Birth, Then Dies."

Such coverage could be dismissed as indicating a popular misunderstanding of the scientific facts. Not so easy to dismiss was an editorial in Nature noting that, although the 1980 Uniform Determination of Death requires

"irreversible cessation of all functions of the entire brain," the standard tests used to determine brain death do not test for cessation of all brain functions. In some individuals declared to be brain dead, the pituitary gland and/or the hypothalamus are functioning (which is likely how individuals like Jahi McMath can reach puberty after being declared dead).

Under pressure from physicians and transplant groups to address these inconsistencies, the Uniform Law Commission was asked to consider changing the 1980 definition to reflect the fact that physicians do not test for whole brain death, but rather for "permanent coma, permanent cessation of spontaneous respiratory functions, and permanent loss of brainstem



Until the 1960s, death was indicated by the irreversible cessation of a person's heartbeat.

reflexes." The commission met in Honolulu this past July. The ensuing discussion showed that there was nothing approaching a consensus about brain death.

In September, the chair of the committee that had been discussing how to revise the definition sent an email to those involved saying that "we have decided to pause" the effort. "No further drafting committee meetings will be scheduled at this time," he added.

We interpret this outcome as an indication that once the question of revising the definition of death was opened, it became apparent that it could not be answered without facing the profound and deeply divisive moral question about which there is no consensus: Under what circumstances is it justifiable to

remove a person's heart in order to save another's life?

We have very different ethical stances on the inviolability of human life. One of us (Camosy) is a professor of bioethics at a Catholic medical school who also teaches moral theology to seminarians, and who supports equal justice for prenatal human beings and a prohibition against physician-assisted killing. The other (Singer), a professor of bioethics at Princeton University, is a utilitarian who supports the right to abortion and to physician aid in dying, and advocates for allowing parents to decide to end the lives of their severely disabled newborn infants. Yet we agree that many individuals, declared "brain dead" after the currently standard tests are correctly carried out, are living members of the species Homo sapiens.

To declare that some human beings with warm bodies and beating hearts are dead, as the Uniform Determination of Death legislation did, was a major cultural shift. And yet the potentially profound implications for the moral and legal status of prenatal and newborn human beings, along with older humans who have the neurological damage associated with later-stage dementia, were unacknowledged.

sport

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Ahmad al Harthy in action in Bahrain FIA WEC race

BAHRAIN: Oman Racing with TF Sport’s Ahmad al Harthy has given the team a great chance to challenge for the podium during the final race of the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) season in Bahrain on Saturday, after qualifying a highly competitive third fastest.

Preparing well throughout the three free practice sessions, with Al Harthy and team-mates Michael Dinan and Charlie Eastwood focusing on race set-up for the big eight hour contest, in qualifying the Omani was in his usual impressive form.

On his first true flying lap in the all-important run on Friday, Al Harthy shot

into the top three on the timing screens in GTE Am with an excellent time of 1m59.199s. On his next lap at the wheel of the No.25 Aston Martin Vantage GTE, he improved marginally to go second fastest with a time of 1m59.161s.

Ultimately, he slipped to third before the chequered flag, less than two tenths of a second shy of the front row of the grid, but the top three start in Bahrain is one Al Harthy and Oman Racing are more than satisfied with.

In today’s race, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, OQ, Omantel and MHD-ITICS supported Al Harthy will be aiming to proudly fly the flag for



Ahmad al Harthy during the final race of FIA WEC season in Bahrain

Oman during FIA WEC’s Middle Eastern finale, bidding for the third podium of his maiden season in the championship.

LAST RACE

Temperatures in Bahrain have been high, and the Sakhir circuit is known for high tyre wear too, so consistency and reliability will be as important as ever. Going into the last race of the campaign, Al Harthy, Dinan and Eastwood are fifth in the driver standings with Oman Racing fifth in the team points table also.

Ahmad al Harthy explain, “It was a solid qualifying to be honest. It’s very difficult to get a perfect lap here in Bahrain because of

the high tyre wear, but we were very close to maximising our performance. It’s going to be a long eight hour race, so third is a very good place to start from.

“We’re happy with that, P3 gives us a good chance to race and we have worked throughout practice so far to make sure we have a good car for the race. More than anything else, the weather is the hottest it’s been on the calendar, so hopefully as the sun sets the temperatures will begin to drop.”

Round seven, the final eight-hour race of the FIA World Endurance Championship season, will get underway later today at 14.00 local time in Bahrain.

Al Alawi head coach of U-19 football team

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, NOV 4

The Oman Football Association (OFA) has announced recently appointment of the national head coach, Ahmed bin Mubarak al Alawi as the new national U-19 football team replacing Spanish coach David Gordo who quit the team since May.

Al Alawi, who hails from Sur, served the U-19 football team as assistant coach to coach Gordo since January 2022. He had served the team in several regional and continental events including the 2023 AFC U20 Asian Cup Uzbekistan qualifiers where Oman boys had managed to advance to the finals.

Ahmed worked with other domestic teams in Al Sharqiyah N&S governorates and had served also many football academies for junior players. He is experienced in providing the right training sessions and the desired technical skills for the U-15, U17 and U19 teams.

Inline to the announcement of the recently appointed head coach, the team will begin their first warm up training session on 6-8 of November for the first batch of players, while the following batch will take place during 8 to10 of November. Both camps will be held in Bidiyah and it will be many criteria to select the top players from both batches.

With the formation of newly



The Oman national U-19 football team

coaching staff, the national U-19 football team will eye for a new chapter with more successful accomplishments in different forthcoming participation at regional and international levels. The expected approach for the newly appointed coaching staff will be re-forming the squad with selecting new players from the series of short domestic camps and will shape their readiness for the future events. The future events will be AFC U20 Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers during September 2024, while the finals of 2025 AFC



Ahmed al Alawi, head coach of U-19 football team

U20 Asian Cup is scheduled to take place during February 2025.

Oman’s last appearance were in the 2023 AFC U20 Asian Cup Uzbekistan finals. Oman team campaign in the Asian Cup had ended with only one point from a goalless draw against Jordan. Oman had suffered two defeats in the first two games of the group against South Korea and Tajikistan. It was the third participation for the Red Warriors junior in Asian AFC Under-20 finals in Uzbekistan after 2014 and 2000 editions.

‘Wissam’ wons first place at Al Ain Track in UAE

MUSCAT: The horse ‘Wissam’ owned by Royal Cavalry snatched first place in the 7th round ‘Jebel Hafeet’ for purebred Arabian horses for a distance of 1000 metres, at Al Ain Club track in the UAE. ‘Wissam’ led by Connor Beasley and trained by Ibrahim al Hadrami. While second place won by ‘Aznigood de Creer’ owned by Rashid al Mazrooei, led by Oscar Chavez and supervised by Abdullah al Hammadi. Third place claimed by ‘Sadarah’ owned by Jumaa Ibrahim, the rider Leandro Chimneys and under the coach Qais Abboud. The Royal Cavalry horses also achieved advanced positions during the UAE races, ‘Manar’ finished second place in the fourth round for a distance of 800 metres, led by Connor Beasley and the supervision by Ibrahim al Hadrami. In addition ‘Muthabar’ finished fourth in fifth round for a distance of 1,600 metres, led by Connor Beasley and Ibrahim al Hadrami in the coaching.



The horse ‘Wissam’ owned by Royal Cavalry in UAE Race

STRONG COMPETITION AT SECOND ROUND OF WORLD AMATEUR CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, NOV 4

The second round competition of the World Amateur Chess Championship (WACC), commenced with the first ceremonial move made by Taryam Matar, the President of the UAE Chess Federation, marking the official start.

The Friday games honoured by the participation of the National Chess Federation's presidents and officials. Emmanuel Mwaka of Uganda, Adel al Amiri of Kuwait, and other officials are present in Muscat.

The championship is organised by the Oman Chess Committee in collaboration with the International Chess Federation FIDE, running from November 2 to 11, at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher.

The intensity of the competition increased in the second round of the Championship. The competitions witnessed strong and exciting battles among the players in a significant challenge, which doesn't recognise age difference but rather focuses on the rating and the categories specified by the tournament, which are three categories: 1700, 2000, and 2300 for both gender men and women. This resulted in younger age categories defeating the older in some matches, attributed to differences in experience, effective match management, and successful decision-making that led the players to victory. In the second round, approximately 200 matches were held with the participation of 400 ranked players representing 64 countries, competing in the three categories, and the top rankings in each category were as follows:

In the Women under 1700 category, Binoj, representing the FIDE, took the lead in the overall standings after earning two points by winning all her matches, including a victory over the Kuwaiti player Rabab Nema. Following her in the Championship rankings is Baldanjantsan from Mongolia,



Taryam Matar, UAE Chess Federation head, marking the official start

with two consecutive wins. Omani player Doaa al Maqbali raised her points to 1.5 with an important victory in the second round over the Sudanese player Nahal Awad.

In the Men under 1700 category, Sergei, representing the IFIDE, topped the overall standings with two consecutive wins, including a victory over the Indian player Rathore. Following him in the overall rankings is the Indian player Anshu Kr, who achieved a fantastic win against the Poland player Janusz. Omani player Khalfan al Hosni follows with two points after defeating Salem al Mamari.

In the Men under 2000 category, John Derek from Uruguay managed to achieve a second victory by defeating the Mexican player Teresa Ale, securing the top spot in the overall standings after the second round. Sudanese player Asim Ali followed, who defeated the UAE player Gaith. Belgian

player Esa came after a splendid victory over Zhanybek from Kyrgyzstan.

In the Men under 2300 category, the Egyptian player Fadi took the lead in the overall standings after achieving a second victory in the second round over the Jordanian player Ghayth. He was followed by the Mongolian player Naranbold after defeating the Brazilian player, Yuri Matos. Saudi player Ahmed al Rehaili followed after defeating the Turkmenistan player Shohratguly. This intensifies the competition in the upcoming rounds as every player strives to win and earn match points to improve their overall standings.

The third round began on Saturday with strong competition that surpassed the intensity of the first and second rounds as players sought to seize opportunities to win and enhance their positions in the three categories. Some matches extended to nearly

five hours due to the players' careful decision-making, aiming to make the right choices for a win. The fourth round will take place tomorrow, with high expectations from the players to achieve results that will qualify them for the championship stage.

HIGHEST NUMBER

In his comments about the tournament, Taryam Matar, the President of the UAE Chess Federation, praised the tremendous efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman in hosting this international championship. He said, "What Oman has accomplished by attracting this international championship and registering the highest number of participants in the history of the championship reflects the high effort made by the Oman Chess Committee, especially its president."

The championship reflects the high effort invested in facilitat-



The Kuwaiti player Rabab Nema in action

ing the participation of teams and large delegations from 64 different countries, in addition to the excellent organisation of the playing hall and table divisions. Along with the live broadcast of the matches, which allows fans of the game from around the world to watch the progress of the championship.

Taryam added, "The presence of many high-ranking players in this championship will significantly contribute to raising the rankings of Omani players and will provide them with valuable opportunities to gain the necessary experience to compete in international tournaments."

In another interview with the player Petr Buchnec, who represents the Czech Republic in the U 2300 category, despite it being his first visit to Oman, he expressed great admiration for the country and the organisation of the tournament. He said, "This is my first

time visiting Oman, and I find the country to be very beautiful."

Speaking about Oman's organisation of the tournament, he said, "The organisation was professional, similar to all the field events I know because I'm not just a player, but also an international arbiter in world tournaments and similar activities."

Petr praised the level of organisation, saying that the Oman Chess Committee and the organisers have resolved and addressed all the complexities, and he expressed his optimism and confidence that the championship will be a fantastic and successful event.

Cultural and entertainment events accompanied the tournament, with the Oman Chess Committee organising trips for the participants to explore the landmarks of the Sultanate of Oman. The participants visited the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.

Djokovic edges Rune, Tsitsipas marches into Paris semifinals

PARIS: World number one Novak Djokovic stayed on course for a seventh Paris Masters title by beating Holger Rune in the quarterfinals on Friday, with the Dane still qualifying for a spot at the ATP Tour Finals after Andrey Rublev beat Alex de Minaur.

Djokovic was rock solid as he avenged his defeat by the tenacious youngster in last year's showpiece to win 7-5 6-7(3) 6-4 and set up a semifinal against Russian fifth seed Rublev, who beat Australian De Minaur 4-6 6-3 6-1.

Victory for 20-year-old Rune would have sealed his place in Turin but he will still make his debut in the year-ender featuring the world's top eight players as De Minaur had to win the title to deny the Dane a place at the elite event.

Djokovic's victory means Germany's Alexander Zverev also qualifies for the ATP Tour Finals.

Rune delighted the Paris crowd with some stunning tennis and



Serbia's Novak Djokovic reacts after winning a game during his men's singles quarterfinal match against Denmark's Holger Rune. — AFP

saved a match point at 4-5 in the second set before an inspired tiebreak took the match to a decider.

But Djokovic was unfazed and broke serve early in the third set, while Rune was not helped by a cut to his hand that required some lengthy patching up at a changeover.

The sixth seed could make no impression on the Djokovic serve in the decider as the top-ranked Serb clocked up a 16th successive win since losing in the Wimbledon final.

"It was quite a similar match to last year's final, it was anybody's game in every set," Djokovic said.

— Reuters

Fernandes strikes late as Man Utd win 1-0 at Fulham

LONDON: Manchester United stopped the rot as captain Bruno Fernandes struck in the 90th minute for a 1-0 victory at Fulham in the early Premier League game at Fulham on Saturday.

The game was petering out into a lacklustre stalemate when Fernandes latched on to a loose ball on the edge of the area and drilled a low skidding shot inside the post.

Successive 3-0 home defeats in United's worst start to a season since 1962 had piled pressure on manager Erik ten Hag and victory at Craven Cottage will release that somewhat.

But while the victory was most welcome, questions still remain about where United are heading under the Dutchman after another rather shapeless display.

A third successive narrow away win in the league lifted United to sixth with 18 points for 11 games ahead of the rest of the weekend



Bruno Fernandes celebrates scoring their first goal. — Reuters

programme.

Fulham, who were twice denied by great saves by Andre Onana in the second half and will count themselves unlucky, are down in 14th with 12 points.

Fernandes has come under fire in recent weeks with former

Manchester United title winners Gary Neville and Roy Keane both suggesting he should have the armband taken away after some petulant performances.

But he answered with a crucial goal when his team needed it most, although the win may only be papering over cracks.

The only talking point of a mundane first half was Scott McTominay's disallowed goal for United after seven minutes.

Christian Eriksen's flighted free kick was turned across the area by Alejandro Garnacho and McTominay arrived to dispatch the ball high into the net. But United's celebrations were cut short, eventually, after a drawn-out VAR check with referee John Brooks going to the monitor to rule it out on the basis that Harry Maguire, who was initially offside, had been interfering with play. — Reuters



Fakhar Zaman in action. — Reuters

Zaman keeps Pakistan alive in rain-hit triumph

BENGALURU: Swashbuckling opener Fakhar Zaman cracked a blistering century to save Pakistan from World Cup elimination in a rain-affected and dramatic 21-run victory over New Zealand at Bengaluru on Saturday.

The 33-year-old left-hander smashed 11 sixes and eight boundaries in his unbeaten 81-ball 126 as rain forced a premature end to the match with Pakistan 200-1 after 25.3 overs, chasing a revised DLS target of 342 in 41 overs.

“We know that every game is do or die for us,” said Zaman.

Rachin Ravindra hit his third century of the tournament while Kane Williamson scored 95 to help New Zealand pile up 401-6 in their 50 overs.

Set a mammoth 402-run target initially, Zaman lifted Pakistan to 160-1 after 21.3 overs before a 90-minute stoppage due to rain led to a revised target for Pakistan.

After the resumption, Zaman kept up the tempo, hitting three sixes off spinner Ish Sodhi’s 25th over as Pakistan went past the 200-mark.

Pakistan had needed to overhaul the original target of 402 in 35.3 overs if they were to get beyond New Zealand’s better net run-rate which could prove crucial in the battle for semifinal spots.

However, Abdullah Shafique fell for four in the second over.

Zaman and skipper Babar Azam (66) added 194 for the unbroken second-wicket stand.

Zaman took the attack to the New Zealand bowlers,

smashing four sixes and as many boundaries in his 39-ball fifty.

He completed his 11th ODI hundred, and first in a World Cup, with a six and a single off Mitchell Santner.

His century came off 63 balls with nine sixes and six boundaries.

Pakistan now have eight points from as many games with their last match against England in Kolkata on November 11.

They not only need to win that but also hope New Zealand lose to Sri Lanka on November 9 in Bengaluru or the match is hit by rain.

“We were trying to give 100% but in some matches we were not up to the mark,” said Azam.

“If we win our next match, well let’s see... we will try to play positively.”

As a consequence of Pakistan’s win, South Africa became the second team alongside India to make the semifinals.

- New Zealand pile up 401 -

Earlier, it was Ravindra and Williamson who set the platform for New Zealand’s total after they were put in to bat.

Ravindra continued his superb form with a 94-ball 108 with 15 boundaries and a six and was matched stroke for stroke by Williamson whose 79-ball knock was spiced with two sixes and 10 boundaries.

This was Ravindra’s third century of the tournament — in addition to two half-centuries — and he was in total control until he holed out at deep mid-wicket off Mohammed Wasim in the 36th over. — AFP

All-round Zampa helps Australia knock out England

AHMEDABAD: Spinner Adam Zampa starred with bat and ball as Australia knocked England out of the World Cup semifinals race with a convincing 33-run win on Saturday.

Chasing 287 for victory in Ahmedabad, England folded for 253 in 48.1 overs despite a valiant 64 from Ben Stokes to slump to their sixth defeat in seven matches and stay bottom of the 10-team table.

Five-time champions Australia edged closer to securing a semifinal berth alongside India and South Africa -- both already qualified for the last four -- with their fifth straight win.

Zampa returned figures of 3-21 with his leg-spin to puncture England’s hopes that were raised by

a couple of partnerships including a 63-run fifth-wicket stand between Stokes and Moeen Ali, who hit 42.

Zampa, who had earlier hit 29 with the bat, broke the stand when Stokes mistimed a paddle to be caught at short fine-leg and departed with a shake of his head.

Wickets kept tumbling with Liam Livingstone and Moeen falling in quick succession for a familiar England tale in this tournament where they have also lost to Afghanistan and Sri Lanka.

Zampa, who leads the World Cup bowling chart with 19 wickets, also took a superb outfield catch to help dismiss David Willey.

Left-arm Mitchell Starc struck with two early wickets including Jonny Bairstow on the first ball of the chase and then Joe Root for 13.

Dawid Malan made 50 before skipper Pat Cummins took him out.

England, in their remaining two matches, are left to fight for a place in the 2025 Champions Trophy with the top seven teams from this World Cup gaining entry into the tournament where hosts Pakistan will have automatic qualification.

Batsmen set up victory for Australia with Marnus Labuschagne top-scoring with 71 and useful contributions from Steve Smith (44), Cameron Green (47), Marcus Stoinis (35) and Zampa (29 off 19 balls).

Chris Woakes returned figures of 4-54 and was supported by fellow quick Mark Wood and leg-spinner Adil Rashid, with two each, to help bowl out Australia for 286. — AFP



Australia’s Adam Zampa celebrates with Pat Cummins, Steve Smith and Marcus Stoinis after taking the wicket of England’s Jos Buttler. — Reuters



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Carbon capture projects to support Net-Zero strategy

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, NOV 4

Investments in Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) initiatives can make a significant contribution to Oman's goal to become Net-Zero by 2050, according to a key official of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

Muhannad al Hinai, Director of Hydrogen Policies and Strategies, noted that CCUS can complement renewable energies, sustainable hydrogen, battery technologies and other decarbonisation solutions in supporting CO2 abatement efforts critical to the country's climate mitigation targets.

CCUS encompasses a suite of technologies that support the capture of planet-warming CO2, generally from large point sources like power generation or industrial facilities that use either fossil fuels or biomass as fuel. The captured CO2 is compressed and transported to be used in a range of applications, or injected into deep geological formations such as depleted oil and gas reservoirs or saline aquifers.

Speaking at a recent forum on Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Al Hinai pointed out that CCUS projects can abate as much as 15 per cent of Oman's total annual CO2 emissions. This compares with a potential contribution of 8 per cent from green hydrogen, 35 per cent from renewables and electrification, 20 per cent from battery technologies, 7 per cent



CCUS investments can help offset around 15 per cent of Oman's annual carbon emissions – Reuters

from negative emissions-based solutions, and the rest from other decarbonisation solutions.

Oman's greenhouse gas emissions are currently estimated at around 90 million tonnes of CO2-equivalent per annum. Of this total, industry, refining and petrochemicals together account for a 32 per cent share, followed by Oil & Gas upstream operations (20 per cent), power generation and buildings (19 per cent), transportation (18 per cent), and farming and waste sector (6 per cent).

"CCUS's anticipated role is to tackle emissions from existing energy assets," said Al

Hinai. "That includes upstream operations, power and industrial plants, hard-to-abate sectors such as the cement, steel and heavy transportation. It could also be utilised to produce low carbon hydrogen, through steam and methane reforming processes of natural gas, alongside the removal of carbon from the atmosphere through DAC (direct air capture) processes, utilising carbon in the fertiliser industries such as the production of urea or ammonia, enhanced oil recovery, and the creation of synthetic fuels." Significantly, a "couple" of CCUS projects are currently under development in the Sultanate of

Oman, according to the official. Notable is the 'Blue Horizons' project being development by Oman Shell in collaboration with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

Also being explored is the potential for storing CO2 in aquifers and depleted oil and gas fields. "We are working closely with some of the interested parties in Oman in developing solutions," said Al Hinai, while also underlining opportunities for captured carbon to be utilised in different applications, including the production of synthetic fuels, such as Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

Oman Post network now covers 215 locations

MUSCAT: The number of post offices serving licensed companies across various governorates has grown to 215, with a further 169 correspondence deposit boxes installed as well, according to recent statistics from the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

These statistics reveal that among the correspondence deposit boxes, there are 129 personal boxes and two company boxes. Moreover, the combined total of mobile mailboxes with personal dedicated mailboxes stands at approximately 24,954 boxes for individuals and 3,642 boxes designated for companies.

In Muscat, the licensed companies have 79 post offices and 34 correspondence deposit boxes. Within these post offices, there are 71 personal virtual boxes and two for companies. The mobile postal boxes that work in conjunction with personal dedicated mailboxes amount to 12,463 boxes for individuals and 2,772 boxes for companies.

Turning to Dhofar Governorate, it boasts 19 post offices and 17 correspondence deposit boxes for all licensed companies. Among these, five are personal virtual boxes. The mobile mailboxes combined with personal dedicated mailboxes are at 1,531 for individuals and 203 for companies.

In Musandam Governorate, licensed companies have access to four post offices and nine correspondence deposit boxes, with 192 mobile mailboxes combined with personal dedicated mailboxes and 41 for companies.

Al Buraimi Governorate hosts nine post offices and seven deposit boxes for correspondence. Within these post offices, three virtual boxes cater to personal use, and there are 356 mobile postal boxes in conjunction with personal dedicated postal boxes. Additionally, 40 boxes are set aside for companies.

Al Dakhiliyah Governorate has a total of 22 post offices and 24



deposit boxes for correspondence for licensed companies. Among these, 10 are personal virtual boxes, while the mobile mailboxes combined with personal dedicated mailboxes number 2,982 for individuals and 77 for companies.

In Al Batinah North Governorate, licensed companies benefit from 30 post offices and 19 deposit boxes for correspondence. Among these, nine are for personal use. The mobile mailboxes combined with personal dedicated mailboxes total 3,106 for individuals and 282 for companies.

Al Batinah South Governorate provides 13 post offices and 12 deposit boxes for correspondence to licensed companies. Among these, two are personal virtual boxes, and 1,576 mobile postal boxes work in conjunction with personal dedicated postal boxes. In addition, 79 boxes are allocated for companies.

Al Sharqiyah South Governorate has 18 post offices and 14 correspondence deposit boxes for licensed companies. The mobile postal boxes combined with personal dedicated postal boxes amount to 667 for individuals and 51 for companies.

In Al Sharqiyah North Governorate, licensed companies have access to 11 post offices and 15 deposit boxes for correspondence. The mobile mailboxes combined with personal dedicated mailboxes stand at 915 for individuals and 37 for companies. — ONA

Nama Water Services to host Oman Water Week 2024

MUSCAT: Nama Water Services, member of Nama Group, will host "Oman Water Week" in January 2024 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center in Muscat. The primary objective of this event is to establish a platform for extensive discussions on the water sector's role in promoting sustainable development in the Sultanate of Oman. The 3-day event also aims to foster greater sustainability, flexibility, and efficiency within the sector.

Oman Water Week is an annual congregation of water experts, specialists, industry professionals, and government officials from both within and outside Oman. Through this initiative, Nama Water Services hopes to emphasise the critical need for sustainable solutions to address the challenges confronting Oman's water sector. It also seeks to explore the latest technical advancements and strategies contributing to sustainable development.

The themes of Oman Water Week encompass a broad spectrum



Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Nama Water Services

of water-related subjects, including the enhancement of sustainability, effective management of water resources, and technological innovations in the sector.

The inaugural day of the conference will focus on topics related to water policies and strategies in Oman, as well as economic aspects of water management. On the second day, the conference will delve into technical aspects, including the achievement of operational efficiency and sustainable



Sewage network and treated water in the Bawshar area (B8)

technologies in the water sector, digital transformation, applications of artificial intelligence, and management and control systems. The forum will address issues

surrounding water resources management in Oman, highlighting the challenges and opportunities faced by various communities. It will bring

together experts and specialists from government and private institutions engaged in the water sector to exchange experiences and knowledge, all in the pursuit

of sustainable solutions.

Oman Water Week will feature dialogue sessions, panel discussions, and an accompanying exhibition showcasing the latest solutions and innovations. Approximately 40 speakers from around the world are expected to participate, and the event anticipates the presence of 450 participants, including engineers, technicians, and water specialists.

Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Nama Water Services, expressed that hosting "Oman Water Week" will provide an invaluable opportunity for water sector officials, experts, and specialists to share knowledge and engage in meaningful discussions that will shape the future of water management in Oman. He further emphasised that the event will serve as a platform for water professionals to stay updated on the latest advancements in water resources management, wastewater treatment, environmental services, and industrial water applications. — ONA

BGP Oman’s geophysical exhibition empowers Omani youth for the future

MUSCAT: BGP Oil & Gas Services LLC has been operating in Oman since 2003, collaborating with major Oil & Gas companies, primarily focusing on seismic projects for Oil & Gas exploration.

On the 30th of October 2023, BGP Oman held an open day Geophysical Technical exhibition for students from Sultan Qaboos University in Muscat and the German University of Technologies. The exhibition took place at BGP Oman’s warehouse located near Adam city, coinciding with the celebration of Omani Youth Day during the same week.

This event underscores BGP’s ongoing commitment and efforts to support the development of Omani youth at the academic level. University teachers, researchers, and students were all invited to explore the various equipment and technologies employed by BGP in Oil & Gas Exploration. BGP provided transportation, refreshments, and lunch for all the students and faculty members attending the exhibition.

The purpose of this exhibition was to demonstrate the Geophysical methods used in exploring minerals and hydrocarbon reservoirs. The goal was to inspire students to acquire further knowledge to contribute to the Sultanate of Oman’s hydrocarbon exploration efforts.

The event venue was meticulously prepared by the BGP



BGP Oman open day

Oman team, who had been working on the arrangements for several weeks. Their aim was to provide comfortable seating arrangements, engaging presentations, live exhibitions, and demonstrations by the technical supervisors from BGP Oman’s Operations team, covering a broad spectrum of Geophysical operations.

The event was hosted by a young Omani working with BGP Oman as an onsite Geophysicist, followed by a Health, Safety, and

Environment (HSE) Induction for all participants. A video showcasing BGP’s Geophysical leadership, primarily in Seismic Acquisition, Processing, and related topics, was presented to all attendees. BGP Oman’s Operations Manager discussed Seismic crew operations and their sequences.

BGP Oman’s youth currently working in roles managing field Geophysical Operations presented topics during the event, such as “HSE Role in BGP Seismic Crew,”

“Seismic Survey Operations,” and “Quality Control in BGP Seismic Crew.” Live demonstrations were also provided on Seismic Surveying, Layout of Geophysical Equipment, and the operations of Seismic Sources, including the Seismic Vibrator.

During the event, BGP showcased its Geophysical equipment, the backbone of Oil & Gas Exploration and crucial for Seismic operations. Students had the opportunity to witness

live demonstrations of this equipment and see its evolution from cable-based to cableless technology. The live equipment demonstrations aimed to inspire Omani innovation and encourage students to contribute to the challenging Geophysical field.

BGP Oman and both universities actively engaged in knowledge sharing, educational activities, and research endeavours, all with the shared goal of advancing the Geophysical field for a prosperous future.

University students received extensive practical information and explanations of geophysical methods with practical examples. Omani students from both universities actively participated in the event, attending lectures presented by BGP Omani staff working in the field. The feedback received from both students and faculty members was overwhelmingly positive.

This event also attracted a significant number of retired Omani employees who had worked with BGP for many years. They felt respected and engaged, taking the opportunity to interact with young students and motivate them to pursue careers in the Geophysical industry, predominantly operated by Omani staff.

The event was covered by the Oman TV media team, with interviews and feedback collected from the participants.

Saudi Fund’s financing support for Oman projects totals RO 1.1 bn



Fisheries port at Duqm SEZ, which has benefited from financing support from the Saudi Fund

RIYADH: The Saudi Fund for Development has so far financed developmental projects in the Sultanate of Oman to the tune of 11 billion Saudi riyals (equivalent to RO 1.1 billion approx.) since 1977. These projects are distributed across infrastructure, transportation, education, health, water, and energy, according to Eng Sultan Abdul Rahman al Murshid, CEO of the Fund.

Al Murshid added that the Fund recently signed an agreement to finance the construction of infrastructure in the integrated economic zone in Al-Dhahirah with funding support of 1.2 billion Saudi riyals. Work on the project will begin in Q1 2024.

The integrated economic zone in Al-Dhahirah is one of the vital projects that will serve both countries in terms of increasing trade exchanges, creating specific industries, and encouraging partnerships between sectors to provide goods and products and reduce the cost of production and export between the two brotherly countries, he said.

Earlier, the Saudi Fund had allocated 500 million Saudi riyals to support the construction of a fish industries complex at the fishing port in Duqm SEZ. — **ONA**

OAB MARKS OMANI TREE DAY



OAB to plant 5,000 trees across the country by December 2023 as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations.

MUSCAT: As the Sultanate of Oman recognises Omani Tree Day, Oman Arab Bank (OAB) remains committed to support the nation’s sustainability and environmental goals through its purpose-driven initiative ‘Roots of Oman’. The initiative aims to plant 5,000 trees across the country by December 2023 as part of its 50th anniversary celebrations. Sulaiman al Harthy, CEO of OAB said: “Roots of Oman is part of OAB’s concerted contributions towards pushing the nation forward to achieve its carbon

neutral commitment by 2050. We are proud to encourage positive and far-reaching socially responsible action, both through the bank’s campaigns and by encouraging citizens and residents alike throughout the Sultanate of Oman to join us on this journey. Together, we can significantly help the environment and reduce our carbon footprint.”

Roots of Oman was set in motion when trees were planted in the newly opened branch in Saada in Dhofar Governorate and Al Rustaq

in Al Batinah South Governorate as a symbol of the Bank’s commitment. OAB has also invited its staff, the Bank’s stakeholders and the public to join the tree planting initiative through a competition on social media, encouraging followers to share their tree-planting efforts using special hashtags #OABRootsofOman.

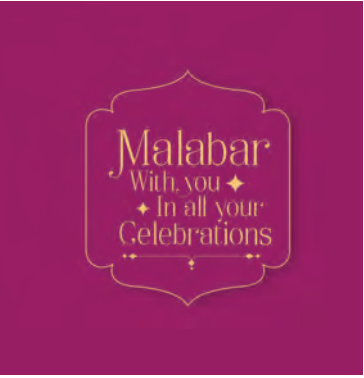
To date, Roots of Oman has seen many trees being planted across the nation, putting it on track to hit its target of 5,000 trees by the end of 2023.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds unveils festive collection

MUSCAT: Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the 6th largest jewellery retailer globally with over 335 showrooms across 11 countries, has announced their much-awaited festive season offers. Adding more sparkle to the numerous celebrations in the season, customers can get assured gold coins with their gold & diamond jewellery purchases. Malabar Gold & Diamonds has also unveiled a stunning array of festive jewellery collections in gold, diamond, and precious gems, designed to be an alluring attraction to customers. The limited period offer can be availed across all Malabar Gold & Diamonds outlets in the Middle East, Far East, the USA & the UK till the 12th November 2023.

For every diamond or precious gem jewellery purchase worth OMR 500, customers will get a free 1gm Gold Coin, and for diamond and precious gem jewellery purchases worth OMR 300, they will be eligible for a ½ gm Gold Coin.

Embracing the spirit of the season, the festive jewellery collection that the brand has unveiled consists of exquisite and unique designs in gold, diamonds & precious gem jewellery that have been carefully curated by considering the varying jewellery preferences that exist amongst their vast customer bases. The special designs have been made available across a wide range of sub-brands such as Mine, Era, Precia, Viraa, Ethnix, and Divine. Elegant designs crafted in contemporary fashion have also been introduced in the 18K gold



category. Additionally, the brand will also be setting up Special Buy counters at their showrooms, offering incredible discounts on selected jewellery designs.

Mr. Shamlal Ahamed, MD — International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, commented, “The offers that we unveil during the festive season are always looked forward to by our customers. By giving away free gold coins with their festive jewellery purchase, we are ensuring that our vast plethora of customers gets to indulge in their festivities with all the pomp and vigour they can muster. The attractive offers and the exquisite array of designs that have been made available in our festive jewellery collection is our way of reiterating that Malabar Gold & Diamonds stands by our customers in all their celebrations.”

In light of the gold rate fluctuations, customers can take advantage of the Gold Rate Protection offer provided by Malabar Gold & Diamonds, wherein customers can block the prevailing gold rates by paying just a 10 per cent advance, valid till the 12th of November.

NBO offers exclusive 53 per cent discount for cardholders on Talabat

MUSCAT: National Bank of Oman (NBO) is thrilled to announce an exclusive 53 per cent discount for its Credit Card and Badeel Travel Card holders, in partnership with Talabat, one of the nation’s favourite online food delivery platforms. Starting from November 1st, 2023 and running through the entire month until November 30th, 2023, this incredible promotion is set to attract food enthusiasts and shoppers alike. Customers can enjoy a month of pleasant savings on their favourite meals through Talabat.

Maha Al Raisi, Assistant General Manager and Head of Products at NBO, said, “We are absolutely delighted to bring this special offer to our customers. Our commitment to add value and exceptional banking experiences



is at the heart of everything we do. We understand that our customers deserve the very best and this promotion is another tangible demonstration of our dedication to making their financial experiences extraordinary.”

To enjoy this fantastic discount, customers need to ensure they have

the Talabat website or the latest version of the Talabat application installed on their handheld devices or tablets. Additionally, they should have their NBO Credit Card or Badeel Travel Card saved as the preferred payment method within the Talabat application or website. It’s important to note that

this exclusive offer is applicable for electronic payments only. Orders must be paid for via the Talabat website and application using the eligible cards; it is not applicable for cash on delivery or pick-up services. This exclusive offer ensures a maximum discount of RO 5 per transaction, making it an ideal opportunity to indulge.

NBO’s offer is designed to complement restaurant menu deals, making it even more enticing for those who love to explore culinary delights. However, it does not apply to service and delivery charges/fees, if applicable. This limited-time opportunity is available for a maximum of two transactions per customer during the offer period, ensuring that NBO’s loyal customers get the most out of this exciting promotion.



Maersk faces sharp Q3 profit decline and job cuts

COPENHAGEN: Shipping group A.P. Moller-Maersk reported a sharp decline in third-quarter profit and revenue on Friday, announcing plans to cut at least 10,000 jobs in response to overcapacity, rising costs, and weaker prices, causing its shares to plummet.

Maersk, a major player in global container trade with a significant role in transporting goods for retail giants like Walmart and consumer brands such as Nike, surprised analysts and investors with a more significant downturn in demand than anticipated.

CEO Vincent Clerc expressed his views on the challenging economic landscape, stating, "The new normal we are now headed into is one of more subdued macroeconomic outlook, and thus soft volume demands for the coming years, prices back in line with historical levels, inflationary pressures on our cost base, especially from energy costs, and also increased geopolitical uncertainty." The industry had invested heavily in new container ships during and after the pandemic to meet robust demand and benefit from record freight rates. Clerc noted a surplus of new ships entering the market since the summer with no signs of idling or scrapping. He expressed concern, saying, "If the fourth quarter does not deliver some type of



Containers are seen on the Maersk's Triple-E giant container ship Majestic Maersk as it sails in the Strait of Gibraltar towards the port of Algeciras.

improvements, then I think we're looking at a pretty dire situation in 2024." Negative revenue growth in the third quarter was primarily attributed to challenges in the retail and lifestyle sector, especially in North America, as well as struggles in the automotive and technology sectors, according to Clerc.

Maersk's shares in the Copenhagen-based group reached their lowest level in three years, trading 17.5 per cent lower by 1141 GMT. Jyske Bank analyst Morten

Holm Enggaard suggested that the share price decline was due to Maersk reconsidering its share buy-back programme for 2024, indicating concerns about the future outlook.

Maersk anticipates a decrease of up to 2 per cent in global container volumes in its ocean business, its largest segment, primarily due to weak consumer demand and destocking by firms following the rush for goods in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic.

The company, which employed

110,000 people in January, is in the process of reducing its workforce to below 100,000, aiming for cost savings of \$600 million next year and beyond compared to this year.

While the company maintained its full-year guidance for revenue and operating profit, it now expects both to land at the lower end of the range.

In the third quarter, operating profit plummeted to \$1.9 billion from \$10.9 billion the previous year, and revenues tumbled by 47 per cent to \$12.1 billion. — **Reuters**

MSX30 Index close week lower by 1.35%

MUSCAT: The Muscat Stock Exchange 30 index closed last week at 4,492.34 points, down by 61.365 points and 1.35 per cent down from the previous trading session, which stood at 4,553.70 points. All Financial and Services sectors indices decreased, the financial index decreased by 1.33 per cent, the Services Index by 1.71 per cent, the Sharia Index by 3.22 per cent and the Industrial Index decreased by 1.17 per cent as well.

Raysut Cement Company informed the CMA normal operations have resumed at its Salalah plant, following a temporary closure of plant production and sales operations during October 22 — 24, 2023, in response to the Cyclone Tej alert issued for Dhofar Governorate.

The total volume of Oman's oil exported as of the end of September 2023 stood at 230,292,300 barrels. The average oil price was calculated at \$79.9 per barrel. Exports comprised 80.2 per cent of total oil production, which stood at 287,037,500 barrels, according to the data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI). Total crude oil production dropped by 3.3 per cent to reach 223,555,200 barrels. The total condensate production rose by 8.1 per cent to reach 63,482,300 barrels.

The total production of electricity in Oman increased by 10.58 per cent in August 2023 to reach 4,720 GW per hour compared to 4,269 GW during the corresponding period in 2022, according to the latest data issued NCSI. Oman's net production of electricity in August 2023 reached 4,596 GW per hour. The net figures are inclusive of purchases by Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP) and the Rural Areas Electricity Company (RAEC). On the other hand, water production in Oman recorded a rise of 2.23 per cent to reach 45,603m cubic metres in August 2023 compared to 44,608m cubic metres during the corresponding period in 2022.

A joint seminar between the Capital Market Authority of the Sultanate of Oman and the Supervisory Authority of Insurance and Social Welfare (ACAPS) of the Kingdom of Morocco on 'Inclusive Insurance and Digitalisation' commenced in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco in collaboration with the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), Access to Insurance Initiative (A2ii), Financial Sector Deepening Program in Africa and Insurance Fintech Association. The two-day seminar comprised several working papers on inclusive insurance and digitalisation.

Oman Arab Bank, in collaboration with Arab Bank and the Central Bank of Oman, conducted an awareness session for financial institutions operating in Oman, showcasing best practices within the sector. The collaboration is a proactive step aimed at ensuring that Oman is well-prepared for the upcoming FATF assessment in 2024 and is set to help the country meet international standards for Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT).

The broad money supply in Oman witnessed a growth of 5.1 per cent on an annual basis to reach RO 21.6 billion by end of August 2023. Despite the decrease in cash in its narrow sense by 5.5 per cent, the increase witnessed in cash in its broad sense is due to the increase in quasi-cash by 9.4 per cent, which consists of the sum of savings and term deposits in Omani rials plus certificates of deposit issued by banks.

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC), which owns and operates the country's transmission system, says it has successfully completed the first phase of its North-South Interconnection Project (Rabt), a landmark initiative to link Oman's two standalone grids into one integrated national network. The majority state-owned utility, part of Nama Group, announced in a post on last Monday that the first phase — encompassing five major grid stations linked by overhead transmission lines spanning a total distance of 670 km.

[Courtesy: U-Capital]

State Bank of India's net profit rises 8 pc

MUMBAI: State Bank of India, the country's largest lender, reported an 8 per cent increase in net profit for the July-September quarter on Saturday, helped by healthy core lending income and robust loan growth.

The state-run lender's net profit rose to 143.30 billion rupees (\$1.72 billion) in its fiscal second quarter, from 132.65 billion rupees a year ago. That was slightly higher than analysts' estimate of 141.83 billion rupees, according to LSEG data.

Net interest income — the difference between a bank's interest earned and paid — rose 12.3 per cent to 395 billion rupees from 351.83 billion rupees a year ago.

Net interest margin — a key

gauge of lenders' profitability — shrank to 3.43 per cent, compared with 3.55 per cent a year ago, and 3.47 per cent in the prior quarter.

SBI's loans grew by 12.4 per cent year-on-year, while deposits grew 11.9 per cent.

Indian banks have consistently clocked double-digit loan growth over the past few months due to rising demand for credit, aided by increased consumer spending.

The ongoing festive season is expected to further boost customer spending, helping sustain the demand for retail loans.

SBI's gross non-performing assets (NPA) ratio was at 2.55 per cent as of end-September, compared with 2.76 per cent at the end of June. — **Reuters**



The State Bank of India (SBI) logo is seen on bags carried by participants during a news conference in Mumbai.

Performance of SAOG companies: No surprises in Q3



Karl Jackson

THIS year, there were no surprises in the third quarter of the year. As has been the pattern for the previous two quarters, on the back of rising interest rates, the banks within the financial services sector have delivered positive results, unlike the industrial companies that have generally delivered flat or below par results.

In the Financial sector, similar to all banks throughout the

world, the Omani banks have led the way with improved net interest income as a result of customer loan borrowing rates increasing at a faster pace than customer deposit rates, half of which remain fixed at zero% (i.e. current and savings accounts), combined with lower loan impairment charges. However, many commentators are speculating that loan impairment

charges are set to rise as borrowers find it hard to service loans at the higher interest rates. It is notable that there are still no published third quarter results from the insurance companies. This is due entirely to a time extension provided by the CMA, as this quarter they will report for the first time in accordance with the new IFRS 17 accounting standard. Although the

financial impact of the changing accounting standard is set to have a big impact on the large European insurers, the impact will be muted in Oman, as the insurers engage in short term (e.g. motor) business and take high proportions of reinsurance cover.

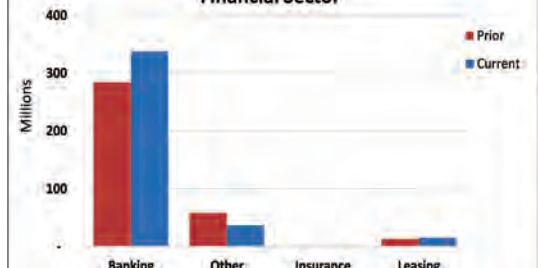
The results of Industrial sector, comprising of construction, manufacturing and real estate

companies, essentially tells the story of two companies. In 2022, Raysut Cement cleaned up their balance sheet and shocked the market with losses of RO 90m, following write downs to their investments in subsidiaries. The big story in 2023 comes from Oman Cables, who have reported double profits of RO 15m, generated primarily from their Omani and Indian subsidiaries

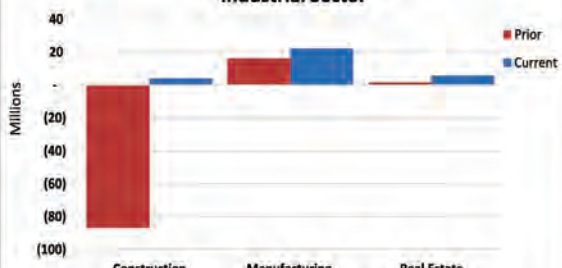
that have leveraged on favourable market conditions, high yielding product mix / market channels and strict financial discipline combined with commercial strategies focused on diversification and penetration into new market segments.

Finally, as we look at the Service sector, again most companies have reported relatively flat results, with the exception of Ooredoo that reported a halving of profits to RO 8m. With the entrance of Vodafone, the telecoms market remains highly competitive, as industry players are actively vying for market share. Despite increasing customer numbers, revenue recorded a decline and operating costs saw an increase.

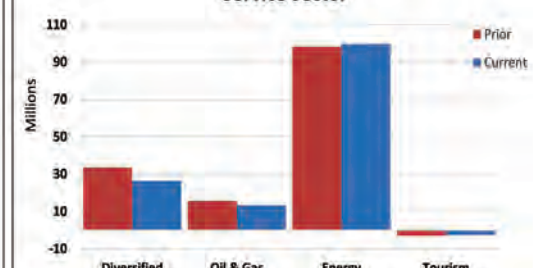
Financial Sector



Industrial Sector



Service Sector



Oman’s innovation in virtual assets



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The author is a member of the International Press Association

Recently, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) of Oman has initiated a public dialogue to frame the future of Virtual Assets (VA) and Virtual Asset Service Providers (VASP). This move is a lot bigger than just a few new rules; it’s a clear signal that Oman is all in on sparking creative ideas and backing the dreams of its young go-getters as the country heads into a future where a shared economy is the new normal. Oman Vision 2040 pledges to weave innovation into the fabric of economic growth. With an eye on a knowledge-based economy, the government is nurturing a fertile ground for tech advancement with initiatives like tech parks, business incubators,

and educational overhauls, all geared toward equipping Omani youth with tomorrow’s skills today. Oman is keeping true to the vision of the late Sultan Qaboos, carving out a place for itself in the modern world without letting go of its immense heritage or its natural splendour. It’s a delicate balance — respecting the deep roots of tradition while reaching for innovation. Young Omani entrepreneurs are at the forefront of this challenge, weaving the nation’s cultural tapestry into the wider fabric of international trade and finance. With tourism flourishing as a testament to the country’s beauty, and a new generation keen to showcase their entrepreneurial spirit, Oman is demonstrating that its wealth isn’t

just buried underground — it’s in its landscapes, its history, and the drive of its people. Initiatives such as the Riyada (Public Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development) and the Al Raffd Fund have been instrumental in nurturing entrepreneurial talent. Success stories abound, with Omani startups breaking ground in fintech, blockchain, e-commerce, and renewable energy sectors, indicating a vibrant future for local ingenuity. Virtual assets hold the promise of reshaping industries by enabling secure, transparent, and rapid transactions. With the proposed regulatory framework, Oman positions itself as a safe harbour for investments in virtual assets, providing

entrepreneurs with the clarity and security needed to innovate confidently. This is a strategic move to attract global fintech companies and investors seeking regulated, stable environments. The integration of virtual assets into Oman’s economy enhances efficiency in financial services, attracts of foreign direct investment, and offers high-tech employment opportunities. However, the volatility and complexity of digital currencies also pose risks. Oman’s challenge lies in crafting regulations that protect stakeholders while not stifling the innovation that can drive the economy forward. Oman is among a group of forward-thinking countries that are getting smart about fintech, making sure they use this Web3

boom in a way that’s safe and smart for everyone. Learning from global partners, Oman is well poised to implement international best practices and emerge as a leader in the Middle East for digital asset governance. The CMA’s call for public input welcomes ideas from all corners to shape Oman’s digital future. This initiative stands as proof of the Sultanate of Oman’s solid backing for innovation and its younger generation. It signals a fresh chapter in economic planning that champions inclusion, variety, and progressive thinking. With a firm step towards what’s next, Oman is gearing up to make the most of the digital age and carve out a new role for itself in the worldwide market.

Relief in crypto world over Bankman-Fried conviction

Cryptocurrency backers on Friday celebrated the fraud conviction of the industry’s one-time golden boy Sam Bankman-Fried, hoping the embattled sector can finally turn the page on a multibillion dollar scandal. The “verdict should hopefully mark the end of a dark era in our industry,” said Yat Siu, president of Animoca Brands, a video game publisher and investor in projects linked to blockchain, the underlying technology of cryptocurrencies. On Thursday, a New York jury found Bankman-Fried, known as “SBF” guilty of all seven counts against him, including fraud, conspiracy and money laundering. He was convicted of using customer funds deposited on his FTX cryptocurrency exchange platform to fuel risky investments and trades by his personal investment firm, Alameda Research. Bankman-Fried faces more than 100 years in prison at sentencing scheduled for March 28, 2024. He is expected to appeal. The “swift and unanimous verdict confirms what we already knew: that SBF misled and deceived so many, from customers and employees to business partners and investors, including myself and Sequoia,” said Alfred Lin, partner at Sequoia, one of Silicon Valley’s most reputable venture capital firms. Thursday’s decision “means another dead weight has been pried off of bitcoin. This is good... Onward,” wrote Jeff Ross, founder of Vailshire Capital Management, which invests in cryptocurrencies on behalf of clients, on X. The FTX implosion late last year was the dramatic conclusion of a sequence that began in the spring of 2022 when a series of cryptocurrency-related companies began to fail. This period saw the value of bitcoin, the industry bellwether currency, plunge by two-thirds between the end of March and the end of November 2022. Bitcoin took nearly a year to recover, and has only regained momentum in recent weeks. “It’s not a day to celebrate,” tempered Hayden Adams, founder of Uniswap, a cryptocurrency exchange platform. “Billions in user funds were lost and our industry took a massive reputational hit. The only winners were a few law firms and various opponents of crypto,” he added. Nick Tomaino of investment firm confirmation pointed the finger at venture capitalists “who gave SBF hundreds of millions of dollars (and) are now taking victory laps because of a guilty verdict.” There was no “accountability for their horrible judgment or the soulless greed that sucked them into such a massive fraud.” Adams urged: “In the next cycle, our industry must do better.” It must “focus on technology and our values, spot the warning signs and avoid the personality cult sociopaths,” he said. — AFP



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SHARI’AH, THE ISLAMIC LEGAL SYSTEM, IS THE CORNERSTONE OF ISLAMIC BANKING AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK. ALL FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES AND TRANSACTIONS MUST ADHERE TO THE PRINCIPLES OUTLINED IN THE QURAN AND HADITH (THE SAYINGS AND ACTIONS OF PROPHET MUHAMMAD) WHICH ARE CONSIDERED THE PRIMARY SOURCES OF ISLAMIC LAW. ISLAMIC BANKS SHOULD AVOID INTEREST (USURY), UNETHICAL INVESTMENTS, AND SPECULATIVE PRACTICES, AND INSTEAD, ENGAGE IN RISK-SHARING ARRANGEMENTS, WHEREIN CLIENTS SHARE BOTH GAINS AND LOSSES.



Islamic banks are distinct financial institutions that are guided by ethical and Shari’ah-compliant principles. These principles set them apart from the traditional banks by ensuring that their operations and processes are compliant with Islamic law and guidelines. The following are some essential guidelines that Islamic banks ought to follow. Shari’ah Compliance: Shari’ah, the Islamic legal system, is the cornerstone of Islamic banking and regulatory framework. All financial activities and transactions must adhere to the principles outlined in the Quran and Hadith (the sayings and actions of Prophet Muhammad) which are considered the primary sources of Islamic law. Islamic banks should avoid interest (usury), unethical investments, and speculative practices, and instead, engage in risk-sharing arrangements, wherein clients share both gains and losses. Profit and Loss Sharing: Islamic banks are expected to follow modes of finance such as Mudarabah (venture capital) and Musharakah (partnership) that provide sharing of profits and losses with their clients. In Mudarabah, one party provides the capital, and the other manages the business. Profits are shared based on an agreed-upon

ratio, but losses are strictly borne by the capital provider. In Musharakah, both parties contribute their capital and expertise in the business, while profits and losses are shared according to their capital contribution. This encourages risk-sharing, fairness and transparency. Mitigation of Risk and Ethical Investments: Islamic banks aim to minimise excessive risk-taking. They avoid speculative transactions and focus on investments in real assets and economic activities with tangible value. This helps protect both the bank and its clients from undue financial risks. This is considered one of the main reasons why Islamic financial institutions were not affected by recent financial crisis. Islamic banks avoid financing businesses involved in transactions and activities prohibited by Shari’ah, such as alcohol, gambling, and pork. Instead, they support projects and ventures that contribute positively to society and the economy. Transparency, Fairness and Justice: Islamic banks are required to disclose all relevant information to clients, ensuring they make informed decisions. This transparency extends to profit and loss distribution, as clients should be aware of how their funds are being utilised. Loans and financial agreements should be structured

to prevent exploitation and ensure equitable terms for all parties involved. Prohibition of Riba (Usury), Uncertainty (Gharar) and Fraud (Maysir): Islamic banks do not charge or pay interest. Instead, they engage in profit and loss-sharing arrangements that align with the belief that money should not increase over time without productive economic activity. Islamic contracts should be clear and not involve excessive ambiguity, speculation, or hidden information, ensuring honest agreements. Islamic banks play a vital role in the global financial system, guided by principles deeply rooted in Islamic law. These principles prioritise fairness, ethical conduct, transparency, and the concept of risk-sharing. By adhering to these principles, Islamic banks create a financial environment that is fair, more equitable and socially responsible. They also ensure that Islamic banks serve as a source of financial support and stability for both individuals and businesses while upholding the values and ethics of Islamic law. In a world where ethical banking practices are increasingly valued, Islamic finance principles are not only important for the Islamic banking sector but can also serve as a source of inspiration for the broader financial industry.

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TRAVEL TALES

This photograph taken from a roof in Paris shows a general view of the Basilica of Sacre Coeur de Montmartre in Paris. — AFP



DISCOVERY

Artist's reconstruction depicts North Dakota in the first months following the impact of an asteroid off Mexico's coast 66 million years ago, showing a dark, dusty and cold world in which the last non-avian dinosaurs, illustrated by the species Dakotaraptor steini, were on the edge of extinction in this undated handout. — Reuters



AUCTION

Christie's auction house intern Carola Chiadini holds the "Bleu Royal" diamond, weighing 17.61 carats, which is the largest to appear for sale in auction history and that could sell for up to \$50 million during an auction preview in Geneva, Switzerland. — Reuters



LIFESTYLE

Afghan refugee families arrive on foot to cross the Pakistan-Afghanistan border following Pakistan's government decision to expel people illegally staying in the country. — AFP



CULTURE

A woman dressed as La Catrina attends the Annual Village Halloween parade in New York. — AFP

art & life

The wonders and traditions of magical Bahla

Bahla is steeped in magic and legend. Its ancient Bahla Fort, artisans, and enchanting souqs preserve a rich heritage, attracting tourists and preserving traditions... P20

HEALTH & WELLNESS

Do You Really Need to Shower Every Day?

IF YOU FEEL The need to shower daily, you're certainly not alone: In one 2021 survey of more than 5,700 US adults, over 60% of the respondents said that they showered at least once each day. Yet dermatologists say that many people do not need, and may not want, to

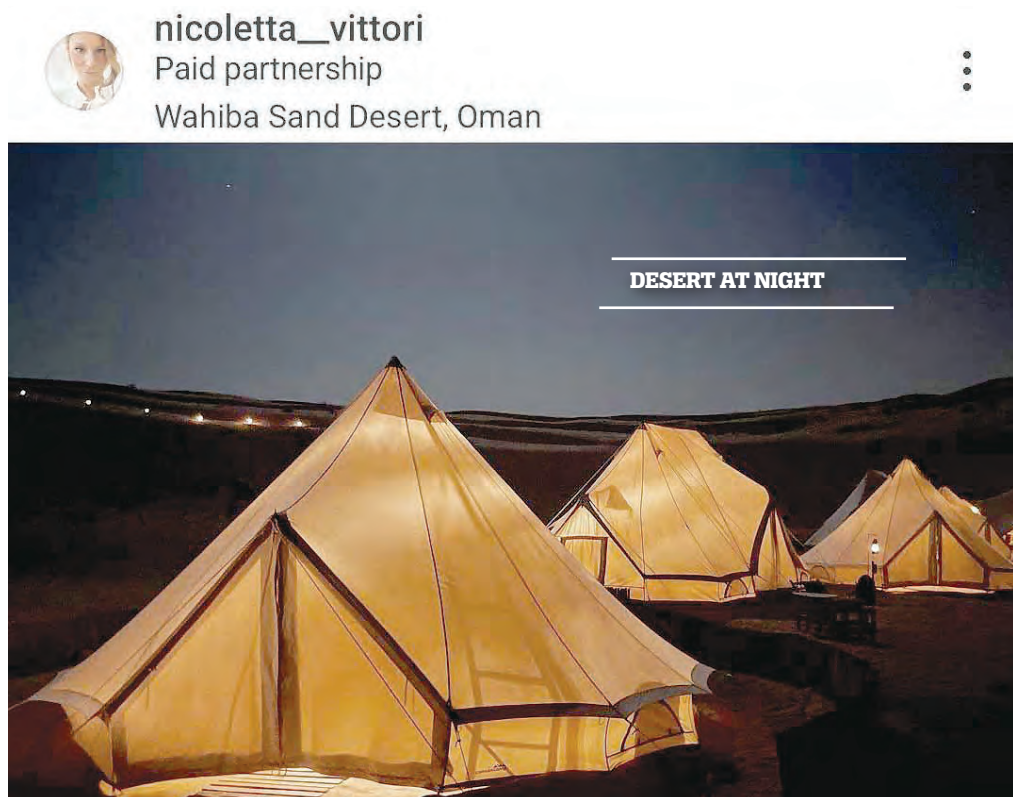
shower this frequently. "There is no one-size-fits-all approach when it comes to washing skin and hair," said Dr Joyce Park, a dermatologist in Seattle. The ideal frequency depends on your skin and hair type, how much you sweat and how dirty you get, she said. And, she added, "showering too frequently can definitely dry out your skin, worsening redness, itchiness and flaking, and triggering eczema flares." Some people benefit from lathering up every day. For instance, if you sweat a lot — whether from exercise, your job or your natural predisposition to perspiration — "it is important to shower to rinse away the sweat and buildup that can contribute to clogged pores and break-outs," said Dr Marisa Garshick, a dermatologist based in New York City. If you have oily hair, you may want to shampoo daily, too. Dry shampoo can help in a pinch, Garshick said, but "still remember to use a traditional shampoo to help eliminate buildup of product and excess oil," which can clog pores and lead to scalp irritation and sensitivity.



People with dandruff may also want to shampoo once a day, said Dr Azadeh Shirazi, a dermatologist based in San Diego. Dandruff isn't caused by dry skin, but instead by a yeastlike fungus that feeds on scalp oil and can inflame the scalp's skin, causing it to flake off. Shampooing daily can get rid of the fungi that cause the dandruff, she said. Many others may be better off show-

ering less frequently — or, at the very least, being thoughtful about how they shower. For instance, if you have eczema or dry or sensitive skin, you might want to shower every other day. Soap and water can exacerbate dry skin, Park said, causing irritation and itchiness. And showering too frequently can dry the skin such that it cracks and allows in microorganisms, increasing the risk of a skin infection, Garshick added. For these reasons, experts recommended taking showers instead of baths, since exposing the skin to hot, dirty or soapy water for long periods can be irritating, Garshick noted, however, that certain types of baths could be helpful for treating some conditions — such as sitz baths for hemorrhoids, oatmeal baths for eczema, or diluted bleach baths for eczema or skin infections. If your hair or scalp is dry, you might limit shampooing to once or twice a week, Garshick added. Some people with curly or coiled hair might like to shampoo less frequently, too, she said. — NYT

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Five not-so-famous things about The Beatles



BEACH BOYS RIVALS

Much has been made over the years of the rivalry between The Beatles and The Rolling Stones.

But it was California band The Beach Boys who were their real competitors.

When the Fab Four set out to conquer the United States, the country was in the midst of Beach Boys mania after the release of the album "Surfin' USA" (1963).

In 1964 The Beatles released "I Want to Hold Your Hand", and when Beach Boys frontman Brian Wilson heard it he knew everything had changed.

Between the two groups, who admired each other, the battle raged in albums over several years.



THE DEVIL'S HORNS

The Beatles were great innovators, with pioneering moves including being the first to put their song lyrics in a booklet inside each album.

They were also the ones to turn the horn sign into what is now the rock symbol par excellence.

The clenched fist with index and little fingers extended is no longer associated with the devil but a celebratory, happy gesture often made at rock concerts.

John Lennon is the first artist known to have done it, for the cover of the single "Yellow Submarine".



NEARLY WENT UNNOTICED

"We're more popular than Jesus now," said John Lennon in a 1966 interview that nearly went unnoticed before sparking huge controversy.

To make matters worse the quote was sometimes distorted to the even more scandalous "bigger than Jesus".

In the United States the band's records were burned in public by former fans, while in Mexico and South Africa Beatles songs were banned for a time.

The group, even after Lennon apologized, received death threats.

For Lennon, the "Jesus affair" was a turning point.

"I didn't want to tour again, especially after having been accused of crucifying Jesus when all I'd made was a flippant remark," he said in "The Beatles Anthology".

Four decades later the Vatican finally absolved them, declaring in 2008 that Lennon's remarks were just "showing off, bragging by a young English working-class musician who had... enjoyed unexpected success".



LUCY'S BONES

The "oldest" woman in the world, the Australopithecus called Lucy aged around 3.2 million years, owes her name to nothing other than the Fab Four song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds".

Discovered by palaeontologists in 1974 in Ethiopia, the famous fossil revolutionised ideas about human origins.

The nickname was inspired by the excavations when the team listened to the album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" on repeat, which includes the song.

— AFP

AUCTION

Vivid blue diamond could sell for \$50 million at Christie's auction

THE LARGEST INTERNALLY flawless fancy vivid blue diamond ever put up for auction could sell for up to \$50 million at a Christie's sale of rare jewels in Geneva on Nov. 7, the auctioneer said on Thursday.

Known as "Bleu Royal," this vivid blue diamond - which is set in a ring - is among the rarest ever to be unearthed.

"What makes Bleu Royal so rare and special is its size. At 17.6 carats, it's the largest of its kind," said Rahul Kadakia, Christie's international head of jewellery.

"The colour is very rich naturally, and it is internally flawless as best as can be."

In 2016, Christie's sold a rare,



14.6-carat blue diamond known as the "Oppenheimer Blue" for more than \$57 million.

"We hope it will beat the Oppenheimer," Kadakia said of "Bleu Royal."

"We have toured it all around

the world, to Asia, to the US and Europe, and we've had good interest from collectors worldwide."

In a separate online auction running Nov. 3-16, Christie's will be offering a pearl necklace worn by film and fashion icon Audrey Hepburn in the final scene of the movie "Roman Holiday" from 1953.

"We priced it at \$20,000 to \$30,000, so it's quite reasonable," Kadakia said. "Everybody can be Audrey Hepburn."

The auctioneer will also be presenting a Rolex wristwatch worn by Marlon Brando in the 1979 movie "Apocalypse Now," on the back of which the actor engraved his signature to avoid having it swapped accidentally during shooting. "What makes it truly unique is that it is really one of the most recognisable memorabilia Rolex that has ever surfaced at auction," said Remi Guillemin, head of watches in Europe at Christie's.

Two years ago the watch, now valued at between 1 million and 2 million Swiss francs, sold at auction for \$2 million Swiss francs (\$2.2 million).

"It is indeed highly exceptional to have both pieces from incredible actors - a Rolex from Marlon Brando and a necklace from Audrey Hepburn," Guillemin said.

— Reuters

LITERATURE

Rare 19th-century books 'stolen' from Polish library

THE UNIVERSITY OF WARSAW said on Tuesday it had discovered the theft of scores of valuable books from its library, prompting the authorities to sack the library director on oversight concerns.

In a statement, the university said "staffing decisions" were linked to "the theft of several dozen objects" from the library.

The university authorities also said a newly set up commission would be mandated to "clarify" the situation and an audit of the "rules and procedures for lending collections" had been ordered.

The university did not reveal which items had gone missing nor did it specify their estimated worth.

But the sacked director on Tuesday said the theft, first discovered earlier this month, involved "Russian publications from the



19th century".

"One of the readers left blank covers and copies in place of original publications," Anna Wolodko said in a statement on social media, adding that around 80 books are now believed to have been stolen.

"We suspect that the thefts are done on request. All stolen publications are in Russian," Wolodko

added.

"This type of works pops up in the offers of auction houses and antique shops operating on the Russian market," she said, adding that the value of the stolen items was "very difficult" to estimate.

She also said that the library had reported the theft to police and took "all available measures" to investigate the incident. — AFP



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TRAVEL TALES

The wonders and traditions of magical Bahla



By Khaled Abdul Malak

Bahla, one of Oman's oldest oasis towns and once the capital of the Sultanate of Oman, is home to many myths and legends of magic. A mysterious aura surrounds the walled city, a sign many say proves that magic is still practised in Bahla, deep in

Fort with its attractive towers, including a wind tower known as Burj-al-Reeh, became accessible to the public in 2012 after a restoration that took more than two decades. It is among the oldest forts in Oman and the largest. The age of the fort has not been confirmed, but the diverse architecture indicates that it was built in different

fessions will just die down and disappear." Bahla potters are reputed to have magic in their fingers, but their traditional trade is being increasingly displaced by mass industrial pottery production. Pottery jars dating from the second half of the fourth millennium BC have been found in old tombs in the oasis city.

ly used to store dates. Another particular feature of Bahla is the weekly cattle sale, where farmers from surrounding villages converge in the souq to sell their animals. "Here is the place where all the citizens from Bahla come to sell their cattle every Friday," said Abdullah, pointing at an old tree in the middle of the souq's square.

the country's heartland, 200 km southwest of Muscat. Besides its reputation for magic, Bahla is in itself a magical place, with an impressive fort on a promontory dominating the oasis below, its ancient 12km wall whose construction dates to the pre-Islamic era, its souqs, and traditional trades and artefacts. The road to Bahla crosses between the majestic Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, the western chain of mountains towering more than 3,000 metres, and the unique chain of black volcanic mountains, or ophiolites. The road passes near Nizwa, another old capital of Oman that also has a fort and an old souq. Declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1987, Bahla

phases as successive rulers added to or renovated parts of it through the centuries. Bahla is also home to "magical" pottery creations, copper artefacts, and silver daggers that adorn many homes in Oman and abroad. All these traditional industries are concentrated in the old souq, a short distance from the fort. "I learned this profession from my father and myself from my grandfather. I will transmit my knowledge to my elder son Yusuf, inshallah," said Ahmed while polishing a silver dagger in his workshop near the souq. "I have an obligation to transmit my ancestors' skills to the next generation and keep the torch burning; otherwise, all these traditional pro-

Today, one can visit a few old workshops near the souq, where craftsmen use traditional methods to make clay utensils and decorative objects. The clay comes from the canyon bed and is laboriously crushed and squashed to make it malleable and then fashioned on the wheel — as potters have done throughout history. Potters mould and curve the clay into shapes and pots of different sizes, which are placed in a dome-shaped kiln heated with wood and palm fronds. Although the electric potter's wheel has been introduced, one can still see the kick wheel used to make snake pots, which are popular decorative objects traditional-

"The farmers display their animals by walking them around that old tree while potential buyers stand in a circle and offer a price. It is like an auction. They will keep on exhibiting their cattle until they find a good deal with one of the buyers. You can find this kind of market mostly in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate," said Abdullah. With its fort, oasis settlement, and perimeter fortification, Bahla is an outstanding example of a defensive architectural ensemble that enabled dominant tribes to achieve prosperity in Oman and the Arabian peninsula during the late medieval period. It is also rising as a major tourist spot in the Sultanate of Oman.

