

US marks 21st anniversary of 9/11

The United States on Sunday observed the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, with President Joe Biden recalling Americans' sacrifice and New Yorkers honouring the nearly 3,000 people killed when hijacked planes destroyed the Twin Towers. Relatives of victims, police officers, firefighters and city leaders gathered at the National September 11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan, where the names of those who died were read aloud. — AFP



P10

SWIATEK DEFEATS JABEUR TO CLINCH US OPEN CROWN



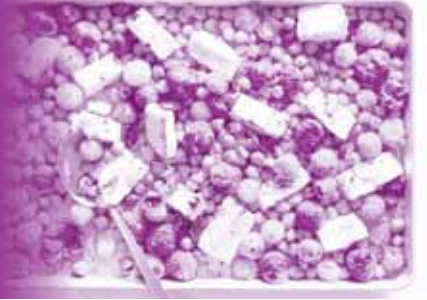
P13

ECB SEES RISING RISK OF RATE HITTING 2% TO CURB INFLATION



P18

LOW-COOK LIFESTYLE FOR BETTER HEALTH



MUSCAT

CONFERENCE ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A Local Conference of the Youth on Climate Change began on Sunday aimed at increasing social awareness on climate change and finding possible solutions for the problem. The conference was organised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Environment Authority (EA) in cooperation with a local voluntary team called Basmatna Gheer or “Our Smile is Different”. The conference comes in preparation for the UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on Climate Change. **SEE ALSO P2**

EXPANSION OF MAJOR ROADS IN MUSCAT

A project for the expansion of Al Mouj and November 18 roads will begin shortly, Muscat Municipality announced on Sunday. Both roads will have three lanes in each direction. Besides, the roundabouts of Al Mouj, Al Bahja and Al Ishraq in Al Hail north, will be converted to traffic signal. The project involves construction of service roads for the commercial stores located in the area. The project aims to ease and improve vehicular movement at different timings as well as stimulate developmental and economic activities and serve residential layouts and surrounding installations. **SEE ALSO P2**



TOUR OF SALALAH KICKS OFF

The second edition of Tour of Salalah (cycling race) kicked off on Sunday with the participation of 70 cyclists representing 11 teams of which 7 are Omani teams. The four-day Tour of Salalah aims to highlight tourism and cultural attractions in the Governorate of Dhofar. The event is staged during the khareef when the weather is suitable for such activities. **DETAILS ON P11**

Oman sees 12% increase in divorces

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

There has been a rise in divorce cases in the Sultanate of Oman, and the total number of divorce certificates registered in the country in 2021 touched 3,837, registering an increase of 12 per cent over 2020. Average 10 divorce certificates per day were issued in 2021, according to the statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

Muscat Governorate topped with 853 certificates, corresponding to 22.2 per cent followed by North Al Batinah (723) certificates. Musandam Governorate has the lowest number with 25 divorce certificates.

Relationship experts attributed this to a number of facts, including the pandemic and job

Average 10 divorce certificates per day were issued in 2021, according to the statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information

losses among others.

“Worldwide, an increasing number of cases of domestic violence, psychological issues among men, women and children were reported and a spurt in divorce cases can be attributed to Covid-19 pandemic when people were confined to houses,” says a relationship expert.

Meanwhile, increase in the number of marriages was also registered in the country.

“As many as 39,000 marriages

were registered in 2021 and 38 per cent of the total married Omanis are in the age group of 30-39 years which includes 49 per cent men and 51 per cent women,” the report added.

Muscat Governorate registered the highest number of marriages in 2021. With 3,980 marriages, there was an increase of 18.6 per cent over 2020, followed by North Al Batinah (3,783), a decrease of 4 per cent. Marriage documents decreased in the governorate by 2.2 per cent, compared to 2020.

Some 34,000 of who got married were first timers, while 66 per cent of job-seekers remained unmarried. The average age of Omani married couples is 42 years.

The number of Omani divorcees during 2021 reached 6,000, bringing the total number of Omani divorced women to 41,549 by...

TURN TO P2

COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APPROVES FORMATION OF ROYAL ACADEMY OF MANAGEMENT’S BOARD

Special focus on investing in human capital

MUSCAT: The Council of Ministers has approved the formation of the Board of Trustees of the Royal Academy of Management, which comes under the honorary patronage of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The decision comes as per Article 6 of the Royal Decree No 2/2022 on establishing the Royal Academy of Management, defining its prerogatives, and approving its organisational structure.

Article 6 stipulates that the Academy shall have a board of trustees under the chairmanship of the Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court. The Council of Ministers shall issue a decision appointing members of board of trustees and determining the duration of their membership.

Members of the Board of Trustees have been appointed for the next three years under the chairmanship of Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court. The members are Dr Said bin Mohammed al Saqri, Minister of Economy as Vice-Chairman, supported by the membership of Dr Mahad bin Said Baowain, Minister of Labour, Shaikh Waleed bin Khamis al Hashar, CEO of Bank Muscat, Khawla bint Hamoud al Harthiyah, CEO of Injaz Oman, and Dr



The Academy would effectively contribute to the formulation of many future visions and insights with the aim of further developing the government system and public-private partnerships, seizing economic opportunities, and developing local management systems

SAYYID KHALID BIN HILAL AL BUSAIDY
Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court

Hatem bin Bakhit al Shanfari, faculty member at the College of Economics and Political Science, Sultan Qaboos University.

TURN TO P2

Queen’s coffin arrives in Edinburgh on solemn final journey

EDINBURGH: Thousands of mourners thronged the route for the final journey of Queen Elizabeth II as her coffin arrived in Edinburgh from the Scottish retreat where she died.

Huge crowds packed the streets of Scotland’s capital as the hearse bearing Britain’s longest-serving monarch completed the first leg of a sombre odyssey that will culminate with her state funeral in London on September 19.

Soldiers in kilts stood to attention as the seven-car cortege arrived at Holyroodhouse palace after a six-hour drive from the

queen’s Balmoral residence where she passed away on Thursday, aged 96. Some of the well-wishers along the way had thrown flowers or applauded, while others were in tears as the convoy including the queen’s only daughter Princess Anne went by.

“It is history, history in the making. We lived so long with the queen — 70 years,” said former soldier Stuart Mackay.

“It’s the only Monarch we’ve known and I think it’s my duty to be here to wave her goodbye.”

The queen’s coffin will rest in Holyroodhouse Palace, the



Pallbearers carry the coffin of the late Queen Elizabeth II in Edinburgh on Sunday. — AFP

monarch’s official residence in Scotland, for a day before being moved to St Giles’ cathedral for the public to pay their respects.

Her son Charles III — formally proclaimed monarch on Saturday — will travel to Edinburgh on Monday for a prayer service and to mount a vigil by her coffin along with other members of the royal family.

The body of the queen will be flown to London the day after to lie in state for four days, which is expected to draw at least a million people, ahead of a funeral.

SEE ALSO P5



Expansion of major roads in Muscat to start soon



MUSCAT: A project for the expansion of Al Mouj and November 18 roads will begin shortly, Muscat Municipality announced on Sunday.

Both roads will have three lanes in each direction. Besides, the roundabouts of Al Mouj, Al Bahja and Al Ishraq in Al Hail north, will be converted to traffic signal. The project involves construction of service roads for the commercial stores located in the area.

The project aims to ease and improve vehicular movement at different timings as well as stimulate developmental and economic activities and serve residential layouts and surrounding installations.

Oman-Saudi road real potential needs to be explored



VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

With 400,000 people having used the Saudi-Oman Road, officials say the potential of this unique highway project is still untapped or unexplored.

According to Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, “As of September this year, nearly half a million tonnes of goods and over 400,000 passengers have used the new direct road between two countries. We expect this number to double and triple in the next five years easily because currently, the movement on this road does have much transit or third-party traffic.”

Saleh bin Nasser al Jasser, the Saudi Minister of Transport and

Logistics, said the performance of the newly opened road has been strong, especially the convenience it offers to Haj and Umrah pilgrims and tourism and businesses from both sides.

It may be noted that the Sultanate of Oman is also studying the need for a dual carriage from the checkpoint to the Wilayat of Ibri as per the traffic density.

Recently, Ahmed al Khateeb, Minister of Tourism for Saudi Arabia, issued a decision to make it easier, and more accessible to visit Saudi Arabia.

The new regulations provide GCC residents the option to apply for an eVisa through the online portal and allow residents of the UK, US, and the EU to apply for a Visa on Arrival.

At the same time, Omani citizens can visit Saudi Arabia with their ID cards.

Focus on investing in Omani human capital

FROM PAGE 1

Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidy, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, affirmed that the vision of the Academy is inspired by the Royal approach of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. He said the Academy’s plans and programmes are dedicated to implementing His Majesty’s directives in investing in Omani human capital and

equipping them with knowledge and the latest practices to overcome future challenges.

He also stressed that the Academy would effectively contribute to the formulation of many future visions and insights with the aim of further developing the government system and public-private partnerships, seizing economic opportunities, and developing local management systems. — ONA

12% increase in divorces

FROM PAGE 1

the end of 2021, constituting 2.4 per cent of the total Omanis (15 years and over). Males constituted 35 per cent of them, while women constituted 65 per cent.

With regard to the marital status of Omanis by educational level until 2021, the data indicated that 25 per cent of married Omanis hold a higher education diploma or higher, 37.7 per cent of them hold a General Education Diploma, and 25.1 per cent of them hold

a certificate without a General Education Diploma.

The release indicated that 73 per cent of working Omanis (15-64 years) are married, while the percentage of unmarried job-seekers reached 66 per cent.

The NCSI report further suggests that the number of marriage documents in the country increased by 3.6 per cent in 2021, compared to the same period in 2020; where 19,294 marriage documents were registered, an average of 53 marriage documents per day.

MTC WELCOMES NEW BATCH



The Military Technical College (MTC) organised an induction week to familiarise the new students who have been admitted to the MTC for the academic year 2022-2023. Air Commodore Mohammed bin Aziz al Siyabi, Dean of MTC, welcomed the students of the tenth batch, stressing the importance of this stage of their academic life and congratulating them for joining this great military edifice.

Local Youth Conference on Climate Change kicks off

MUSCAT: A Local Conference of the Youth (LCOY) on Climate Change began here on Sunday to increase social awareness on climate change and finding possible solutions for the phenomenon.

The conference was organised by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and the Environment Authority (EA) in cooperation with a local voluntary team called Basmatna Gheer or “Our Smile is Different”.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of Eng Naif bin Ali al Abri, President of the CAA. Dr Mohammed bin

Saifal Kalbani, Director General of Environmental Affairs at the EA, said that the LCOY comes in preparation for the UN Conference of the Parties (COP) on Climate Change.

Al Kalbani added that the conference underscored the importance of involving youth in tackling the issue of climate change. Several working papers were presented during the conference covering a set of topics, such as air pollution, climate change and its effects on the Sultanate of Oman and the project of planting mangrove trees. — ONA

Training course on infection prevention and control

MUSCAT: Infection Prevention and Control Training Course ran by the Ministry of Health (MoH) represented by the Department of Infection Prevention & Control of the Directorate General of Disease Surveillance and Control (DGDSC) in collaboration with the Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN) commenced on Sunday.

Dr Saifal Abri, Director General for Disease Surveillance and Control. Presided over the opening of the two-week course that includes theoretical and on-hands training on the IPC advanced skills to obtain the Certification in Infection Prevention and Control (CIC).

As part of a comprehensive preparedness and response for public health emergencies strategy, the DGDSC’s has put the training of national cadres in the field of

infection prevention and control one of its top priorities. The DG cooperated in past years with international expertise such as the Joint Commission International (JCI), and currently with the ICAN to train infection prevention and control health workers on the advanced skills and international standards required to establish, implement, and follow up IPC programmes on health institutions and services at the Governorates level as well the national programme.

This two-week training is conducted with aim of developing internationally certified national outputs with various global experience and qualifications. National leadership and trainers in this vital area will be built up, reinforcing therefore the quality and sustainability of the programme within the Sultanate



of Oman, in addition to promoting regional and international participation. The training course will cover updated theoretical knowledge and needed skills in IPC according

to the global standards and International Health Regulations (IHR). Moreover, workshops and visits to health institutions will be conducted to learn the best safe practices in reducing healthcare-associated infections, infection risks notification mechanisms, in addition to preparing specialists responsible for training other health workers in the health care.

The DGDSCS has managed to include 25 IPC health workers and practitioners in its first edition from various primary and specialised healthcare institutions across the Sultanate of Oman.

The ICAN is one of the largest Infection Prevention and Control organisations in the world that has been supporting the education and training of IPC professionals across Africa and in a number of regions including the Middle Eastern countries.



Hayya card holders can bring 3 non-ticketed fans: Qatar

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Hayya card holders will be able to invite up to three non-ticketed fans to attend World Cup festivities in Qatar, the World Cup Organising Committee has revealed.

"A fan holding the Hayya Card can invite up to three non-ticketed fans to attend World Cup festivities in Qatar," Yasir al Jamal, Director-General, Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy, said.

A minimal entry fee will be charged for non-ticketed fans aged 12 and over, with the feature set to be launched in alignment with the

Last-Minute Ticket Sales period. There will be no entry fee for non-ticketed fans aged under 12, he said.

Fans snapped over 500,000 tickets during the most recent sales phase in July and August. The next sales period will begin around the end of September, while over-the-counter sales will start in Qatar soon. With Muscat as one of the major and approved cities to receive the World Cup fans, the details were unveiled in a press conference held on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the visitors holding the Hayya card can apply for

Oman's visa online or on arrival at land or airports. A Fifa village (Fan Zone) will be established at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC), with details to be revealed soon. World Cup fans can enter the Sultanate of Oman (Hayya card holders) with a free multiple-entry visa (valid for up to 60 days). The Hayya card holder can avail of this facility for family members and will be allowed to change the visa to another category during the stay in the Sultanate of Oman in accordance with certain conditions.

Oman Airports said there would be dedicated departure and

arrival gates, baggage conveyors, check-in counters fans, and a customer service team in place to guide passengers through custom routes. Arrangements have also been made for fans to and from the airport via special bus stops for buses.

The Sultanate of Oman will have over 20,000 hotel rooms and over 200 tourist products via more than 35 local operators and ten land transport companies. The OCEC, covering an area of more than 9,000 sqm, will provide a festive atmosphere for the World Cup 2020 fans with a variety of activities and events.

Over 470 students take part in summer classes



AMAL AL RIYAMI
TANUF, SEPT 11

The Tanuf Summer Centers and the 10th Holy Quran competition concluded its activities for this year. The closing ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Saif bin Sultan al Nabhani at the Abu Jafer Farm Hall in Hay Al Saad last week.

The centres aimed to encourage students to memorise the Holy Quran, imbibe its moral lessons, refine their skills and abilities, and groom them for community service.

More than 470 boys and girls participated in the events held in five centres. The turnout reflected parents' interest in teaching their children the Holy Quran.

The centres included teaching the Holy Quran, the Prophet's Hadith, and the Arabic language, in addition to organising open forums for students.

Ali bin Mohammad al Riyami, General Supervisor of the summer centres, thanked the entities and individuals who supported the activities of the summer centres in the village. Al Riyami also praised the huge turnout at the 10th Tanuf competition for memorising the Holy Quran, which included six levels. The sixth level was held for those over 50-years-old.

Shaikh Saif bin Sultan al Nabhani and Dr Umayya bin Batti al Riyami honoured winners, sponsors, teachers and volunteers.

EA ORGANISES CORAL REEF CLEAN UP CAMPAIGN



SUHAR: The Environment Authority, represented by the directorate of environment in North Al Batinah, organised intensified campaigns to clean up the coral reef environment in the wilayats of Suhar and Shinas in cooperation with Omani fishermen. Such campaigns are aimed at protecting coral reef environments from pollutants and remnants of fishing equipment. They also aim at increasing environmental awareness among the public. The Environment Authority regularly organises campaigns within the context of its efforts to conserve maritime environment at different coral reef locations across the governorates of Musandam, Dhofar, South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta. – ONA

Wujmah — A charming village high up in the mountains

TEXT& PHOTOS
BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

The adventure of reaching the village of Wujmah, which is hidden among the Hajar Mountains, requires tracing the mountain path that passes through several small villages.

The journey of ascent and descent begins on the winding mountain path between the orchards of agricultural villages. The journey begins with an exploration of archaeological sites, including ancient tombs and mud and stone dwellings.

Studies estimate that these sites date back to approximately 3,000 BC. These archaeological sites still bear witness to the presence of ancient human settlements high in the mountains before reaching the beautiful oasis of the village.

Although this mountain path requires a strong will and high physical fitness, the beauty of the site with its terrain and natural resources encourages explorers to continue the exploration journey until reaching the last point, as, at the end of the mountain path, the visitor is surprised by the view of ancient geological formations.

On the edge of the geological formations, the villagers hang some pottery vessels that collect drinking water from mountainous heights of more than 1,000 metres. Tourists, birds, butterflies and all kinds of wildlife that reside in this area benefit from the water collected in these pots.

The residents of the village mention that many types of wildlife live among the heights of the mountains; among these animals are Arabian Tahr, foxes, deers and others. These animals can be seen in their natural habitats at all times, and the number of these animals has increased in recent years due to the implementation



of the system of natural reserves and tightening control by the environmental authorities in the Sultanate of Oman.

"These animals represent the natural heritage of the residents of the village. We have been watching them for decades, and we feel joy when their numbers increase after the intensification of awareness programmes and the improvement of control tools over the various elements of nature", an environmentalist told Observer.

On the same mountain path, there are also many aflaj and water basins which were constructed by locals long ago. They are still the main source of freshwater for the residents of this mountain village.

The village is famous for the production of natural honey, as the residents of the village inherited this profession from their fathers and grandfathers, and they are still creative in producing honey in great abundance.

"The density of trees and vegetation, the gentleness of the atmosphere and the availability of water are basic factors that help us to continue working in beekeeping, and therefore this village is distinguished by the production of high-quality honey, and we market it in various local markets. Demands for honey are increasing, especially in the winter season, as honey enters the Components of daily food dishes in the villages of the Hajar Mountains during this season in particular", Al Abri explained.

Many tourists visit this village to learn about its natural and geological resources. The tourists seek to develop the mountain path and put up guide signs to help the visitor reach the archaeological sites easily. The development of the infrastructure for this site is also very important, as the site lacks restrooms and other facilities.



GIVING DUE IMPORTANCE TO SPORTS IN SCHOOLS, THE OMAN SCHOOL SPORTS ASSOCIATION WAS ANNOUNCED IN 2016 TO ENCOURAGE AND PROMOTE TALENTED STUDENTS IN SPORTS



Sports for students

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

'A sound mind in a sound body,' is an evergreen quote for fitness, particularly for school students. It goes beyond doubt that schools should strike a balance between academic and sporting activities. Nevertheless, sports is an important educational activity, a process that helps achieve the fitness goals of a country, training for which starts at an early age.

Underlining this importance, every school should have a teacher specialising in physical education.

Not only do the students learn the importance of sports activities, they learn about the importance of outdoor activities and the dangers of being obese. The habits inculcated during the school days remain with the students forever.

Sports classes help create a spirit of healthy competition among the students, develop teamwork, take advantage of free

time with useful activities, help them eliminate negative energies, and raise practical efficiency.

Students also have an opportunity to participate in and compete in competitions and develop new sporting skills. It provides an opportunity to develop communication and rapprochement between teachers and students.

Also, it helps solve problems of confusion, eliminate negative energies, and reduce excessive movements through playing and creating an atmosphere of entertainment in schools.

Physical training teachers and psychology experts call sporting activities a nice way to develop practical temperament, improve academic retention, and develop mental health and memory.

Sports classes help reduce the phenomenon of school dropouts, bad habits like smoking, and the

exploitation of leisure time with useful activities in terms of health and aesthetics.

Physical activity brings significant benefits to the health of the heart, body, and mind. as per reports, the risk of death increases by 20 to 30 per cent in people who do not get enough physical activity compared to people who do enough physical activity.

Despite all the advantages mentioned above, more than 80 per cent of the world's adolescent population does not get enough physical activity.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines physical activity as any bodily movement of skeletal muscles that requires energy, including activities during work, play, household tasks, travel and recreational activities.

Dr Madeeha al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education, has stressed the importance of school sports in all schools of

the Sultanate of Oman.

Through the school sports curriculum, the students can choose the game of their choice, suiting their physical and technical capabilities.

Giving due importance to sports in schools, the Oman School Sports Association was announced in 2016 to encourage and promote talented students in sports.

The Ministry of Education is currently working on establishing new schools with complete sports facilities and maintaining damaged facilities in the old schools, in addition to a plan to develop new facilities in schools that completely lack facilities.

Thus, exercise is an activity a student must do daily, whether at school or at home.





Policing operation ahead of queen’s funeral will be ‘hugely complex’

LONDON: A senior Metropolitan Police officer has said policing in the run-up to the Queen’s funeral will be a “hugely complex operation”.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Stuart Cundy on Sunday said hundreds of extra officers had already been called in as thousands descended on the capital following the monarch’s death.

Officers are likely to be concerned with

managing crowds, with a huge number of mourners expected to queue for several hours, including overnight, to pay their respects to the Queen as she lies in state, expected to be from Wednesday.

Leaders from around the globe will also travel to the UK for the state funeral on Monday, meaning security will be of increased concern.

Cundy said: “Our role is to ensure this is

going to be a safe and a secure set of events.

“Our policing operation is hugely complex, with a huge amount of detail within it, as you can well imagine. “So we’re always mindful of all manner of different potential things that might occur. We know that not just the eyes of the United Kingdom but the world will be on London at this point in time.”

Members of the public are being

encouraged to engage with police and speak to them if they have any concerns.

Cundy said: “This is a point in time for everybody to remember Her late Majesty the Queen, to pay respects, and I think also to celebrate the long life of public service which she demonstrated. “As a police officer, we swear a solemn oath and it’s a real privilege to be serving His Majesty the King. The Met is well prepared and people

will already have seen significant policing presence of my colleagues here in London, and that will continue to build over the coming days.

“We’re working closely with other police forces here in London, and many other partners and other agencies that are involved in the many events that will take place from now leading up to the state funeral on Monday.” — dpa

Locals silent in grief for cherished neighbour Elizabeth

Truss to join King at services across UK

LONDON: Prime Minister Liz Truss will join King Charles III at memorial services around Britain for Queen Elizabeth, Downing Street has said, while denying she would officially accompany him after the idea drew criticism. Media commentators and social media users had whether there was a political motivation for Truss joining the king to lead mourning in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

But the prime minister’s office was at pains to play down any controversy, with Truss still in the first week of her premiership after having been appointed by the queen on Tuesday. “The PM is not ‘accompanying’ the king and it is not a ‘tour’. She is merely attending these services,” Downing Street said.

— AFP



Members of the public stand on a bridge, in Kinross, pay their respects as they wait for the hearse carrying the coffin of Queen Elizabeth II to be driven to Edinburgh to lie at rest. — AFP

BALLATER, United Kingdom: A perfect silence greeted Queen Elizabeth II’s cortege as it passed through the remote Scottish village close to her beloved Balmoral Castle on Sunday, with thousands lining the streets to pay their respects.

Some threw flowers as Elizabeth’s coffin — draped in the Royal Standard of Scotland with a wreath of white heather, dahlias and sweet peas placed on top — wound its way through the sun-bathed countryside.

Fittingly, the first to see the

coffin were the villagers of Ballater, where Elizabeth spent many happy times during her summer retreats from the burden of queenship.

Members of the public, some wearing traditional Scottish dress, mixed with local dignitaries, members of the armed forces and church representatives on the streets of the quaint village, falling silent as the coffin passed by.

“She really sacrificed a lot for... the country and that earns a lot of respect,” said Judith Brown, who made the trip to Ballater from

England to pay her respects.

“It is a whole era that is being closed off now,” she added.

The queen’s coffin was travelling by road through Scottish towns and villages on the way to Edinburgh in a 180-mile (290-kilometre) journey expected to last at least six hours.

Farmers on the route positioned their tractors to form a guard of honour as the cortege drove by, while riders on horseback lined up in Peterculter, a suburb of Aberdeen, to pay respect. — AFP



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (32/2022)

Muscat Municipality invites interested companies to the following tenders:

Tender No.	Tender Description	Document Fee	Last Date for Inquires Submission	Last Date for Obtaining Tender Docs.	Last Date for Submission
9/2022/MM/PA-1	RE-Supply of Spare Parts for Chain Saw Machines	25/- OMR	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
34/2022/MM/PA-8	RE-Supply of Irrigation Materials	25/- OMR	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
54/2022/MM/PA-16	RE-Supply of Sign Faces for Street Name, Way Number, House Number, Block Number and Flat Number with Accessories within Muscat Governorate	25/- OMR	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
62/2022/MM/PA-18	RE-Supply of Printer Inks	25/- OMR	19/09/2022	25/09/2022	27/09/2022
63/2022/MM/PA-19	RE-Supply of Cleaning Materials	25/- OMR	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022
64/2022/MM/PA-20	RE-Supply of Carpenter Material	25/- OMR	3/10/2022	18/10/2022	23/10/2022

- Specialized Companies with a valid registration certificate from Tender Board can obtain tender documents from the website through the following link: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>. Starting from the date of this announcement until the end of deadline mentioned above.
- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically through link mentioned above.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond as per details mentioned in E-Tendering and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality and valid for (90) days starting from the deadline for submission.
- Tender not accompanied by a tender bond will be rejected.**
- Clarifications and support:**
 - For any inquiries regarding tenders, please contact us through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
 - For technical support of e-tendering system, please send an email to (etenderhd@mtc.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).
 - For technical support of E-Bond through e-tendering system please send an email to (esnad@gstb.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200 / 24402330).

Website: www.mm.gov.om



Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Center

Auction Advertisement for Leasing Staff Cafeteria and Ground floor Coffeeshop

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre announces the following Auctions:

Auction No.	Auction Title	Last date for Collection of Auction Document	Bid Submission Closing	Auction Specification Fees
CCCRC/AUC/001/2022	Leasing Cafeteria for staff	19/09/2022	28/09/2022	No fees
CCCRC/AUC/002/2022	Leasing Ground floor Coffeeshop	19/09/2022	28/09/2022	No fees

Qualified companies interested in participating in this Auction shall collect the Auction 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 immediately, but not later than Two weeks before the date of tender submission.
- For Queries you may Contact via e-mail: purchase@ccrc.gov.om

What is the story behind the British monarch’s famous red box?

LONDON: King Charles III is likely to receive important documents in the famous red boxes used by the monarch and British government ministers.

The boxes, made by luxury British leather goods company Barrow Hepburn & Gale, contain a range of papers, including those that require a signature, briefing documents and information about forthcoming meetings.

While all government boxes are embossed with the royal cypher, the queen’s personal box carried the words “The Queen.”

The king will have his own cypher, suggesting he is set to receive new boxes to mark the start of his reign.

While English queens use the St Edward’s crown (or a variant of it) in their cypher, kings traditionally use the more rounded Tudor crown.

Barrow Hepburn & Gale says on its website that its boxes “follow their holder around the world, ensuring they can execute the responsibilities of their office.”

It added: “Wherever in the world the sovereign or minister is, the red box is close by.

“Our despatch boxes are not only an elegant design, but are functional and secure.”

In a Facebook social media post in September 2015, the Royal Family account said the queen received red boxes everyday of her reign, including weekends, but not on Christmas Day.

The documents were sent from the private secretary’s office to the monarch in a locked box, it said.

The post also said the queen was still using in 2015 the boxes which were made for her coronation in 1953.

It said they had been “periodically refurbished” to keep them in a good condition. — dpa



Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Center

Tender Advertisement

Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care & Research Centre announces the following tender:

Tender No.	Tender Title	Last date for Collection of tender Document	Bid Submission Closing	Tender Fees	Site Visit Date
CCCRC/T/ 562/2022	Medical Store Building MEP Work	22/09/2022	29/09/2022	70 OMR	19/09/2022 10:00AM
CCCRC/T/ 563/2022	Medical Store Ancillary Buildings & External Works (MEP and Civil)	22/09/2022	29/09/2022	70 OMR	19/09/2022 10:00AM
CCCRC/T/ 560/2022	Disaster Recovery Hosting Site	19/09/2022	27/09/2022	25 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 requirements should be submitted in a sealed envelope (hardcopy & softcopy) and should be delivered and deposited in the tender box at SQCCRC.

Please note:

- Bids received after the deadline indicated above, for whatever reason, will not be considered.
- Queries/ clarifications should be submitted immediately, but not later than Two weeks 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.



Iran rejects criticism of its N-stance by European powers

DUBAI: Iran rejected as “unconstructive” a statement by France, Britain and Germany on Saturday that said Tehran’s demands were jeopardising talks to revive its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, Iranian state media reported.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani said the statement was “unconstructive”, adding “the three European countries are advised to play a more active role in providing solutions to end the few disagreements that remain”, state media reported.

In their statement, the three European powers vented their frustration at Iran’s demand in nuclear talks that the UN nuclear watchdog close a probe into uranium traces found at three sites.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid took off for Germany on Sunday, in his latest diplomatic effort to persuade Western powers to ditch a nuclear deal with Iran.

Momentum that built towards a restored agreement last month appears to have slowed, after the three European nations that are party to the agreement — Germany, France and Britain



Iran Foreign Ministry spokesperson Nasser Kanaani

— on Saturday raised “serious doubts” about Iran’s sincerity in restoring the deal.

Meeting his cabinet before flying to Berlin, Lapid thanked these three powers for the “strong position” they had voiced in a tripartite statement on Saturday.

These powers charged that Tehran “has chosen not to seize this critical diplomatic opportunity”, adding that “instead, Iran continues to escalate its nuclear programme way beyond any plausible civilian justification”.

Lapid told his cabinet that “Israel is conducting a successful diplomatic campaign to stop the nuclear agreement and prevent the lifting of sanctions on Iran.

“It is not over yet,” he added. “There is still a long way to go, but there are encouraging signs.”

An Israeli diplomatic official, who requested anonymity, said that Iran will be the focus of the talks when the delegation lands in Berlin.

“It’s important to continue to coordinate positions and to influence the European position. Germany has an important role in this,” the official said.

Lapid, who was travelling with senior security officials, is scheduled to meet Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Foreign Minister

Talks are under way in Vienna since April 2021 to restore the agreement, by lifting the sanctions on Tehran and pushing Iran to fully honour its prior nuclear commitments

Annalena Baerbock and President Frank-Walter Steinmeier before returning to Israel late on Monday.

The 2015 agreement, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, gave Iran sanctions relief in return for restricting its nuclear programme.

Negotiations under way in Vienna since April 2021 have sought to restore the agreement, by lifting the sanctions on Tehran and pushing Iran to fully honour its prior nuclear commitments.

Last month, the European Union, which acts as the mediator of the talks, put forward a “final” draft of the agreement.

— Reuters/AFP

Swedes vote in tight election race as far right surges

STOCKHOLM: Swedes voted in legislative elections on Sunday that will either pave the way for an unprecedented right-wing government supported by the far right or a third straight mandate for the ruling Social Democrats.

Opinion polls have predicted a close race with a razor-thin lead for Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson’s Social Democrats and the left bloc, following a campaign dominated by rising gang shootings and soaring electricity prices.

Polling stations closed at 8 pm, with final results due around midnight. At a voting station set up in Stockholm’s Central Station, 34-year-old IT worker Erwin Marklund said he was concerned about the rise of the far right and had voted for the small Left Party. “It’s important to not get the far right into the system”, he said.

The right-wing bloc has never before agreed to cooperate with the nationalist and anti-immigration Sweden Democrats, long treated as “pariahs” by other political parties.

The far right has leapt to second place in opinion polls behind the Social Democrats in the final weeks of the campaign, credited with around a fifth of votes.



Leader of the Sweden Democrats party Jimmie Akesson votes at a polling station in Stockholm during the general elections in Sweden. — AFP

Their surge — overtaking the traditional leaders of the right-wing bloc, the conservative Moderates — was attributed to an election race focused on issues close to their voters, including crime, segregation and the integration of immigrants.

Prime Minister Andersson, 55, hopes however to hang onto power with the support of the small Left, Centre and Green parties. “It’s going to be very, very close”, she told reporters as she cast her ballot in the Stockholm suburb of Nacka on Sunday.

Andersson, whose party has dominated Swedish politics since the 1930s, enjoys broad support among Swedes. — AFP

Five dead in ‘massive’ Papua New Guinea quake

PORT MORESBY: A 7.6-magnitude earthquake shook Papua New Guinea on Sunday, damaging buildings, triggering landslides and killing at least five people, with several others severely injured.

Residents in northern towns near the epicentre reported intense shaking mid-morning that cracked roads and rattled the cladding off buildings.

Local member of parliament Kessy Sawang said at least two people had died in remote mountain villages, with four others airlifted to hospital in critical condition.

“There has been widespread damage,” she said, adding that a landslide had buried homes and “split” one village where people had “lost their houses”. In nearby Wau, Koranga Alluvial Mining said three miners had been buried alive.

There are limited communications in the area, few government resources and very few paved roads, making assessment



and rescue efforts difficult.

Small aviation companies and missionary groups were involved in airlifting some of the injured across the rugged jungle landscape.

“It’s very difficult, the terrain, the weather. It’s challenging,” said Nellie Pumai of Manolos Aviation, which had transported one person

The quake was felt as far as the capital Port Moresby about 480 kilometres away

out and was trying to return.

In the eastern highland town of Goroka, residents captured images of window awnings falling off the cracked walls of a local university.

It was “very strong”, said Hivi Apokore, a worker at the Jais Aben Resort near the coastal town of Madang.

“Everything was like sitting on a sea -- just floating.”

The quake was felt as far as the capital Port Moresby about 480 kilometres away.

The US Geological Survey initially issued a tsunami warning for nearby coastal areas, but subsequently said the threat had passed.

But fearful locals near the sea nevertheless fled for higher ground — reporting that the water level had suddenly dropped.

The nation’s leader, James Marape, said the quake was “massive” and told people to be cautious, but said he expected the damage to be less than that from a 2018 quake and series of aftershocks, which killed an estimated 150 people.

However, the scale of the damage and number of casualties from Sunday’s quake was still unclear.

“National and provincial disaster agencies, as well as leaders, have been asked to assess the damage and injuries to people and attend to these as soon as possible,” Marape said.

State-backed communications firm DataCo said it was experiencing “multiple service disruptions” to the operation of a domestic undersea communications cable as well as the PIPE Pacific Cable 1 that runs from Sydney to Guam.

— AFP

SHORT TAKES

TOKYO

Typhoon Muifa to hit Japan southern islands

Typhoon Muifa approached Japan’s southern islands, prompting officials to issue a warning for locals to seek shelter from the “violent waves and winds” before it made landfall.

According to Japan Meteorological Agency, Muifa is expected to maintain its strength and hit Ishigaki island, near Taiwan, on Monday before heading north towards Shanghai and its surrounding areas.

As of Sunday afternoon, the typhoon was located 180



kilometres south of Ishigaki, packing gusts up to 216 kilometres per hour as it moves northwest, the agency said yesterday.

— AFP

KABUL

3 killed as chopper crashes during training exercise

A Black Hawk helicopter crashed during a Taliban training exercise in Afghanistan’s capital Kabul, killing three, the group’s defence ministry said.

“An American Black Hawk helicopter, which was flown ... for training, crashed due to a technical problem inside the campus of the National Defence University,” said Ministry of Defence spokesperson Enaytullah Khowrazmi, adding five people were also injured.

The Taliban took control of



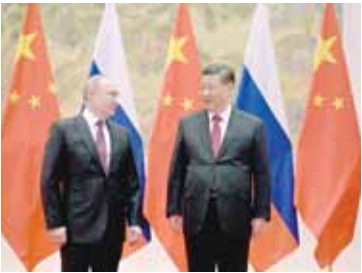
some US-made aircraft after they seized the country. US forces damaged some military hardware as they left and Afghan forces had flown some helicopters to central Asian nations. — AFP

BEIJING

Xi, Putin meet for first time since Covid

Xi Jinping will leave China this week for the first time in more than two years for a trip to Central Asia where he will meet Vladimir Putin just a month before Xi is poised to cement his place as the most powerful Chinese leader since Mao Zedong.

The trip, his first abroad since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, shows just how confident Xi is about his grip on power in China and just how perilous the global situation has become: Russia’s confrontation



with the West over Ukraine, the crisis over Taiwan and a stuttering global economy.

Xi is due on a state visit to Kazakhstan on Wednesday and will then meet Putin. — Reuters



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 12 | 2022

7

In brief

■ ATHENS



GREEK PM REMAINS 'READY TO MEET' WITH ERDOGAN

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said that he remains open to communication with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan despite a wide-ranging dispute about territory and resources. "I am always ready to meet with the Turkish president," Mitsotakis said at a press conference in Thessaloniki, adding that he hoped for talks at the first meeting of the European Political Community in Prague in early October.

The heads of state and government of 44 countries are to be invited. Relations between the two neighbouring countries and fellow Nato members have deteriorated in recent weeks.

— AFP

■ TUNIS



TUNISIAN JOURNALIST GRANTED BAIL IN 'TERROR' CASE

A Tunisian journalist and activist was released on bail, five days after his arrest on suspicion of "terrorism", his website said.

Ghassen Ben Khelifa, editor of the website Inhiyez and a prominent pro-Palestinian activist, was arrested at his home. The case against him is the latest in what civil society groups describe as a growing threat to freedom of the press in Tunisia under President Kais Saied. Police officers also searched Ben Khelifa's house and seized two computers, according to multiple media reports. His lawyer, quoted by local media, said Ben Khelifa was suspected of running a Facebook page that "incites terrorism". —AFP

■ BAGHDAD



11 IRANIAN PILGRIMS AND DRIVER KILLED IN IRAQ CRASH

Eleven Iranian pilgrims and their local driver died in central Iraq when their minibus collided with a truck, a health official said. The vehicle carrying the pilgrims slammed into the parked truck in Babil province south of Baghdad, provincial health authorities spokesman Ahmed al Jibouri said.

"Eleven Iranians died on impact, along with their Iraqi driver," he said, adding that four other pilgrims were in critical condition. He said a fire had erupted, and that the driver of the truck had been taken in for questioning. Many roads are full of potholes and are plunged into total darkness at night. — AFP

UKRAINE FORCES PUSH FURTHER AFTER FALL OF RUSSIAN STRONGHOLD

KYIV/KHARKIV: Ukrainian forces kept pushing north in the Kharkiv region and advancing to its south and east, Ukraine's army chief said on Sunday, a day after their rapid gains made Russia abandon its main bastion in the area.

President Volodymyr Zelensky hailed Ukraine's advance in the northeast Kharkiv province as a potential breakthrough in the six-month-old war, saying this winter could bring more rapid gains of territory if Kyiv can get more powerful weapons.

"In the Kharkiv direction, we began to advance not only to the south and east, but also to the north. There are 50 km to go to the state border (with Russia)," Ukraine's chief commander General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi said on Telegram.

He said the country's armed forces have regained control of more than 3,000 square km since the beginning of this month.

In Moscow, Russia's defence ministry said on Sunday that Russian forces were hitting Ukrainian army positions in the Kharkiv region with precision strikes delivered by airborne troops, missiles and artillery.

The retreat from the city of Izium marked Russian forces' worst defeat since they were pushed back from the capital Kyiv in March, as thousands of Russian soldiers left behind ammunition and equipment as they fled.

The gains are important politically for Zelensky as he seeks to keep Europe united behind Ukraine - supplying weapons and money - even as an energy crisis looms this winter following cuts in Russian gas supplies to European customers.

"I believe that this winter is a turning point, and it can lead to the rapid de-occupation of Ukraine," Zelensky said in comments to a political forum published on his website late on Saturday. "We see



A destroyed Ukrainian military vehicles outside the city of Melitopol in Zaporizhzhia region, amid ongoing Russian military action in Ukraine. — AFP

The gains are important politically for Zelensky as he seeks to keep Europe united behind Ukraine even as an energy crisis looms this winter following cuts in Russian gas supplies to European customers

how they (occupiers) are fleeing in some directions. If we were a little stronger with weapons, we would de-occupy faster."

Ukrainian officials stopped short of confirming they had recaptured Izium, but Zelensky's chief of staff Andriy Yermak posted a photo of troops on its outskirts and tweeted an emoji of grapes. The city's name

means "raisin." Kyiv-based military analyst Oleh Zhdanov said the gains could pave the way for a further push into Luhansk region, whose capture Russia claimed at the beginning of July.

"If you look at the map, it is logical to assume that the offensive will develop in the direction of Svatove - Starobelsk, and

Sievierodonetsk - Lysychansk. These are two promising directions," he said.

Britain's defence ministry said on Sunday Ukrainian forces continued making gains in the Kharkiv region over the past 24 hours. However, fighting continued around Izium and the city of Kupiansk, the sole rail hub supplying Russia's front line across northeastern Ukraine, which has been recaptured by Ukrainian forces.

As the war entered its 200th day, Ukraine reported more Russian missile and air strikes overnight and regional officials reported heavy Russian shelling in the east and south. — Reuters

Sympathy and solidarity as US marks 21st anniversary of 9/11

NEW YORK: Americans on Sunday marked the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, with President Joe Biden visiting the Pentagon and New Yorkers honouring the nearly 3,000 people killed when hijacked planes destroyed the Twin Towers.

Relatives of victims, police officers, firefighters and city leaders gathered at the National September 11 Memorial in Lower Manhattan, where the names of those who died were read aloud — as they have been every year since the deadliest single attack on US soil.

They rang bells and held moments of silence at 8:46 am and 9:03 am, the precise times the passenger jets struck the World Trade Center's North and South Towers.

Biden commemorated the anniversary at the Pentagon, where Al Qaeda hijackers crashed a plane into the massive building that serves as Defence Department headquarters.

In a steady rain, the president approached a wreath of flowers outside the building and placed his hand over his heart.

"Twenty-one years later, we keep alive the memory of all the precious lives stolen from us at Ground Zero, in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, and at the Pentagon," Biden said on Twitter ahead of delivering remarks.

"To the families and loved ones who still feel the ache, Jill and I hold you close in our



US President Joe Biden arrives for a wreath laying ceremony to pay his respects to the victims of the 9/11 attacks at the Pentagon in Washington, DC. — AFP

hearts." Al Qaeda hijacked a total of four planes. The third hit the Pentagon and the fourth, Flight 93, crashed in a field in Pennsylvania after passengers launched a revolt onboard.

Vice President Kamala Harris, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and Mayor Eric Adams were among the dignitaries attending the New York ceremony, where relatives hugged one another, placed flowers at the memorial and held placards or wore shirts with images of their lost loved ones.

"While the grief recedes a bit with time, the permanent absence of my father is just as palpable as it ever was," the son of Jon Leslie Albert said after reading several victims' names, including his father's.

Messages of sympathy and support came from outside the country, including from Nato Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who called September 11 "one of the most tragic days" for the US and the world.

"Facing missile attacks daily, Ukraine knows well what terrorism is and sincerely sympathises with the American people," Zelensky tweeted, referring to the Russian invasion of his country that has left thousands dead.

New York was illuminated late on Saturday by a "Tribute in Light" that showed two blue beams projecting into the night sky symbolising the Twin Towers. — AFP

South Africa mine dam bursts, killing at least 3

JOHANNESBURG: At least three people were killed and dozens injured after a mine dam burst and sparked flooding that swept away houses and cars in central South Africa, officials said on Sunday.

Television footage showed a river of mud and water flowing away from the mine and into a nearby residential area.

It covered roads and swept houses away in Jagersfontein, a town about 100 kilometres southwest of the Free State province capital, Bloemfontein.

"A mine dam collapsed and swept away houses and cars in the area," Palesa Chubisi, a spokeswoman for Free State premier Sisi Ntombela, said in a statement.

"Three bodies have since been recovered."

Chubisi said 40 people, including a pregnant woman, were taken to local hospitals, four suffering from fractured limbs and the rest with bruises and hypothermia. National

electricity utility Eskom said Jagersfontein was left without power after one of its substations was "engulfed by the mud".

"Due to the current situation in the Jagersfontein area and inaccessibility of our substation, it is impossible to estimate when supply will be restored or to determine the extent of the damage," Eskom said in a statement.

Search and rescue efforts continued, while authorities were evacuating people in the affected areas to nearby farms, she added.

A disaster management team was at the scene to determine the extent of the damage, but the cause was not yet known.

The flooding caused some houses to collapse "leading some members of the community to escape with only the clothes on their backs", said the provincial department of social development, which was assisting with the evacuation and relief efforts. — AFP



Taking stock on World Literacy Day



Sandhya Rao Mehta

The writer is Assoc Prof, Department of English, Language and Literature Sultan Qaboos University

Too much has been going on in the world this week to recognise and mark World Literacy Day.

As politics, inflation and climate change disasters grab our attention, we tend to devote less time to continuing challenges in our societies.

It is hard to believe that in today's world of 7 billion, more than 15 per cent is still illiterate, lacking in basic skills of reading, writing or arithmetic.

World Literacy Day, observed on September 8 every year, is meant to draw attention to this inadequacy. Launched by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), the event is intended to address issues of equality in access to literacy and

create awareness and opportunities for everybody.

Literacy is defined as “the quality or state of being literate: educated...able to read and write”.

It may sound simple enough to those who take schools and education for granted, but literacy is in no way guaranteed, especially in today's times when large populations are displaced by natural and human-made disasters.

The theme for the 2022 World Literacy Day is “transforming literacy learning spaces”. This is mainly in response to the pandemic which effectively redefined the way in which space is defined.

Classrooms were quickly replaced by any corner of a house and learning came on the screen

2022 WORLD LITERACY DAY IS THEMED ON “TRANSFORMING LITERACY LEARNING SPACES”. THIS IS MAINLY IN RESPONSE TO THE PANDEMIC WHICH EFFECTIVELY REDEFINED THE WAY IN WHICH SPACE IS DEFINED

instead of a teacher in the flesh.

Daunting as this change was for most, it is difficult to imagine that millions just lost complete access to education due to the lack of digital infrastructure and devices.

The learning space which was once even an informal thatched

room in a remote village suddenly disappeared and many of those young learners are now lost to literacy, as bringing them back to schools will be an uphill task.

The ray of hope in all this is that education is now a grassroots project, with local communities everywhere taking responsibility for education.

There is a lot that one can do at a local level to help to raise literacy in the community. Individuals can help in education by gifting books or creating small community libraries. Small, bird feeder sized boxes can be found dotting public spaces like parks and beaches where everyone can borrow, replace or just sit and read a book, or even just look at pictures in a book.

Visiting disadvantaged communities and volunteering to read aloud, enacting a favourite scene or helping to draw or colour helps to spur interest in young learners who have not had formal education.

Even more effective is making children participate in the act of learning. It makes them feel responsible and have a sense of ownership, so that the little victories of getting a spelling or a math problem right will feel like a large step.

The fact that so many children and adults have been left behind in the race for literacy remains a cause for concern, but knowing that we can all do our bit to solve this issue remains a reason to hope.

Was Queen Elizabeth II a media-savvy monarch?

FIACHRA GIBBONS

Queen Elizabeth II's coronation — broadcast live for eight straight hours by the BBC in 1953 — was the first major event of the television age.

Six decades later, aged 86, she showed a surprising gift for comedy, joining “James Bond” star Daniel Craig for a sketch in which both appeared to parachute into the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics.

And she topped British television ratings last year with her final carefully choreographed Christmas message, a tradition she began in 1957.

But did that mean the queen — who often floated above the criticism some of her family attracted — could be considered media-savvy?

Royal biographers are divided on how much mental space the queen gave to the media, which she kept at a respectful distance for the seven decades of her reign.

She may officially have been the first British royal to embrace social platforms, with 12.3 million Instagram followers, though few believe she ever concerned herself much with her online profile.

But she knew how to play a role.

Frank Cottrell-Boyce, who co-wrote the action hero sketch at the Olympics, as well as one with beloved fictional character Paddington Bear for her Platinum Jubilee this year, on Friday hailed her “brilliant” comic timing.

“That's real acting going on there. Paddington isn't really in the room,” he told the BBC of the latter skit, in which the queen claimed she kept a marmalade sandwich in her handbag at all times.

She decided early on to embrace mass media, historian Robert Lacey said, following the example of her grandfather George V.

The queen saw radio and television as a “way to talk to directly” to her subjects, he said.

Her first radio broadcast came at just 14 when she addressed British children at the start of World War II.

Over time, her Christmas speeches evolved from rather stilted affairs in a ball-gown to highly sophisticated fireside chats — her office or sitting rooms carefully dressed with family photos to reflect her theme.

But the queen was less than enthusiastic about letting the cameras behind the curtain to peek at the Windsors' private lives.

Royal biographers like Andrew Morton — whose study of her strained relationship with her sister Margaret appeared last year — suspect the queen's innate reticence didn't help her complicated ties to the media. — AFP

Queen's death leaves UK grappling with its sense of national identity



Mark Landler

The writer is an American journalist and the London bureau chief of NYT

No sooner had the long-anticipated news broken — Queen Elizabeth II was dead — than Britain activated Operation London Bridge, the painstakingly choreographed funeral plan that guides the country through the rituals of tribute and mourning that culminate with her burial 10 days later.

But the plan, with its metronomic precision, masks something far messier: a rupture to the national psyche. The queen's death last week, at 96, is a genuinely traumatic event, leaving many in this stoic country anxious and unmoored. As they come to terms with the loss of a figure who embodied Britain, they are unsure of their nation's identity, its economic and social well-being, or even its role in the world.

To some, it almost seems as if London Bridge is down.

Such trauma was not wholly unexpected: Elizabeth reigned for 70 years, making her the only monarch that most Britons ever knew. Yet the anxiety runs even deeper, scholars and commentators say, a reflection not only of the queen's long shadow but also of the unsettled country she leaves behind.

From Brexit and the coronavirus pandemic to the serial scandals that recently drove Prime Minister Boris Johnson from office, the end of the

AS BRITONS COME TO TERMS WITH THE LOSS OF A FIGURE WHO EMBODIED BRITAIN, THEY ARE UNSURE OF THEIR NATION'S IDENTITY, ITS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL WELL-BEING, OR EVEN ITS ROLE IN THE WORLD

second Elizabeth age has been a time of unending turmoil for Britain.

In just the two months since Johnson announced he would step down, inflation has soared, a recession looms and household energy bills have almost doubled. Almost lost in the worldwide outpouring after the queen's death was that the new prime minister, Liz Truss, three days on the job, rolled out an emergency plan to cap energy prices at a likely cost of more than \$100 billion.

“It all feeds into a sense of uncertainty and insecurity, which was already there because of Brexit and then Covid and now a new, very inexperienced prime minister,” said Timothy Garton Ash, a professor of



People visit the flower garden in Green Park, near Buckingham Palace, where a steady stream of well-wishers have come to leave flowers in memory of Queen Elizabeth II in London.

European studies at the University of Oxford. The queen, he said, was the rock, “and then the rock is removed.”

Not just the rock, but the rhythm of British daily life: Her image is printed on pound notes and postage stamps, her royal monogram — E R for Elizabeth Regina — emblazoned on flags and red postal boxes across the land.

At the formal proclamation of her son, Charles, as king on Saturday, the void left by the queen was palpable. Her empty throne, bearing the initials E R, loomed before an assembly of the new monarch; his heir, Prince William; the archbishop of Canterbury; and the prime minister and her six living predecessors.

For older Britons especially, the loss is “deep and personal and almost familial,” said Johnson, paying tribute to the queen in Parliament on Friday, four days after she accepted his resignation in one of her last acts.

“Perhaps it is partly that she has always been there, a changeless human reference point in British life,” he said. “The person who, all the surveys say, appears most often in our dreams. So unvarying in her polestar radiance that we have perhaps been lulled into thinking that she might be in some way eternal.”

Beyond the queen's constancy, Johnson and others said, was her immense global stature.

She was a living link to World War II, after which Winston Churchill helped draw the map of the postwar world, seated around a Yalta conference table with Franklin D. Roosevelt and Josef Stalin.

Johnson and Truss have harked back to that role with their robust support for Ukraine. But Britain these days is less a major power at the centre of global decision-making than a mid-size one cheering from the sidelines. It is fitting that the last Briton to receive a state funeral — until the queen's, set for September 19 at Westminster Abbey — was Churchill in 1965. “My own personal reflection is that there is probably never going to be an occasion in which another British figure is so mourned globally,” Garton Ash of Oxford said. — New York Times

It’s man’s right not a privilege!



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

An author, columnist, creative writer, translator and a communications professional

Education is a life necessity and the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel, as Socrates advised. It has to be pursued at all times, regardless of one’s age or level of literacy. Though, learning could sometimes be hard for those young and old people who missed the chance of going to school in their days. It is challenging as well to those who could not proceed with their journey at school at a certain age. However, it is never late to resume a journey of learning as one gets older!

Nevertheless, how difficult or challenging learning is, the rewards are undoubtedly worth. Getting education always grants people the ability to fight the war of ignorance and poverty. Thus, the right to be educated marks a perfect tool to bridge the gap between different cultures, generations and connect various civilisations. Without having this right, the value of liberty, justice and equality is definitely meaningless. It has been attributed that man’s mind, once stretched by a new idea, never recovers its original dimensions.

If truth to be told, ignorance signifies the biggest danger and threat to mankind. The world is changing every single day due to the impact of technological revolution. Thus, those who are not getting along with the revolutionary happening changes worldwide will be left behind. Most likely, they will struggle to match the lifestyle that

people are getting used to. They could probably get outdated or placed in a different planet! The spell of technological advancement is aggressively spreading over all aspects of life everywhere. Accordingly, everyone has to dance to the tunes of the digitalised world. Rather, every human being has the right to get a proper education to become literate and cope with modern life. Otherwise, being ignorant is not so much a shame, as being unwilling to learn, so learning is a rewarding right and not a privilege that one has to chase.

In view of that and out of a courtesy to people who missed their chance of learning, the world introduced International Literacy Day to urge them to pursue their studies.

Literacy, here, stands as a process by which one expands other’s knowledge of reading and writing in order to develop their thinking and learning for understanding oneself and the world. Such a process is important to achieve competence in every educational subject.

Actually, literacy is one of the greatest gifts a person could receive.

The International Literacy Day was first publicised at the 14th session of Unesco’s General Conference on October 26, 1966. Over all these years, the day has been celebrated annually worldwide, on September 8, to remind the public of the importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights. Unesco designated this day to gather the international community around a great cause.

The day stresses that education shall always be directed to developing human personality and strengthening respect for human rights and freedoms.

According to the Unesco, despite the stable rise in the literacy rates, over the past 50 years, there are still around 800 million illiterate adults worldwide, most of whom are women.

Among those are nearly 260 million children do not attend school due to different circumstances. Literacy is as important as food to individuals for it unlocks their capacity to plan and create a more promising future. Literacy can help societies heal, develop and contribute to improving overall standard of living.

In the Sultanate of Oman, based on recent data released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information for the year 2021 in the field of illiteracy elimination, the illiteracy rate in the age groups of 15-44 has decreased to 0.46 per cent. Further, the number of people enrolled in literacy classes for the academic year 2021/ 2022 has reached 3,124 students. Also, the number of those enrolled in the adult education system for grades 7-12 reached 5,972 students.



ENVIRONMENT FRIENDLY

A worker holds a permeable and modular slab made from waste plastics and composites not recovered in Giromagny, eastern France. Parking slabs made entirely of recycled plastic and capable of storing rainwater and returning it to the soil in the Territoire-de-Belfort region, a start-up intends to make a notoriously polluting sector greener by offering a product that can be “recycled ad infinitum”. – AFP

Public-health funding today keeps the doctor away



William A Haseltine

The author is a scientist, biotech entrepreneur, and infectious disease expert, is Chair and President of the global health think-tank ACCESS Health International

With Covid-19 still an ever-present threat and monkeypox cases rising alongside existing chronic epidemics, building strong, responsive public-health systems has never been more important. In addition to improving data management (which I addressed in a previous commentary), we also need sustained investment and training in the public-health workforce.

Public health has always suffered from chronic underfunding, partly because the social and economic benefits of investing in preventive care are difficult to quantify or invisible to the untrained eye. Successes in containing disease outbreaks or reducing mortality rates often go unnoticed. Unfortunately, it often takes a massive failure of prevention to get policymakers and the public to recognise the need for greater preparedness.

Americans spend significantly more on medical costs than do people in other similar wealthy countries, yet still have lower life expectancy, higher rates of chronic disease and maternal mortality, and fewer doctors per capita. America’s underinvestment in public health is a major reason. Researchers developing cancer treatments have far greater access to funding than those working on cancer prevention.

You know you have a flawed system when you can’t mobilise investments that will pay for themselves – which is precisely what most outlays for public health will do. According to a systematic review of 52 interventions published in 2017 in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health, health-protection programmes (including vaccinations) saved an average of \$34 for every \$1 spent on them.

Despite this massive return on investment, a 2020 investigation by Kaiser Health News and the Associated Press found that per capita funding for state public-health departments in the United States dropped by 16 per cent between 2010 and 2019, while spending for local health departments fell by 18 per cent. Many health departments thus were already in dire shape when Covid-19 arrived.

While Congress invested heavily on public health during the pandemic, federal funding is still following a familiar boom-and-bust cycle. The federal government will spend money to address a specific crisis, but it will not sustain anywhere close to the same level of funding after the emergency ends. Local and state health departments are left to bootstrap their operations until the next crisis, for which they will not have had the resources to prepare. We

PUBLIC-HEALTH FUNDING OFTEN COMPETES WITH MANY OTHER DEMANDS ON GOVERNMENT BUDGETS. BUT BY INVESTING IN ROBUST PUBLIC-HEALTH STAFFING AND INFRASTRUCTURE, THE UNITED STATES AND OTHER COUNTRIES CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF MONEY SPENT ON TREATING PREVENTABLE DISEASES, ULTIMATELY FREEING UP FUNDS FOR OTHER PURPOSES

are now entering a new bust phase, with many local health departments approaching a Covid-19 funding cliff. Emergency funding has been spent or is expiring, even though core public-health services such as testing, reporting, and vaccinating are still needed to address a high caseload. Public-health departments need to provide these services in addition to all the other functions they are charged with, including but not limited to managing water safety, issuing death certificates, tracking sexually transmitted diseases, and preparing for other infectious-disease outbreaks.

A lack of consistent and predictable funding also means that health departments are unable to recruit, retain, and invest in a skilled workforce. Emergency funds for personnel sometimes remain unspent, because local public-health departments are wary of hiring people who will then become permanent fixtures on their payrolls after the additional funding runs out. Owing to these staffing limitations, public-health agencies will instead simply shift personnel from one agenda to another. For example, some public-health departments are now being forced to divert staff working on syphilis and chlamydia in order to conduct outreach, contact tracing, and vaccine campaigns

for monkeypox. These staffing issues, together with an environment of political pressure, harassment, and personal threats from the public, have led to an exodus of public-health officials in recent years, following a similar exodus of physicians and other frontline workers during the pandemic. A bad problem is fueling a worse one. In a major new report, the Commonwealth Fund Commission on a National Public Health System recommends that Congress provide an additional \$4.5 billion annually for guaranteed – not discretionary – federal funding for public health. That would cover the difference between what the US currently spends on public-health personnel (\$19 per capita) and what it needs to spend (\$32 per capita). But this figure is primarily based on personnel; it almost certainly needs to be higher to cover core infrastructure such as material, equipment, and training.

Moreover, the Commonwealth Fund also recommends that the US Department of Health and Human Services establish a national continuing-education and training system, in coordination with schools and public-health programs, and together with state, local, tribal, and territorial health authorities. The report also advocates public-health training in other departments (such as those focused on education, housing, and criminal justice) to encourage collaboration and address issues like the social determinants of health.

Public-health funding often competes with many other demands on government budgets. But by investing in robust staffing and infrastructure, we can significantly reduce the amount of money we spend on treating preventable diseases, ultimately freeing up funds for other purposes. More importantly, we can develop systems that are well prepared to control outbreaks of emerging diseases and address ongoing chronic illnesses, giving all citizens a chance to benefit from longer, healthier lives.

©Project Syndicate, 2022



America’s underinvestment in public health is a major reason.

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports



Swiatek defeats Jabeur to clinch US Open crown

NEW YORK: Iga Swiatek surged to the third Grand Slam title of her career with a maiden victory at the US Open on Saturday, defeating Tunisia's Ons Jabeur in straight sets to extend her remarkable finals winning streak. The 21-year-old world number one from Poland saw off a second set fightback from history-chasing Jabeur to prevail 6-2, 7-6 (7/5) in 1hr 52min at Arthur Ashe Stadium. The win was Swiatek's second Grand Slam title of 2022 to set alongside her French Open victory in June, which followed her maiden Grand Slam win at Roland Garros in 2020. Swiatek's victory was her 10th straight win in a final. She is unbeaten in finals since suffering a lone reverse in her first WTA final in Lugano three years ago. Swiatek collapsed on court in relief after a win that saw her pocket a hefty \$2.6 million in

prize money. "I'm really glad it's not in cash," she quipped as she was presented with her winner's cheque for a tournament she entered with low expectations when the season began. "I wasn't sure if I was on the level yet to win actually a Grand Slam, especially at the US Open where the surface is so fast," she said. "It's something that I wasn't expecting for sure. It's also like a confirmation for me that the sky is the limit. "I'm proud, also surprised a little bit, just happy that I was able to do that." But the loss was another agonising near-miss for Jabeur, who had been bidding to become the first woman from Africa to win a Grand Slam title. The 28-year-old from Tunis had also been beaten in the final of Wimbledon in July.

"I have nothing to regret because I did everything possible," said Jabeur. "I'm not someone that's going to give up. I am sure I'm going to be in the final again and I will try my best to win it." **JABEUR FIGHTBACK** Jabeur impressed en route to the final, dropping only a single set and stitching together a string of assured performances. But she was in trouble almost from the get-go against the clinical Swiatek, who was into her stride quickly with her serve and signature forehand functioning smoothly. Jabeur by contrast looked jittery and was broken to love in her first service game. Swiatek held easily to go 3-0 up with only eight minutes gone in the first set. Jabeur did threaten a revival when she held and then broke to

close the gap to 3-2. But the fifth seed was let down again by her shaky service game, a problem throughout Saturday's final, and Swiatek broke back for a 4-2 lead. Jabeur was broken again as she served to stay in the set and Swiatek took the first set. Swiatek threatened to run away with the second set after breaking Jabeur and holding to go 3-0 up. Yet Jabeur showed great determination to break Swiatek to cut the deficit to 3-2. Once again however Jabeur was unable to make the service break count and Swiatek broke again for a 4-2 lead. This time, though, Jabeur dug deep to claw her way back into the contest, assisted by a slice of luck when a Swiatek return clipped a net cord to clinch a service break. Jabeur held to level the score at 4-4 and suddenly the momentum had shifted. — AFP

Dr Shihab to deliver FIVB Coaches Course Level 3 in Bahrain

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

After a gap of more than eight years, the volleyball coaching course for Level 3 will go back to the East Asian Zone again in Bahrain. The Bahrain Volleyball Federation will host the course in Al Manama city on Monday and will run until September 19. Oman's Dr Shihab Aldin Ahmed, who has done more than 65 international courses, and Gordan Mayforth of USA with more than 40 international courses, will deliver the course. The participants who will attend this course, they have to be FIVB Level 2 qualified and working with a competitive team. Also they have to be committed to develop their technical and tactical understanding of the game and dedicated to furthering their coaching career. A total of 22 coaches who lead their national teams and clubs in national tournaments and International events will participate in theoretical and practical sessions that involve modern methods in training and modern aspects of volleyball. The participants include nationalities from Bahrain, Egypt, Tunisia, Kuwait, Oman, Pakistan, India, Palestine, Jordan and Sudan. The course duration is 60 hours which includes theoretical and practical sessions. In addition, discussion sessions with international experienced coaches will be held. "Special thanks to the FIVB Development department for this mission which emphasises on elite volleyball coaches and upgrading their knowledge in modern volleyball. Also, many thanks to Bahrain Volleyball Federation and FIVB Development training Centre for active efforts in hosting FIVB courses and improving coaches' standard in Asia. The Level 3 award prepares an experienced coach to plan, organise, deliver and evaluate a



programme of training sessions aimed at improving the technical and tactical performance of individual players and a team over a series of matches (season). In addition, this Level is a high level and professional standard for coaches who already lead the national teams in national and international tournaments," Dr Shihab said. "This course will enable coaches to learn many aspects in training science and develop their teams in many ways." "It includes planning and delivering a series of coaching sessions based on goal setting and evaluation. This is aimed at improving the performance of individual players and a team over a period." "Reviewing your coaching philosophy, individual differences and how that impacts on your work with players. "Challenged to think about how you put together teams to maximise players' strengths and provide balance. Introduction of a range of offensive and defensive systems of play and their tactical application. Examining how you plan, deliver and evaluate player improvement through effective practices. Implementation of the principles of match analysis, scouting and match coaching. Awareness of the principle of sport physiology, coaching processes and planning." "Exchanging experience and training methods with Olympiad coaches, who have bright experience in FIVB events and Olympic Games is another key factor," he ended.

Mudhaibi emerge champions of first Musannah tent pegging

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

The Wilayat of Mudhaibi were ranked first at teams and individual category in the first edition of Musannah Tent Pegging Championship 2022, which was organised by the Equestrian Committee in Musannah in cooperation with the Oman International Academy of tent pegging and under the supervision of the Oman Equestrian Federation (OEF). The event was held at Barcelo Resort Musannah under the patronage of Sayyid Khalid bin Mahfouz al Busaidy, in the presence of Ahmed bin Saif al Abri, Secretary-General of the



OEF, Ali bin Saleh al Shabibi, Chairman of the Equestrian Committee in Musannah, and



equestrian enthusiasts. The championship comes under the main sponsorship of Oman

Liquefied Natural Gas Company. The tournament witnessed strong competition among the

participants of 32 contestants representing eight teams from the Oman's governorates, Musannah, Al Suwaiq, Suhar, Saham, Al Khabourah, Mudhaibi, Ibra and Bahla. They competed in six rounds, which are a single spear round, a sword singles round, two rings and a wedge with a spear, two lemons and a wedge with a sword, teams tour with a spear and teams tour with a sword. Mudhaibi team won the first three places at the individual category, where Badr bin Mahammed al Khasibi came in the first place with 55 points, Sami bin Ali al Haddadi claimed the second place with 52 points and Khalid bin Salem al Habsi came

third with 51 points. In the team section, Mudhaibi claimed the title with Saif bin Ali al Jabri, Badr bin Mohammed al Khaseibi, Sami bin Ali al Haddadi and Khalid bin Salem al Habsi collecting 195 points. The Al Leem Equestrian Centre team from Al Suwaiq came in second place. Riders Amjad Iqbal, Suleiman bin Abdullah al Balushi, Musa bin Salem al Maawali and Hussein al Hasani claimed 169.5 points. The Musannah State team, represented by Khalfan bin Khamis al Rawahi, Nasser bin Saif al Hashimi, Hamad bin Saeed al Manouri and Anas bin Ali al Balushi came third with 156 points.



UAE sweep Stage 1 podium of Tour of Salalah

ANUROOP ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

United Arab Emirates (UAE) cyclists made a clean sweep of the top three podium places in the opening stage of the second edition of Tour of Salalah on Sunday.

Saif al Kaabi claimed the opening honours in Salalah by finishing in 2 hours 52 minutes and 11 seconds in the 116 km-long Stage 1 run from the picturesque Darbat Waterfall to Ayn Ishat.

Teammate Jaber al Mansoori (same time) finished a close second and Khalid Mayouf (+1:01) completed the podium sweep for the UAE.

Abdullah al Hammadi continued the UAE domination in the stage by finishing fourth (+1:01).

Shihab al Qamshouai kept the Sultanate of Oman in the top five by finishing fifth in 02:54:12.

Earlier, more than 100 cyclists pedalled to the finish point when the Tour of Salalah 2022 was flagged off at Darbat Waterfall.

The four-stage cycling race which offers a total prize money of RO 7,730 is being organised



by the Oman Cycling Association and supported by Dhofar Municipality, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

The Tour of Salalah is witnessing competition among 11 teams – 7 teams from Oman and national teams from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Thailand.

The Oman teams in the competition include Royal Army of Oman, Salalah Club, Oman Club, Bahla Club, Al Asimah, Cycle.kom and Gulf Cycles.

CYCLE.KOM SECOND

UAE national team led the team category with an overall timing of 08:37:34. Oman's Cycle.kom – NRO are second with 08:51:25 and the Saudi Arabian national

team are third (08:51:44). Omani teams Salalah Club (08:51:46) are fourth and Oman Royal Army (08:54:09) finished fifth after the Stage 1 race.

In the under-23 category, UAE's Abdullah al Hammadi (02:53:12) is topping the list. Oman's Faisal al Maamari (02:55:55) is second and Great Britain's Bradley Perkins (02:56:31) is third.

Oman's Mohammed al Wahibi (fourth) and Said al Rahbi completed the top five list.

On Monday, the 101 km-Stage 2 will be held between Al Baleed Archaeological Park and Hajee.

Oman Cycling Association Chairman Saif bin Sebaa al Rashidi gave away the jerseys and awards to the stage winners in the concluding ceremony.



Australia's Finch ends ODI career with win on back of Smith century

CAIRNS, Australia: A Steve Smith century helped give retiring Australia skipper Aaron Finch a winning send-off on Sunday with a 25-run victory in the final one-day international against New Zealand at Cairns.

Chasing the home team's 267-5, built on the back of Smith's masterful 105, the Blacks Caps were all out for 242 in the last over with Mitchell Starc taking 3-60.

It capped a disappointing Chappell-Hadlee series for the visitors. Australia won the opening game by two wickets before a 113-run thrashing of the Black Caps in the second.

"For us to get to 260 after probably our slowest start ever was just amazing," said Finch, who was out for five in his 146th and last ODI. "Our bowling has been good, everyone has contributed."

"Been a fun ride, I've loved every bit of it," he added of his ODI career.

New Zealand started the chase confidently, racing to 49 before Sean Abbott temped Devon Conway (21) into a drive that Smith caught.

Cameron Green accounted for opener Finn Allen after a breezy 35, caught low by Josh Hazlewood to leave them 57-2 in the 12th over.

Some unplayable bowling starved New Zealand of runs with Alex Carey stumping Tom Latham for 10 off Adam Zampa's spin and



Smith taking a comfortable catch to remove Daryl Mitchell (16) off Hazlewood.

When skipper Kane

Williamson was run out for 27 after a comical mix up with Glenn Phillips they were in trouble at 112-5. — AFP

Kiplimo becomes first Ugandan man to win Great North Run

LONDON: World record holder Jacob Kiplimo became the first Ugandan man to win the Great North Run after tributes were paid to Queen Elizabeth II before Sunday's race.

Kiplimo powered to victory in his first appearance at the event in north-east England.

The 21-year-old had a 32-second lead as he hit the 12-mile mark on the 13.1-mile course from Newcastle to South Shields.

Kiplimo, the reigning world half-marathon champion, crossed the line in 59.33, 66 seconds ahead of Olympic 10,000m champion Selemon Barega, with Ethiopia's Kenenisa Bekele third in 1.01.01.

"I enjoyed the race, it was nice. I came here to win it," Kiplimo said.

In the women's race, Kenya's Hellen Obiri retained the title



after holding off strong challenges from Peres Jepchirchir.

The trio broke away from the field early in the race and contested a tense finale.

Obiri made the decisive kick in sight of the finish line as she clocked 1:07.05, 37 seconds faster than last year, with her compatriot

Jepchirchir, the Olympic marathon champion, two seconds behind and Ethiopia's Almaz Ayana a further three seconds adrift.

"It's a great opportunity to do a faster one than last time, so I'm so happy," Obiri said.

— AFP

South Africa struggle as England take control of third Test

ANDY JALIL AT KIA OVAL
LONDON, 11 SEPTEMBER

England have taken control of the third Test with South Africa, shortly before tea on the fourth day, on 140 for six in the second innings and in an overall lead of just 100.

South Africa got off to a fine start in their second innings putting on 58, their second best first wicket stand of the series after 85 in their only innings in the first Test at Lord's. But three overs before lunch, England got the breakthrough. Ben Stokes put himself on and he struck with his third ball with the help of an

excellent low catch at first slip by Joe Root. Sarel Erwee could not judge the late out swing and went for 26.

England claimed the next wicket in the third over after the break with Stuart Broad pinning Dean Elgar in front of the stumps for 36 and that was two down for 83. The next two batsmen went in rapid succession. Three overs later Ollie Pope at gully, took a low catch off the bowling of James Anderson to dismiss Keegan Petersen for 23.

Broad struck for the second time to reduce South Africa to 95 for four when an out swing straightened late to trap Ryan Rickelton lbw for 8. The batsman



asked for a review but the dismissal was confirmed.

That was followed by a determined stand for the fifth wicket in which Khaya Zondo and

Wiaan Mulder stayed together at the crease for 14 overs although adding just 25 runs, before England could break the partnership. That happened with Mulder playing-

on with a bottom edge on to his stumps to a ball from Robinson for 14 from 52 balls faced.

Robinson didn't wait long to strike again, he removed Zondo in his next over lbw for 16 from 51 balls and the tourists were 133 for six.

Earlier, England resumed their first innings on 154 for seven on the fourth morning but their hope of boosting the total did not materialise. The second ball of the morning accounted for Ollie Robinson when he hit to cover and was snapped up without adding to his overnight score of 3 off Kagiso Rabada.

In his next over Rabada had

Jack Leach play-on to his stumps off the inside edge to complete his haul of four wickets for 81 and on the same total of 158 the innings was wound up as Marco Jansen claimed the wicket of the overnight not out batsman Ben Foakes who got a thick edge to third slip for 14.

The wicket added to Jansen's four wickets of the previous day, giving him five for 35, his first 5-wicket haul in his seventh Test match. His superbly controlled bowling had greatly helped to restrict England to a modest lead of just 40 runs. England had lost the three remaining wickets for only 4 runs in 17 balls in the first 13 minutes of play.



OBSC begins initiative to spread billiards and snooker

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

The Oman Billiards and Snooker Committee (OBSC) has recently started implementing an initiative to spread the game of billiards and snooker among the junior and under-21 years old categories.

888 Hall in Al Maabela area in Muscat, 12 players from different age groups underwent training over five consecutive days from 3 pm to 7 pm, under the supervision of Oman national coach Mubarak al Wahaibi.

The national coach is discovering talents among the target groups from all over Oman in an effort of a talent hunt programme for constituting the Oman national team.

On this occasion, Hammoud bin Hamdan al Harthy, Secretary of the Committee, said: "It is necessary to pay attention to young people and new talents, as a plan was adopted to select young people. Our professional national coach has extensive experience in managing the course of the game, in accordance with the relevant international rules and standards, and has the expertise to pick the young talents."

"The committee will continue, the efforts to train the juniors, and internal camps will be held in this regard. We are also planning external camps in line with the future vision of the Committee in building a strong team to achieve advanced positions, as well as finding a wide base of practitioners of this game in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman."

One of the players who took part in the camp, Hassan bin Nabil al Moussawi, said: "I was very happy to participate in this first gathering of the best Omani junior players. I would like the authorities' full support in boosting the popularity of billiards and snooker in Oman. We need to set up an official national team with good capabilities and high skills, which qualifies them to achieve high results."

Bank Muscat inaugurates two new Green Sports fields in Al Dakhiliyah and Al Dhahirah

MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial institution in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to inaugurate more sports fields across the Sultanate of Oman as part of its long-running Green Sports CSR programme. The bank recently handed over a Green Sports field to the Al Farfara Sports Team in the Wilayat of Bidbid at a ceremony held under the auspices of Mohammed bin Khamis al Husaini, Member of the Majlis Ashshura.

In another ceremony under the patronage of Dr Hamad bin Hamdan al Rabie, Member of the Majlis Ashshura, the bank inaugurated a second Green Sports field to the Al Aaridh Sports and Cultural Team in the Wilayat of Ibri. Both the opening ceremonies were attended by a number of officials from the two teams and the bank.

Speaking on the occasion, Hamdan bin Hamoud al Bimani, Regional Manager, Al Dakhiliyah, Bank Muscat congratulated the Al Farfara team in Bidbid for successfully completing their Green Sports project. He said that this achievement would contribute in enhancing the facilities and infrastructure available for the team's practice and for activities by the local community.

OMAN OQ LONE GCC TEAM IN 'SOCCA WORLD CUP'



Oman OQ 'the Global Integrated Energy Group' will be the only team from the GCC in the third edition of 'Socca World Cup', an international corporate football tournament. The tournament will see 43 teams divided into 8 groups compete in Hungary until September 18. The other teams in the group of OQ include Germany, Nigeria, Algeria and Latvia. The OQ had participated in the first edition in 2018 in Canada, with the participation of 16 countries.

He hoped that the new facility would help the Al Farfara team to rise to greater heights, improve community bonding and harness the talent of Omani youth. He called upon the team and its management to build further on this achievement, and take the club to greater heights by optimal utilisation and development of the new facilities.

Meanwhile, Salim bin Rashid al Shidi, Regional Manager—Al Dhahirah, Bank Muscat spoke on the occasion of the inauguration of the Al Aaridh Sports and Cultural Team Green Sports field in the Wilayat of Ibri, and said that the bank was delighted to continue opening Green Sports fields this year too, thereby continuing its long tradition of extending support to youth sports teams across Oman. He congratulated the Al Aaridh Team and said that the new facility would allow them to improve their sporting capabilities and talents.

He added that the bank looks forward to supporting more and more young talent play at the highest level of sports by enabling the implementation of high-quality sports infrastructure for local teams across the Sultanate of Oman.

Oman's Rashid officiates as safety delegate in Greece WRC Rally

SPORTS REPORTER
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Oman's Rashid al Balushi was appointed as the safety delegate (trainee) by the global motorsports body FIA in Acropolis Rally in Greece during the 10th round of World Rally Championship from September 9 to 11.



This appointment is a kind of appreciation to talented people from Oman, where they proved previously their skills in organising big events as technical managers and safety delegations adding to the ability to work under pressure and in different conditions.

Rashid has been appointed by FIA previously as safety delegate since 2019 in Oman International Rally, Jordan International Rally, Kuwait International Rally and Lebanon International Rally, where he gained a lot of experience.

The chance to represent FIA in Greece Acropolis rally as the safety delegate trainee has come in recognition of Rashid's wide experience in the area.

He said: "I am very delighted and happy to represent Oman in this international event as the first from Oman and GCC to attend such a big and prestigious event."

"I gained a lot of knowledge and experience about the functioning of WRC, its role and preparations and hope that in future I will impart this knowledge to my colleagues in Oman."

"I express my gratitude to everyone who supported me to be here in Greece in this WRC event. I hope to be part of the organising committee in any international rally also," he added.







Interest rate up to **2.5%**

Get Higher Returns with
HIGH-YIELD SAVINGS ACCOUNT

For more information



بنك ظفار
BankDhofar

the best bank for you 2479 011 www.bankdhofar.com

Oman unveils new high-powered team to negotiate investment projects

KEY INITIATIVES: Fast-track Platform, Invest-in-Oman Centre, 2nd phase of Investor Residency programme set to launch

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

A high-calibre national team well-versed in the complexities of deal-making has been assembled by the Omani government to negotiate directly with investors to help achieve a speedy and mutually beneficial outcome to any medium and large-scale investment proposals from local and international investors.

The move is one of several initiatives spearheaded by the government as part of its Vision 2040 strategy to help enhance the Sultanate of Oman’s appeal as a destination for business and international investment.

According to Aisha al Saifi (pictured), Vice-President of the National Investment & Export Development Programme (Nazdaher) – an initiative set up under the auspices of Oman Vision 2040 – the National Negotiation Team has been trained to ‘speak the language of business and investment’.

“The national negotiation team, which is a centralised decision making platform, represents the government in the negotiation process in all investment projects that exceed RO 50 million and above. They can speak the same language as business. They speak the language of tax employment, land allocation, gas allocation, utility



We have already launched the first wave that has seen over 400 investors applying for investor residency. We are now working on the second wave of the scheme that will see entrepreneurs, such as digital nomads, researchers, and so on, being granted residency as well.

AISHA AL SAIFI

Vice-President, National Investment & Export Development Programme (Nazdaher)

prices, and so on — all under one umbrella. They’re a team that is able to negotiate with you,” Al Saifi stated in a presentation during an investment forum held in the city last week.

The Vision 2040 platform is overseeing a major investment drive that aims to attract around RO 11 billion worth of new project investments in some 175 projects and initiatives offered up to local and

international players over the 2021 – 2025 timeframe. Of this target, investments of around RO 4.3 billion have been garnered to date, with another RO 6.7 billion yet to be nailed down by the 2025 timeframe.

Seeking to strengthen Oman’s business environment across the board, construction work is also underway on a full-fledged ‘Invest in Oman’ Centre, said the official.

“Hopefully towards the start of next year, this centre will be a one-stop-shop that will be serving you with the required business permits and processes, ensuring that you have one account manager who will take care of all your permits. We have (representatives) from all the concerned entities for which permits are required, stationed in one place to ensure that you have the right VIP treatment.”

Additionally, a new high-powered panel has been constituted with the mandate to fast track approvals and permits for major investment projects, said Al Saifi. The Fast Track Platform has been empowered to resolve as many as 28 sticking points that investors typically face when setting up operations in the Sultanate of Oman, she noted.

“We want to ensure that any issues faced by businesses are addressed. So we have established the fast track platform, which consists of 12 under-secretaries to ensure that any issues that are faced by the investors can be resolved in a matter of two weeks.”

Meanwhile, the second wave of visa issuances under the government’s Investor Residency programme targeting eligible expatriates will be launched soon, according to the official.

“We have already launched the first wave that has seen over 400 investors applying for investor residency. We are now working on the second wave of the scheme that will see entrepreneurs, such as digital nomads, researchers, and so on, being granted residency as well,” she stated.

ECB sees rising risk of rate hitting 2% to curb inflation



People walk in front of the euro sign at the former ECB headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. – AFP

PRAGUE: European Central Bank policymakers see a rising risk that they will have to raise their key interest rate to 2 per cent or more to curb record-high inflation in the euro zone despite a likely recession, sources said.

With inflation hitting 9.1 per cent in August and seen above the ECB’s 2 per cent target for two years to come, the central bank has been raising its interest rates at record speed and urging governments to help bring down energy bills that have ballooned since Russia attacked Ukraine. The ECB raised its deposit rate from zero to 0.75 per cent on Thursday and President Christine Lagarde guided for another two or three hikes, saying rates were still far away from a level that will bring inflation back to 2 per cent.

Many policymakers saw a growing probability that they will need to take the rate into “restrictive territory”, jargon for a level of rates that causes the economy to slow, at 2 per cent or above. The sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because policy deliberations are private, said this would most likely happen if the ECB’s first inflation projection for 2025, due to be published in December, is still above 2 per cent.

— Reuters

Copper-gold project on track for commissioning in April

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 11

Following the arrival at site of all of the critical pieces of equipment for its key mining project, Al Hadeetha Resources LLC (AHRL) says its flagship Al Washihi Majaza copper gold project is on track for commissioning in April 2023.

Australian mining firm Alara Resources Limited, which owns a 51 per cent equity interest in the Al Hadeetha Resources joint venture, announced recently that key pieces of hardware from a Chinese equipment manufacturer have arrived at the project site in Wilayat of Al Mudhaibi in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

Deliveries have included the project’s ball mill, grinding mill and crusher – components that together constitute a milestone in the project’s development, the company stated.

Alara Managing Director, Atmavireswar Sthapak said:



AL HADEETHA RESOURCES LLC, A JOINT VENTURE BETWEEN ALARA RESOURCES, AL HADEETHA AND AL TASNIM, IS THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL JOINT VENTURE COMPANY THAT HAS BEEN AWARDED A COPPER MINING LICENSE IN THE SULTANATE OF OMAN FOR THE WASH-HI MAJAZAH PROJECT. THE WASH-HI MAJAZAH COPPER DEPOSIT HAS BEEN EVALUATED UNDER JORC STANDARDS WITH OVER 16 MILLION TONNES OF COPPER RESOURCES AND 10 MILLION TONNES OF MINEABLE RESERVES.

“We are well pleased with recent progress made in the development phase of the Al Wash-hi Majaza Project. We were particularly excited to see the all-important ball mill, LRS ball mill, SAG mill

and crusher equipment recently arrive onsite. This achievement yet again demonstrated the ability of Alara and its JV partners to successfully work through logistic challenges still being thrown up by the pandemic and other factors disrupting normal operations of the global mining industry.

Other project-critical equipment consignments from India, Turkey and the UAE are expected to arrive on site over coming weeks.”

Al Hadeetha Resources LLC, a joint venture between Alara Resources, Al Hadeetha and Al Tasnim, is the first international joint venture company that has been awarded a copper mining license in the Sultanate of Oman for the Wash-hi Majazah project. The Wash-hi Majazah copper deposit has been evaluated under JORC standards with over 16 million tonnes of copper resources and 10 million tonnes of mineable reserves.

MEDRC concludes Tahlya V programme



MUSCAT: In partnership with bp Oman, MEDRC held a graduation ceremony marking the closing of the Tahlya V programme, under the auspices of Eng Ali bin Mohammed al Abri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources for Water Resources.

Tahlya V is the fifth cycle of the vocational training programme which aims at building the capacity of young Omanis and equipping them with the necessary skills to advance in the desalination sector in the Sultanate of Oman. This year, a total of 68 Omanis graduated with 31 supervisors and 37 operators graduating from the programme.

Shamsa al Rawahi, bp Oman Social Investment Manager, commented: "Our partnership with MEDRC started in 2017 with the first cycle of the Tahlya

programme. The aim of which is to fill a gap in the local labour market specifically in the desalination sector. Over the years it successfully trained 330 young Omani jobseekers of which 56 per cent are currently employed. We are proud of the programme achievements so far and are delighted to continue helping strengthen local capabilities."

Ciarán Ó Cuinn, MEDRC Centre Director, commented: "We are honoured to work with bp Oman to deliver this great programme that has transformed the desalination and water sector in Oman. The programme worked on developing the local potential, allowing them to take up new opportunities to support Oman's economy. We are excited to announce that the sixth cycle of the Tahlya programme will start this month and train an additional 76 trainees."

Free remittance offer from Sohar International

MUSCAT: In line with the bank's digital transformation strategy to enhance digital financial inclusion, Sohar International recently announced its free remittance offer. As per the campaign, retail customers can use the Sohar International mobile app to transfer money to a local account or internationally to all countries free of charge. The offer will run for an extended period of time until December 31, 2022.

Khalil bin Salim al Hedaifi, Chief Retail Banking Officer at Sohar International said, "Sohar



International continuously monitors the prevailing market scenarios to develop value-added propositions that reserve the potential to have a meaningful impact on its customers. Keeping in mind the volatile economic climate, it is imperative that we take a holistic approach to provide solutions."

OOMCO, talabat sign collaboration agreement

MUSCAT: Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) and talabat, the region's leading local tech platform, have signed an agreement that sees talabat as an official OOMCO World App redemption partner. Customers can now redeem OOMCO World reward points using the talabat App to enjoy exclusive discounts at a growing range of vendors.

OOMCO World Loyalty customers will enjoy exclusive discounts and promotions at over 3,000 restaurants across Oman. The agreement was facilitated through Wemsol International Electronic Cards Trading LLC, an OMA Emirates Group Company facilitated the agreement, the innovative payment and technology service provider specialising in customised payment solutions, and OOMCO's loyalty programme solutions



partner.

Tarik al Junaidi, CEO of OOMCO, said, "As a customer-centric marketer, Oman Oil Marketing Company has become a pioneer in the digital transformation of the fuel sector

by incentivising customers with unique benefits.

OOMCO World goes beyond the pump and allows users to collect points every time they refuel, then use these points to enjoy exclusive retail, lifestyle and

now, dining experiences.

The partnership with talabat reinforces OOMCO's position as Oman's leading fuel marketer and the only company of its kind to offer a smart app with integrated loyalty programme, and we will

continue to seek innovative new partnerships to add even greater value to OOMCO World."

Mohammed Zourob, Managing Director of talabat, said, "The partnership with OOMCO allows us to deliver a new range of rewards that fit seamlessly into our customers' on-the-go lifestyles.

We continue to find new and exciting ways to use our tech to enrich customers' lives and with our ever-expanding menu of almost 3,000 vendors and cutting-edge q-commerce technology, talabat offers variety, reliability and an efficient cashless payment process. Partnering with OOMCO's innovative OOMCO World App is a natural fit as together we look forward to rewarding customers with exclusive offers on food and grocery orders every time, they refuel their vehicles at OOMCO filling stations."

SBCF organises fully sponsored Umrah trip for 100 pilgrims

MUSCAT: Saud Bahwan Charitable Foundation (SBCF) recently organised and fully sponsored a specially designed Umrah trip for 100 pilgrims at Al Noor Foundation. Through this initiative, SBCF aims to play a responsible role in fulfilling the wishes of these needy pilgrims.

Al Noor Association is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) that works towards improving the living standards, of the blind in Oman. Saud Bahwan Charitable Foundation regularly supports various charitable activities with financial and non-financial assistance.

The Foundation has continually focused all efforts on a number of



social causes that make a lasting difference in the lives of the economically hard-pressed. The foundation's activities are apparent in various spheres across the nation. While most of the projects are directly handled by Saud Bahwan Charitable Foundation, it also undertakes projects jointly with Ministries and Institutions.

Saud Bahwan Charitable Foundation has facilitated the holy journey for the pilgrims at Al Noor Association through National Travel & Tourism (NTT). National Travel & Tourism's NTT Holidays has specially arranged Umrah packages that take care of every detail, ensuring pilgrims make the most of every moment, fulfilling their wishes.

National Finance reaffirms dedication to reducing plastic waste

MUSCAT: As a company strongly committed to its social responsibilities, National Finance reaffirmed its dedication to reducing plastic waste by successfully carrying out the 'Use Less Plastic' campaign that was launched in August.

The initiative was organised in response to 'Plastic Free July', which is a global movement that empowers individuals to be part of the solution to plastic pollution.

Going beyond spreading awareness about the repercussions of using plastic, the company focused on encouraging its employees to discard the plastic items used during their day-to-day work in a designated area for the purpose of recycling.

The company collaborated with well-renowned artists; Abdulkareem al Rawahi who is a sculptor skilled in recycling plastic materials and transforming them into stunning works of art and Yousuf al Rawahi, who specialises in sculptures, a member of the Fine Arts Society and Youth Studio since 1999.

The artists were able to create the sculpture entitled "Tree of Life" at Oman Avenues Mall during the



weekend. The tree symbolises the renewal and continuity of life towards a better future. Whereas the branches of the tree reflect the reach of the National Finance company across the Sultanate of Oman. Lastly, the marble base represents the stability and credibility of the finance company in the non-banking financial sector.

"The "Use Less Plastic" campaign has been successful in making our employees more aware of the importance of using less plastic in their day-to-day life. We have witnessed during this period that changing habits, ways of thinking, and attitudes can be achieved through ongoing

awareness campaigns. This is just a start, we will continue to explore different initiatives in order to help impact our environment" said Lina al Abdulsalaam, Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing at National Finance.

National Finance's 'Use Less Plastic' initiative has been able to raise awareness among its employees whilst influencing them to work on finding alternative solutions that would reduce the risk of single plastic use.

National Finance always strives to cooperate with various parties seeking to raise society's awareness of aspects that achieve sustainable development.

MHD ITICS to showcase cutting-edge technology at Future Tech Expo and Summit 2022



MUSCAT: MHD ITICS, the Infrastructure, Technology, Industrial and Consumer Solutions cluster of the renowned Mohsin Haider Darwish Group, will be showcasing its competencies in cutting-edge technology at the Future Tech Expo and Summit 2022, which was inaugurated today in Muscat. MHD ITICS has collaborated with Freshworks, a leading provider of modern SaaS (Software as a Service) solutions for enterprises, which will be on display at the 2-day event.

The Summit is being held at the Oman Exhibition and Convention Centre (OCEC) on September 12-13, under the patronage of the Ministry of Transport, Communication and Information Technology. Dubbed as Oman's foremost B2B and B2G technology expo and summit, the much-anticipated event will facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue with power-packed networking opportunities for industry experts, decision and policy makers and government officials.

MHD ITICS and Freshworks, together will display competencies in digital solutions at its dedicated booth — BC 1 and 2, presenting the Company's service portfolio and tech capabilities, alongside its squad of robots. As a leading digital transformation facilitator in the country, the MHD ITICS booth will focus, primarily, on enterprise applications, the Internet of Things (IoT) and Robotics, in addition to the telecom infrastructure and ELV services. With its partnership with Freshworks, MHD ITICS is uniquely positioned to offer cloud-based customer relationship management (CRM) and IT service management (ITSM) tools.

America exports natural gas, imports high price

America’s natural gas market was largely disconnected from the world for decades. Transportation limits meant prices reflected local demand and supply only. But the industry’s infrastructure has changed, and it means that US natural gas is going global. That will continue to have an effect on domestic prices.

The first facility to export liquefied natural gas in the lower 48 states came online in 2016, and America is now the world’s largest LNG exporter, with peak capacity of about 14 billion cubic feet per day. New facilities under construction will raise export capabilities an additional 5.7 billion cubic feet by the end of 2025, says the US Energy.

The demand for US natural gas outside of the states has risen faster than production, though. Between June 2019 and June of this year, LNG exports more than doubled.

Meanwhile, natural gas production only increased 7 per cent according to the EIA.

As a result, LNG exports now take up over 10 per cent of America’s production of natural gas, or about double what it was in 2019. The result is easily seen in the commodity’s costs. Prices this summer are the highest they’ve been since 2008. The spot price of Henry

Hub natural gas is \$7.85 per million British thermal units on September 7, over three times as high as prices averaged in September 2019.

The US natural gas boom could eventually fizzle. Some lawmakers and domestic users have pushed for export limits to lower prices. Big producers like Qatar are also increasing export capacity substantially. And environmental concerns could eventually dent demand as solar, wind, and nuclear power capabilities ramp up.

Yet multi-year LNG contracts are increasingly the norm. Investors’ preference for fossil fuel firms to prioritise returning capital over investment probably will limit domestic gas production growth. Plus the gap between US prices and those elsewhere is still very wide.

The Dutch benchmark price for October is almost eight times the current US Henry Hub price on an equivalent basis thanks to decreased Russian imports. And the price of LNG in North Asia is seven times as high.

That means American gas will still be in high demand. And as US drillers export their fuels, domestic prices will rise. — Reuters



The US natural gas boom could eventually fizzle. Some lawmakers and domestic users have pushed for export limits to lower prices.



KEEPING THE LIGHTS WITH SOLAR POWER

Workers set up solar panels at a shopping mall’s parking lot in the city of Byblos in northern Lebanon. Lebanon’s economy collapsed in 2019 after decades of corruption and mismanagement, leaving the state unable to provide electricity for more than an hour or two. Last winter, the mountain village barely had three hours of daily generator electricity. Solar power now helps keep the lights on for 17 hours, an engineer working on the project said, providing a semblance of normality. — AFP

The risk of competitive interest-rate hikes



SHANG-JIN WEI

The writer, a former chief economist at the Asian Development Bank, is Professor of Finance and Economics at Columbia Business School and Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs.

AGGRESSIVE INTEREST-RATE INCREASES DESIGNED TO COMBAT HIGH INFLATION AT HOME MAKE SENSE IN ISOLATION.

The world is facing the risk that major central banks will undertake competitive interest-rate hikes that may look desirable for their countries individually but could drag the world economy into an unnecessary recession. This scenario can still be avoided, but the window of opportunity is closing.

Aggressive interest-rate increases designed to combat high inflation at home make sense in isolation. For example, in view of the US Federal Reserve’s prolonged underestimation of the persistence of US inflation, Chair Jerome Powell’s recent vow to continue hiking rates, despite the risk of recession, seems reasonable.

To ensure that inflation expectations remain anchored at a low level, the Fed would prefer to err on the side of being too aggressive, rather than risk doing too little.

Across the Atlantic, the European Central Bank and the Bank of England have also vowed to raise interest rates to deal with the highest inflation seen in decades. The problem with this approach is that an interest-rate hike by any major central bank has the effect of exporting inflation to other countries, forcing other central banks to raise interest rates more than they otherwise would have done.

For example, when the Fed raises its interest rate, if the BOE and the ECB do not respond, the pound and the euro would

depreciate against the US dollar, leading to higher import prices and adding to the already high inflation. If the BOE and ECB respond by further raising their interest rates, they export a bit of extra inflation back to the United States and to other economies.

The result is an interest-rate spiral that is more damaging to world output and employment than these countries may wish to see collectively. For the 66 smaller economies that peg their currencies to the US dollar – especially those without significant capital controls, like Hong Kong, Panama, and Saudi Arabia – local interest rates tend to rise automatically whenever the US raises its interest rate, even when higher rates are harmful to their economic prospects.

With global growth already slowing, owing to Russia’s war in Ukraine and the accompanying surge in energy and food prices, a wave of ever higher interest rates might push the world economy toward negative growth. With some coordination, the world’s major central banks might achieve the goal of controlling inflation with a less aggressive strategy than each would adopt in isolation.

But heightened geopolitical tensions and deepening mistrust among some major economies are making policy coordination harder. Fortunately, a globalised competitive interest-rate hike has not happened yet.

In China and Japan – the world’s second- and third-largest economies, respectively – inflation is currently under 3 per cent, compared to 8 per cent or more in the US, the United Kingdom, and the eurozone.

This means they do not need to raise their interest rates in response to the Fed, the ECB, and the BOE. In fact, the Chinese authorities are contemplating lowering interest rates to spur growth, and Japanese policymakers – who for decades have been more worried about deflation than inflation – don’t seem overly concerned. For the moment, both countries appear willing to accept a depreciation of their currencies. But this could change.

With no end in sight for the war in Ukraine, energy prices are not expected to drop anytime soon. China and Japan are both big importers of oil and gas, so surging energy prices worry them more than they worry the US

While current Chinese and Japanese inflation rates are significantly lower than in other major economies, they are still rising fast: China’s has tripled since the beginning of the year, from an annualised rate of 0.9 per cent to 2.7 per cent and Japan’s quintupled from 0.5 per cent to 2.6 per cent over the same period.

If this trend continues, imported inflation will soon become a major policy concern for them, too.

© Project Syndicate, 2022

Cities adopting cash payments to curb poverty



KURTIS LEE

The author is an NYT economics correspondent based in Los Angeles.

Early in the pandemic, Alondra Barajas had a temporary job for the Census Bureau, doing phone work from the two-bedroom apartment she shared with her mother and four younger siblings. When that job ended in late 2020, she struggled to find employment.

But Barajas learned from an ad on Instagram that she might qualify for an unusual form of assistance: monthly payments of \$1,000 for a year. Since she started receiving the funds this year – while caring for her newborn, searching for a job and looking for a new place to stay – her outlook has seemed brighter. “It’s helped me from hitting rock bottom,” she said.

The payments are part of a pilot programme from the city of Los Angeles, one of the nation’s largest experiments with a guaranteed income. The idea is that the best way to close the wealth gap and

give people the opportunity to build a more stable life is to provide unrestricted cash payments to some of the most vulnerable Americans.

The concept, sometimes referred to as universal basic income, has had advocates for decades. Andrew Yang made it a centrepiece of his 2020 Democratic presidential campaign. At the same time, detractors have long argued that the approach incentivises people not to work. Still, it is gaining traction, city by city.

More than 48 guaranteed income programmes have been started in cities nationwide since 2020, according to Mayors for a Guaranteed Income, a network of leaders supporting such efforts at the local, state and federal levels. Some efforts are publicly funded, and others have non-governmental support. Jack Dorsey, former CEO of Twitter, donated \$18 million to help the initiative.

California has become the epicentre of the movement. The Los Angeles programme, funded

primarily by the city, benefits 3,200 people who have at least one child, as well as an annual income below the federal poverty level.

Several cities have moved ahead with efforts using private money: Oakland pledged to give 600 low-income families \$500 for 18 months, and in San Diego, some families with young children will get \$500 a month for two years.

Last year, the state set aside \$35 million over five years for cities to carry out pilot programmes, which can use different criteria, including income level, people leaving the foster care system and residence in low-income neighbourhoods. An application process for municipalities to tap into those funds is underway.

Beyond California, 300 Atlanta residents who live below the federal poverty level are receiving \$500 a month for a year, and in Minneapolis, 200 residents from designated low-income neighbourhoods will receive \$500 a month for two years.

This fall, 260 people living in motels or emergency shelters in Denver will receive a \$6,500 payment and will get an additional \$500 a month for 11 months, with payments planned for 560 more people.

Michael Tubbs, who as the mayor of Stockton, California, put in place one of the country’s first guaranteed income programmes in 2019, notes that these payments are not meant to be a sole means of income but aim to provide a buffer for people to break the cycle of poverty. Tubbs sees the programmes as crucial tools in achieving racial justice for Black people and Latinos.

“The ways in which racism and capitalism have intersected to steal wealth from some communities” he said, “creates the disparities we see today.” Damon Jones, an economics professor at the University of Chicago, who has studied such programmes, noted that unrestricted cash was used broadly by the federal government to

stem the economic devastation of Covid-19.

“Policymakers were surprisingly open to this idea following the onset of the pandemic,” Jones said. Now the emergency aid programmes have largely lapsed, ending what for some was a lifeline. Opponents argue that guaranteed income programmes are too expensive and are counterproductive.

Oren Cass, executive director of American Compass, a conservative-leaning think tank, said the case against guaranteed income was not that people “receiving random windfalls can’t benefit from them — in at least some cases, they can and do.”

“It’s that a permanent and society wide system to provide for everyone would destroy fundamental elements of the social contract and create the wrong incentives for people as they make choices about their life’s course,” he said. “You can’t pilot that.”

— The New York Times

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربيت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds

لوگو Logo

شوبين جفت Shopping gift

GET 20 OMR ر.ع. with every purchase of TallyPrime single user

Contact: Guruprasad +968 79248644, 98753781
Email: guru.prasad@asiasolutions.net
https://www.asiasolutions.net

Tally POWER OF SIMPLICITY
TALLY FOR VAT ASIA SOLUTIONS

OMAN DAILY Observer Classified Section

MONDAY SEPTEMBER 12, 2022 SAFAR 15, 1444 AH

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi 95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

WORLDWIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO
PACKING & SHIFTING SERVICE
WAREHOUSE FACILITY

www.pcsinternational.co.in

PCS CARGO
Prompt Cargo Services LLC

TOLL FREE 800 22822

Head Office
AL GHUBRA
Near Makkah Hypermarket
91 787 812
91 787 814

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: 97239696 95355638

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

HOTEL FOR RENT/SALE

PRIME LOCATION IN QURUM HEIGHTS

LUXURY HOTEL

7 STORIED BUILDING

Contact Nos. : 99643760/92192020

ACCOUNTS OUTSOURCING

Outsource your accounts to highly qualified professionals having 25 years of experience in the field of Trading, Contracting & Construction.

Contact: 99092585

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN, male, 16 year's experience building caretaker and office boy, valid Oman driving licence, looking for job. Contact 78688105.

INDIAN finance manager, M com 20 years experience. Good experience in Mis reports, budgets, tax and banking. NOC available. GSM 95392251.

INDIAN male 48 years M Com 15 years experience in managerial positions in finance and accounts in Oman. Looking to join managerial positions. Ready to move to any GCC countries. DL and NOC available. GSM 95392251.

CMA qualified finance professional, Indian male with 21+ years of wide ranging managerial experience in budgeting costing, financial analysis & reporting, cash flows, banking & auditing in major manufacturing, contracting, FMCG & hospitality companies in Oman, available to join immediately with local NOC & valid Oman driving licence. Can reach me on 94839479

QAQC Engineer with 12 years GCC & Oman experience. Valid Oman D/L, seeking job. Min salary: RO 850+ Contact: 93821867.

INDIAN youth experienced in Marketing & HR, Start-up Ventures, Online advertising, with a MBA seeking suitable placement. Immediate availability. Connect: +968 77427494

SIT. WANTED

INDIAN female (M Tech Civil Structural Engineering) having 7 years experience as Quantity Surveyor cum Quality Control Engineer, looking for suitable position. Contact: 96154505.

INDIAN male graduate Executive Secretary/ Stenography/ Oman DL and Muscat experience available. Contact: 79256679.

GENERAL manager with 16+ years experience in Oman, MBA — BE, seeks suitable placement. Contact: 94008034.

INDIAN Female, MCom, Good experience in VAT, payroll, Inventory, Book keeping until finalisation. Seeking suitable position and available for join immediately. Contact. 96974566

PLANNING engineer, PMP. Indian male Civil Eng. Around 10 years experience in construction projects. Softwares: Primavera P6, MS Office, ERP, having Oman driving licence. Ready to join, email: engineer4planning@gmail.com, Call: 78002582.

FOR RENT

FLATS 2bhk and 1 bhk in Mumtaz. Contact 99341138 and 90991079

FIRST FLOOR HOUSE: 3 spacious bedrooms, 3 toilets, 1 spacious hall, kitchen, with reserved parking shade. 350 metres far away from the beach. 18th November Street, North Al Ghubra, behind Automatic Restaurant. Contact No: 92433668

FLATS, 2BHK in Ghubra near Indian School. 99341138/ 90991079.

A LARGE apartment in Darsait, 5 bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, a hall and a balcony with sea view. Rent RO 260 per month. T: 99315986

BUILDING of 1.500 sqm 3 stories, accommodation, store and office at Misfa. 99432177, 99010964.

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

مجمع السلامة الطبيه الحديث modern Al Salama Polyclinic

د. نورا بركات DR. NORA BARAKAT MD, MS
DERMATOLOGY AND AESTHETICS MEDICINE SPECIALIST

CONSULTATION AVAILABLE SAT TO WED 10AM TO 6PM THU 9AM TO 2PM

CONTACT US
TOLL FREE +968 24451726 - +968 79235354
AL MARJAN (DEAR TRAFFIC SIGNAL) - SUQUAT OF OMAN
E: ALSALAMAMANGMAIL.COM

EMERGENCY NO +968 94612100

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: 99639264

سماء الخضراء للتجارة SAMA AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: 24501568, 24502479 • Fax: 24503566

Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

URGENT REQUIREMENT

1. INFRASTRUCTURE ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Road, Sewage, Pipeline, Telecom Networking, Electrical works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should have worked with MOTC, Municipalities, Madayan and other related Govt. Bodies.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be willing to lead team of qualified engineers.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with qualifications in Mechanical Engineering will be an added advantage.
- Should have 25 years of work experience.

2. PROJECT ENGINEER - 1 No.

- Candidate should have experience in Construction of Roads and other civil works in the Sultanate of Oman.
- Should be able to liaise with the Govt. Authorities.
- Should be a qualified Civil Engineer with 15 years of work experience.

Candidates holding NOC/ Transfer availability preferred.
Right Salary for Right Candidate.

Interested candidates may forward their CV & Expectations etc by Email : reachhr2022@gmail.com

Now get news on the go

To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp <your name> to 96473232

Saham Ayurvedic Hospital
Al Kishda, Saham, Sohar

AYURVEDA AT ITS BEST!

Saham Ayurvedic Clinic
Bait Al Reem, Al Khuwair, Muscat

GCC'S FIRST IN-PATIENT AYURVEDIC HOSPITAL
AYURVEDA | REHABILITATION | PHYSIOTHERAPY | SPEECH THERAPY | YOGA

26721707 (HOSPITAL) 97000533 (HOSPITAL)
24403783 (CLINIC) 99230005 (CLINIC)

WWW.SAHAMAYURHOSPITAL.COM
INFO@SAHAMAYURHOSPITAL.COM

LAMASAT BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Accounting Services, VAT and Consultancy Services

Contact: 24571454 GSM: 95392251

MODERN GATEWAY SOLUTIONS LLC

Location: Ruwi Bus Station
Tel.: +968 24706951, Mobile: +968 96210055
E-mail: moderngatewayolutions@gmail.com

Services: Laptop Repair • Desktop Repair • Printer Repair
CCTV Installation • Annual Maintenance Contracts

النعماني للشحن AL NAMANI CARGO
DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE

WORLD WIDE DOOR TO DOOR CARGO

INDIA • BANGLADESH
NEPAL • SRILANKA • INDONESIA
PHILIPPINES • AFRICA • EUROPE
USA • ALL GCC

TOLL FREE NUMBER 80066766
www.alnamanicargo.com

FREE PICK UP 24/7
Branches: Ruwi, Hamriya, Ghala, Seeb, Barka, Suwaili, Sohar

SERVICES

AUTOCAD/ REVIT ARCH MEP, part/full- time. Contact WhatsApp: 79037728.

AL SUMRI AC maintenance. We are ready to repair and install all types of Air-Conditioner within Muscat Governorate. 94301888.

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

Please Contact our Team

95210257

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.om

@omanobserver





Muscat.. a shining jewel among cities

With the advent of the winter season, Muscat is getting prepared for some exceptional weather attracting all the cultural events and tourists from around the world. Being the warmest city in the region, the moments to be lived in the nights of Muscat will make a wonderful memory for any visitor.

Reflecting the old style of architecture, some buildings in Muscat show the authenticity of the past while others follow the modern style keeping pace with the rest of the world.

In the heart of Muscat, the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque shines among the most important landmarks in the city. The Mosque contains a library that is known as an important source of knowledge and research for students.

Many researchers and students visit the library daily to benefit from references and

resources. In turn, the library provides all services to reviewers and a calm atmosphere for reading and reviewing.

On the other hand, the experience of the heritage markets in Muscat seems different, as the fragrance of Omani frankincense is scattered, scenting the corners of the place, and the voices of sellers rise to attract buyers amid an active purchasing movement like the case is in Muttrah Souq. Muscat has undergone many development operations for the Souq in different stages to make it a vibrant commercial oasis.

On Sultan Qaboos Street, the Royal Opera House Muscat is one of the finest cultural and artistic centres featuring the grandeur of Omani castles; An enriching cultural and artistic experience with a theatre that matches the largest theatres in the world. It also includes a shopping centre that contains many restaurants and international brands, and

gardens designed in a unique style that gives the visitor a unique visual enjoyment.

The Sea of Oman, whose waves wash the golden sands of Muscat's beaches back and forth, tells the old stories of this ancient city. A visitor to Bandar Al Rawdhah can experience the silence of the night in Muscat through a cruise accompanied only by the stars up in the sky. The silence in the middle resembles the silent positions and the wisdom of Omani politics.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism is working to make the winter tourist season exceptional, especially with the warm weather that characterises the Sultanate of Oman compared to other countries in the region, as well as the diversity of terrain, which adds more beauty. The ministry aims to stimulate the tourism movement and raise the occupancy rate of hotel establishments.

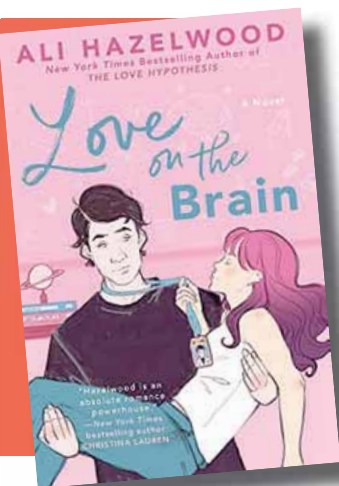


READ

LOVE ON THE BRAIN

BY ALI HAZELWOOD

The Washington Post columnist describes Republican actions between the signing of the Contract With America and the January 6 insurrection.



VENICE FILM FEST

(From L) Iranian Kurdish actor Navid Mohammadzadeh, Iranian director Vahid Jallilvand and Iranian-Georgian actress Diana Habibi arrived for the screening of the film "Shab, Dakheli, Divar" (Beyond The Wall) presented in the Venezia 79 competition as part of the 79th Venice International Film Festival at Lido di Venezia in Venice, Italy. — AFP



FOR WOMEN

Parts of the exhibition "50 Queens" at Kongens Nytorv in Copenhagen, Denmark. Fifty white pedestals without statues have been erected in Copenhagen to draw attention to the lack of historical women represented in the public domain in Denmark. The pillars are statue-less to emphasise the lack of recognition for women, despite Denmark — like the rest of Scandinavia — being a bastion of feminism. — AFP





Low-Cook Lifestyle

IT'S SO HOT, and I feel so lazy. I recently moved out of my apartment of six years, and I've been house-sitting until I find the perfect place. It's been glorious to dote on my friends' plants and test out neighbourhoods, but I'm never quite comfortable using another person's kitchen as intensely as I would my own. So I've been living a low-cook lifestyle. I can't recommend it enough. Outside my borrowed kitchens, there's been fabulous onigiri from a nearby deli, gorgeous pizza and the best pasta. Still, a woman can't live on takeout alone. (No matter how hard she tries.) The recipes below are all perfect for the temperatures (high) and my energy level (low).

SHEET-PAN FETA WITH CHICKPEAS AND TOMATOES
In a spread of Greek appetizers, or meze, there's often a warm feta dish like bouyiourdi (baked feta with tomato and hot peppers) or a saganaki (fried cheese). This recipe combines elements of these two classic appetizers into a sheet-pan meal. Softened feta provides a salty, creamy counterpoint to sweet, juicy tomatoes and chickpeas that are sticky from honey and spicy from dried chile. Try this version, then riff wildly: Switch out tomatoes for mini peppers, olives, dates or cauliflower. Swap the hot honey for anchovies, harissa, smoked paprika or turmeric. Eat with pita, grains, salad greens, hummus or yogurt.

By Ali Slagle
Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 40 minutes

Ingredients:
3 cups cooked chickpeas (homemade or two 15-ounce cans), drained, rinsed and shaken dry
2 pints (16 to 20 ounces) cherry or Sungold tomatoes
1 shallot, thinly sliced
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons honey
1 teaspoon mild chile flakes (like gochugaru) or 1/2 teaspoon red-pepper flakes
Kosher salt (such as Diamond Crystal)
2 (6- to 8-ounce) blocks of feta (see tip), sliced 1-inch-thick

Preparation:
1. Heat the oven to 400 degrees. On a baking sheet, stir together the chickpeas, tomatoes, shallot, olive oil, honey and chile flakes. Season with salt, then spread in an even layer. Arrange the feta among the chickpeas. Roast until the feta and tomatoes are soft and the chickpeas are golden brown, 30 to 35 minutes (no need to stir). Eat right away. (The feta will harden as it cools; reheat leftovers.)

TIP: Avoid feta made with cow's milk, which does not have enough fat to withstand roasting.

CHEESY KIMCHI NOODLES
Instant ramen ranks highly among

comfort foods because it can be quickly prepared and those little seasoning packets provide lots of flavour with minimal effort. No packets are used in this recipe, but the addition of gooeey, melted Cheddar and funky fermented kimchi makes the dish even more satisfying. Sautéed scallions and garlic balance out the spicy Sriracha, soy and sesame sauce, while the runny yolk from a crispy fried egg adds richness and mellows the spice. The cheese becomes sticky as it cools, so these noodles are best served immedi-



ately while still warm and glossy.

By Lara Lee
Yield: 2 servings
Total time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:
For the noodles:
6 ounces dried instant noodles (see tip)
1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil, plus more for coating cooked noodles
2 eggs
5 scallions, thinly sliced on the diagonal (reserve 1 tablespoon for garnish)
1/2 (packed) cup kimchi, sliced
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 tablespoon black (or white) sesame seeds, plus more for garnish
1/2 cup grated cheddar
For the sauce:
2 tablespoons Sriracha
1 to 2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 tablespoon Shaoxing wine

Preparation:
1. Bring a medium saucepan of water to a boil over high. Add the noodles and cook according to the package instructions until tender but still springy, about 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a colander and rinse in cold water until cool, then toss with a splash of canola oil to prevent the noodles

from sticking together. Set cooked noodles aside.
2. Meanwhile, prepare the sauce: In a small bowl, whisk the Sriracha, soy sauce, sesame oil and Shaoxing wine; set aside.
3. Set a medium non-stick skillet over high heat. Add 1/2 tablespoon canola oil and, once shimmering, crack in the eggs. Reduce the heat to medium and cook until the whites are done and the edges are browned, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate.
4. In the same skillet, heat the remaining 1

still warm. Note that if you don't have a grill, you can roast the fish in the oven.

By Melissa Clark
Yield: 4 servings
Total time: 30 minutes

Ingredients:
2 limes
2 small fresh red or green chiles or 1 large one, thinly sliced, seeds removed if you like
1 shallot (or 2 scallions, or 2 tablespoons red onion), thinly sliced
2 tablespoons fish sauce
Kosher salt
Pinch of sugar
1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil or grapeseed oil, plus more for brushing
1 1/4 pounds salmon fillet, preferably 1 large centre-cut piece
8 cups salad greens, such as Little Gem, bibb or Boston lettuce
1 cup mixed soft herbs (such as cilantro, mint and basil), leaves and tender stems
1 cup thinly sliced radishes, cucumbers or both (optional)

Preparation:
1. Light the grill for indirect heat, or heat the oven to 450 degrees.
2. As the grill or oven heat up, make the dressing: Halve 1 lime, and squeeze its juice into a small bowl. Add the chile slices, half of the sliced shallot (save the rest for serving), the fish sauce and a pinch each salt and sugar. Let sit for 1 minute to dissolve the salt, then whisk in the olive oil. It won't emulsify, so mix again before using.
3. Brush the salmon with oil, and place it in a grilling basket if you have one. Cook over the indirect (unlit) side of the grill, for 2 to 5 minutes per side, depending on how hot the grill is and how thick the salmon is. Note that individual fillets will cook faster than a single large piece. Check the salmon often. (Alternatively, roast the salmon on a baking sheet in the oven, until just cooked to taste, 7 to 12 minutes; you don't have to flip it.)
4. As the salmon cooks, halve the other lime. Brush the cut sides with olive oil and grill, cut-side down, over direct heat until charred, about 1 minute. If using the oven, throw the halves, cut-side up, on the roasting pan with the salmon. They won't char, but they will cook and mellow in flavour, which is the aim.
5. When the salmon is cooked, transfer it to a plate and spoon some dressing over it. Let it cool slightly, then break up the fish into large chunks.
6. Place greens, remaining shallots, herbs, and radishes or cucumber, if using, in a large shallow bowl or on a platter, and add a little more of the dressing. Squeeze some of the juice from a charred lime half over it and drizzle with a little olive oil. Toss and taste, adding lime juice, olive oil or salt as needed.
7. Top with the salmon chunks and drizzle with more (or all) of the dressing. Serve with the remaining charred lime half on the side for squeezing. — **NYT**

GRILLED SALMON SALAD WITH LIME, CHILES AND HERBS
Made of soft, supple salmon; crisp lettuces and vegetables; and a very savoury dressing run through with chiles and lime, this light salad is tangy and full of flavour. The dressing, based on nuoc cham, a traditional Vietnamese dipping sauce, has just enough fish sauce to give it depth and pungency without overpowering the brightness of the lime. You can substitute other fish, or even chicken, for the salmon. Just adjust the grilling time as needed, and toss with the dressing while

CHANGING WORLD

Octopuses Do Not Have Backbones — or Rights



LAB RATS HAVE rights. Before researchers in the United States can experiment on the animals, they need approval from committees that ensure they follow federal regulations for housing and handling the creatures humanely. The same is true of scientists working with mice, monkeys, fish or finches. These protected animals share one thing in common: a backbone. But invertebrates in research labs, including worms and bees or cephalopods like squid and octopuses, do not receive the same protections from the federal government. As researchers are more often working with cephalopods to answer questions in neuroscience and other fields, the matter of whether they are treating the animals humanely is becoming more pressing. Governments in Europe and Australia have written these smart, spineless animals into their laws. But in the United States, "If you were in a research setting, and you wanted to buy some octopuses and do whatever you wanted to do with them, there is no regulatory oversight to stop you," said Robyn Crook, a neuroscientist at San Francisco State University. That is not to say cephalopod research is the wild west. US research institutions are increasingly opting to subject their cephalopod studies to the same approval process as experiments on mice or other vertebrates. But the lack of cephalopod care standards to guide their decisions, combined with the lack of federal oversight to back them up, reflects how rules and laws are lagging behind scientific understanding of these animals' complex inner lives. Like a lab rat, an octopus can learn to navigate a maze. Octopuses can also perform clever feats that rats cannot, such as disguising themselves as rocks and snakes, breaking out of their tanks or hiding inside coconut shells. In 2021, Alexandra Schnell, a biologist at the University of Cambridge, and others found that cuttlefish can pass a version of the marshmallow test, a famous measure of self-control in human psychology. The cephalopods resisted eating a piece of prawn for as long as two minutes to earn an even better snack (a live shrimp). Unlike humans — whose intelligence is, as it were, all in their heads — octopuses carry the bulk of their nervous system in their arms. Their suckers



do not just grab onto things, they feel and taste them, too. "It's like if your hands were coated with tongues," said Christine Huffard, a biologist at the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute. In a paper published in July, Huffard and Peter Morse, of James Cook University in Australia, showed that male blue-ringed octopuses could use touch to recognise females they had already mated with. After bumping into a former mate, the males fled, perhaps to avoid being eaten. Such research suggests that octopuses and other cephalopods are smart and sensitive. But do they feel pain like we do? It is not just a hypothetical concern. Some research with cephalopods involves potentially painful surgeries, such as amputating an octopus's arm. We cannot simply ask them whether it hurts, though. "Whether or not pain experience exists in animals outside vertebrates is quite a controversial proposition," Crook said. In a 2021 paper, she showed that octopuses that had received an injection of acetic acid had stroked the wound with their beaks and had avoided a chamber where they had stayed after receiving the injection. But the octopuses had liked being in a chamber where they had experienced a numbing injection after the first one. Researchers use a similar test in rodents to judge whether drugs cause them pain. "We suggest that octopuses feel, and are capable of feeling, the same thing," Crook said. In another 2021 paper, she and co-authors studied the nerve activity of octopuses and cuttlefish that had been anaesthetised — or so the scientists thought. They had dipped the animals in magnesium chloride to anaesthetise them, a common lab procedure. When an animal stopped moving and turned white, scientists had assumed it could not feel anything and would not be stressed by handling. But electrode recordings showed that for several minutes after becoming unresponsive, the cephalopod could still feel experimenters touching its body. Crook said the finding immediately changed how researchers in her lab anaesthetised octopuses. Now, they wait as long as 20 extra minutes to make sure the animals will not feel anything. She hopes other labs have changed their practices, too. — **NYT**



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

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



khalidalmawali_
Mirbat

Follow

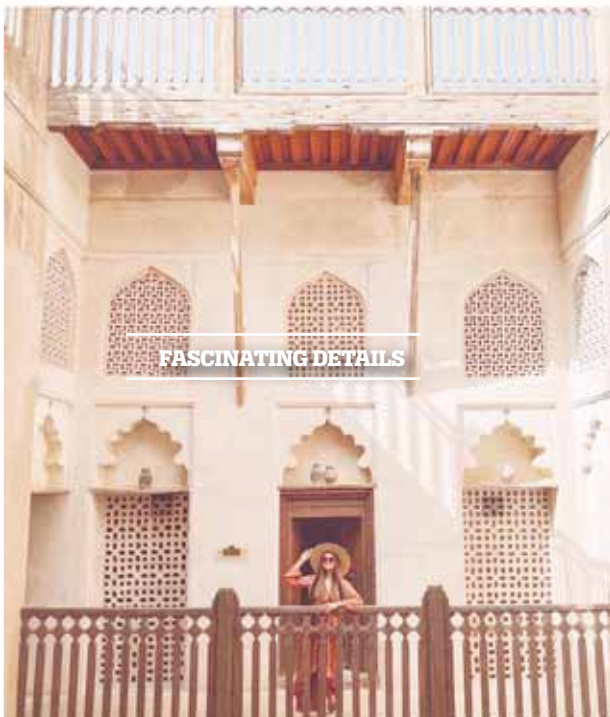


LIGHT IT UP



mgypsea
Jabreen Castle

Follow



FASCINATING DETAILS



sahar.al3mri
Bar Al Hikman

Follow



A NEW ADVENTURE

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



AROUND THE WORLD

CHANGING WORLD

Turkish scorpion farmer milks arachnids for their expensive venom



THOUSANDS OF SCORPIONS, housed in transparent plastic boxes, line the walls of a breeding laboratory in Turkey's southeastern Sanliurfa province, waiting for personnel to milk their expensive venom used to produce medicine.

Using a pair of tweezers and tongs, lab employees remove the scorpions from the boxes and wait as they squeeze a tiny drop of venom from their needles into a receptacle. The venom is then frozen and turned into powder before it is sold.

A single scorpion produces about two milligrams of venom, and the lab is able to obtain



about two grams of venom daily, said Metin Orenler, the owner of the scorpion farm.

Orenler's farm, which opened in 2020, now has around 20,000 scorpions of the *Androctonus Turkienensis* species, which was identified as a distinct type in an article published in a scorpology journal in 2021.

"We both breed the scorpions themselves and also milk them," Orenler said. "We freeze the venom that we obtain as a result of the milking we do, then we turn it into powder and sell them to Europe."

The venom, which is exported to France, the United Kingdom, Germany and Switzerland, is used to produce cosmetics, painkillers and antibiotics, Orenler said, adding that one litre of the venom is worth \$10 million. — Reuters

HEALTH & WELLNESS

The Seeds Strike Back



CHIA SEEDS ARE making a comeback — again.

They are sprouting up on store shelves and packed into puddings and pretzels and even jams. According to forecasts from Grand View Research, a firm that tracks the food industry, the market for chia seeds is expected to grow by more than 22% per year from 2019 to 2025.

Such is the life cycle of the chia seed — always popping up in one trend or another. The seeds have long been a staple in Latin America and were even offered to Aztec gods during religious ceremonies, but every generation in America seems to think they have discovered them for the first time, said Beth Czerwony, a registered dietitian with the Cleveland Clinic's Center for Human Nutrition.

During the last 40 years, chia has maintained a fairly constant presence in the public consciousness. They appeared as the furry plant Chia Pets in the late 1970s, and by the '90s, health food companies started marketing them as a nutritional powerhouse. Over the past decade in particular, the tiny seeds have garnered an outsized reputation: as a purported hack for weight loss, a protein supplement and a staple of the ultrahealthy.

Now, thanks in part to social media, chia seeds are again on many people's minds. Some TikTok users tout the purported benefits of an "internal shower" — a viral trend that involves drinking a supposedly cleansing sludge of chia seeds, water and lemon to relieve constipation and aid with weight loss. The hashtag #internalshower has been viewed more than 100 million times.

"When it was trendy in the early 2000s, the kids talking about it now might not have even been born," Czerwony said. "Everything old comes back."

We asked nutritionists and

doctors if the latest chia craze lives up to its healthy hype.

Are chia seeds really that good for you?

Chia seeds are not a magic conduit to weight loss or a cure for disease, but they are "incredibly healthy as a natural food source," said Dr. Melinda Ring, an integrative medicine specialist at Northwestern Medicine.

As with anything, though, you have to be careful to not overdo it, said Dr. Lisa Ganjhu, an associate professor at the New York University Grossman School of Medicine who specializes in gastroenterology. She warned against eating the seeds straight, which can upset digestion. Instead, soak them in water or plant-based milk for several hours until they expand to a gelatinous slime, or add ground chia seeds to baked goods. You can also swirl them into a smoothie, where they can absorb the liquid, or else mix them into a pudding.

If you eat too many chia seeds — say, several pounds in a sitting — you run the risk of bloating, cramping, discomfort and diarrhoea, she said.

What are the health benefits of chia seeds?

A serving of chia seeds — roughly 2 tablespoons — will not transform your entire diet or replace the vitamins you should be getting from vegetables. But doctors and dietitians point to a few key health benefits:

— THEY ARE HIGH IN FATTY ACIDS.

Chia seeds contain remarkably high levels of an omega-3 essential fatty acid known as alpha-linolenic acid, or ALA. You can only get these acids from your diet, Ring said, and eating foods that are rich in ALAs can help prevent heart disease. In fact, the seeds are one of the richest plant sources of omega-3 fatty acids; one serving has more than twice the daily amount of ALA rec-

ommended by the National Institutes of Health.

— THEY HAVE LOTS OF FIBER.

Two tablespoons of chia seeds have around 10 grams of dietary fiber — more than twice that of an apple. Fiber-rich foods promote gut health by encouraging bowel movements — hence, the thought behind the "internal shower." But Ganjhu said she thinks of chia seeds as more of an "internal Brillo pad."

"It will definitely push things through," she said.

The fiber in chia seeds can also keep you fuller for longer, especially if you soak the seeds first. The soft outer layer that coats seeds softens up and congeals into a gel-like form, which can further expand in your stomach, Czerwony said.

— THEY CONTAIN ANTIOXIDANTS.

Chia seeds are high in several potential antioxidants, which can help break down free radicals that damage our cells, Czerwony said. While it is possible to have too many antioxidants, doctors say most people would benefit from more in their diets, because free radicals can build up in the body over time, leading to — among other problems — plaque formations in the heart.

— THEY ARE A HANDY WORK-AROUND TO DIETARY RESTRICTIONS.

Czerwony said she has seen patients use chia seeds, which are gluten-free and vegan, as an egg substitute, using the similar consistency to bake pancakes and breads.

And chia seeds are a good source of protein, although considerably less so than soybeans or quinoa, Ring said, which makes them an ideal supplement for vegetarian diets or for anyone looking to lower their meat intake.

"It's a good trend — it's healthy," Czerwony said. "It's not going to hurt you." — NYT

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Without God

BEING FROM the Gulf and going through its education system meant two things: 1) The words Darwinism and Evolution were merely mentioned in our biology syllabus but were never taught as it opposed creationism that we Muslims believed in. 2) Philosophy was something we heard of but never studied. Whenever I wondered the reason behind never having philosophy taught in school, the answer I always got from my family was simple: it led to atheism (names were amply provided of people we know who majored in it at university and returned as self-proclaimed atheists). Going abroad to continue my higher studies meant venturing into unfamiliar grounds.

There, I was first exposed to evolution theory when doing my foundation level at university. I laughed the first time I saw the diagram of a fish turning into a reptile and then into a human. I rolled my eyes when an argument broke between my atheist physics teacher and my religious Saudi friend about creationism. I gasped in horror when my Tunisian friend told me that Philosophy was a subject taught in their schools and exclaimed: "And none of you became atheist?"

It was also my first time to answer the door for a Jehovah Witness and given a colourful pamphlet that had a lamb and a lion sitting together in a green meadow, before wondering loudly what was this children's story about?

However, I was lucky to be raised by a father who was open-minded and encouraged us to forge long-lasting friendships with people from different cultures without questioning their creeds. This meant having European friends who were atheists yet-out of respect- beliefs were never discussed between us although I had a few burning questions in mind: with the lack of religion, where does their moral system stems from?

If they're non-believers, why use the words God and Jesus when expressing astonishment? Some of the answers I found in philosophy, others in sociology and hu-

man behaviour books.

Lately, I came across a book called: Without God written by an American pastor called Zachary Broom in 2019. The book is a crash course for anyone who's interested in learning about Western ideologies. Historically speaking, Atheism started in ancient Greece and was revived centuries later by philosophers who criticised Christianity such as Hobbes, Hume, and Voltaire.

The book covers many philosophical arguments that atheists had made such as the problem of evil and the source of morality as well as scientific ones from Darwinism to Big Bang theory. These arguments established by classical and modern-day atheists such as Richard Dawkins are disputed by Christian apologists such as Ravi Zacharias and C.S Lewis (Yep! The same of author of The Chronicles of Narnia).

What I enjoyed most while reading this book is the balance that Broom succeeds in finding so that the book doesn't feel overwhelmingly religious, which makes it accessible to people from different creeds although it has quotes and stories from the Bible. The smooth narrative and chapters arrangement helps in moving from one concept to another without much confusion.

Another positive aspect of the book is that the author shares his own experiences, especially when it comes to doubt that sometimes creep to the most faithful of us. The book doesn't offer any straightforward answers but confirms scepticism in all areas of life including religion and science. Its message is clear: there is no proof of anything in life, yet our choice of believing in any superpower is what brings us comfort, add meaning to our lives and guides our moral choices and behaviour. Without God is interesting, insightful, and subtly argued.

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

Hidden items found in Vermeer's famed 'Milkmaid' painting

EXPERTS FROM Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum said on Thursday they have found a hidden jug holder and basket in Dutch master Johannes Vermeer's famed painting "The Milkmaid" which he later painted over.

The 'startling' discoveries in the 17th century masterpiece shed new light on the technique of the enigmatic artist, ahead of the largest ever exhibition of Vermeer's work starting at the museum in 2023.

Advanced scanning technology revealed that beneath the plain white wall that makes the milkmaid's bright yellow and blue clothes stand out, Vermeer had originally painted extra details before changing his mind.

The resulting simplicity paved the way for later masterpieces like his iconic "Girl with a Pearl Earring", which will also form part of next year's landmark Vermeer show, researchers said.

"This reveals a new unexpected Vermeer, it's astonishing," Gregor Weber, head of fine arts and at the Rijksmuseum, told a news conference.

Vermeer's changes mean that the figure of the maid, seen in the painting pouring a stream of milk from an earthenware jug, "stands in front of us in a much more monumental way," he said.

Researchers knew from x-rays carried out around a decade ago that there was something hidden below the layers of paint in the artwork, which is believed to date from 1657-8, but they weren't sure what.

'TOO HECTIC'

One of the most significant new discoveries by the Rijksmuseum was that the artist had sketched out a wooden holder for jugs on the wall just behind the milkmaid's head.

Experts previously thought it might be a fireplace, but a new technique called Short Wavelength Infrared Reflectance clearly showed the details of the jugs and the wooden frame.

The technique, usually used for industrial inspections and for military purposes, produces "false colour" images in blue, although in reality it was in black paint.

Further research revealed that such a jug rack was mentioned in Vermeer's estate after his death, while a

model of a very similar holder can be seen in a 17th century dolls house in the Rijksmuseum.

"What we discovered with The Milkmaid is that she didn't at first have a very beautiful white wall behind her. No, there was a rack hanging with jars in it," Rijksmuseum General Director Taco Dibbits told AFP.

"One of the jars is now picked to make the milk pudding she's making. So that's one of the things that Vermeer then thought – this will make a composition that is too hectic, I'm going to paint it over."

Another key finding was that the previously-noticed shadow of some kind of basket could now be seen to be a "fire basket", woven from willow, which would typically be used to air clothes.

The basket was replaced by a much smaller foot stove complete with Delft blue tiles.

The researchers further discovered a "hastily applied" thick black line of paint underneath the milkmaid's left arm showing that Vermeer had apparently made a swift initial sketch.

'LESS IS MORE'

The uncovered sketches provide a crucial insight into the genius of Vermeer (1632-1675), since none of his drawings or studies remain.

Very little is known about Vermeer, who lived a life of modest means in the historic city of Delft during the Dutch "Golden Age" of painting.

The changes to "The Milkmaid" would be crucial for his later works, introducing a "motto of simplicity" involving blocks of colour and the use of light and shade.

"These steps had consequences for his whole work which will follow, he learned that less is more," Weber said.

The Rijksmuseum has used similar techniques to uncover the creative process behind Rembrandt's "The Night Watch" and Vermeer's "Girl with a Pearl Earring".

"You would think that these iconic paintings have no secrets for us any more," said Annelies van Loon, researcher from the Rijksmuseum and the Mauritshuis museum in The Hague.

The exhibition running from 10 February to June 4, 2023 will feature 27 of Vermeer's small lifetime production of some 35 paintings, gathered from museums around the world.

Dibbits said it was the "first and also the last time that so many Vermeer paintings could be gathered together".

Tickets go on sale on the Rijksmuseum website on Thursday. — AFP