

HM greets German President

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a cable of greetings to President Dr Frank-Walter Steinmeier of the Federal Republic of Germany on his country's National Day. In his cable, His Majesty the Sultan expressed his sincere sentiments and best wishes of good health and happiness to President Steinmeier. He also wished the people of Germany continuous progress and growth. — ONA



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KIPRUTO AND YEHUALAW TRIUMPH AT LONDON MARATHON



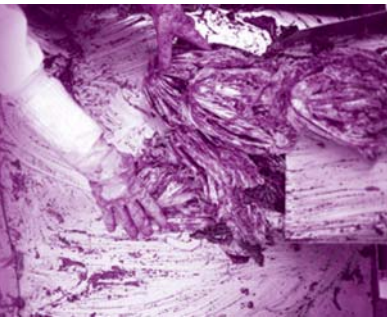
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SALALAH PORT TO INVEST \$66M TO SERVICE MEGA CONTAINERSHIPS



P20

TO TACKLE A KIMCHI CRISIS, SOUTH KOREA BANKS ON MASSIVE CABBAGE WAREHOUSES



MUSCAT

FIRST 'VNOTES' SURGERY PERFORMED

A team from the Royal Hospital's obstetrics and gynaecology department conducted Oman's first successful surgery using the new technique of 'Vnotes'. Dr Thuraya bint Rashid al Rawahiyah, Senior Consultant, Oncology Surgery, at the Royal Hospital, said that 'Vnotes' surgery has been used for uterus and ovary resection and is the latest technology in gynaecologic surgery using the body's natural openings, like the vagina.

SEE ALSO P5

JAKARTA

125 DEAD IN INDONESIA FOOTBALL STAMPEDE

At least 125 people died and hundreds more were injured after police fired tear gas to disperse rioting football fans in Indonesia, in one of the world's worst stadium tragedies. The disaster on Saturday night at the Kanjuruhan Stadium in Malang city prompted Indonesian President Joko Widodo to order the suspension of the top-flight Liga 1 competition pending a review. Most of the victims died of a lack of oxygen during a stampede after thousands of fans invaded the pitch as hosts Arema FC lost 3-2 to rival East Java club Persebaya Surabaya, police said. Authorities had earlier put the death toll at 175, but the police later revised the figure down to 125.

DETAILS ON P6

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PAKISTANI FARMERS STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE

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King of Jordan arrives on Tuesday



RELATIONS SET TO EXPLORE WIDER ECONOMIC HORIZONS

MUSCAT: King Abdallah II of the Kingdom of Jordan will begin an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman on Tuesday, according to a statement issued by the Diwan of Royal Court on Sunday.

The statement reads as follows: "Stemming from the well-established relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, King Abdallah II Ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will begin an official two-day visit to the Sultanate of Oman starting from Tuesday (October 4).

"The visit comes within the framework of cooperation and

coordination between the two leaderships to achieve further progress and growth that serve the two countries' peoples and meet their aspirations.

"During the visit, the two monarchs will exchange views and discuss matters on enhancing joint Arab action, besides touching on the regional and international developments.

"May the Almighty Allah bless the leaderships of the two countries with success for the welfare and prosperity of their peoples and the Arab and Muslim nations!"

— ONA

SEE ALSO P4

HM issues three Royal Decrees

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Sunday issued three Royal Decrees.

Royal Decree No 60/2022 on delegating climatic affairs specialisations to the Environment Authority from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Article (1) delegates climatic affairs specialisations to the Environment Authority from the Civil Aviation Authority, as per the annex attached to this Decree. Article (2) states that all allocations, assets, rights, obligations and holdings of climatic affairs shall be transferred from the Civil Aviation Authority to the Environment Authority.

Article (3) states that employees of the Civil Aviation Authority who are specialised in climatic affairs shall be transferred to the Environment Authority, along with their same financial grades.

Article (4) replaces the phrases 'Civil Aviation Authority' and 'Chairman of the Board of Directors of the

Article 1 of the Royal Decree delegates climatic affairs specialisations to the Environment Authority from the Civil Aviation Authority, as per the annex attached to the Decree

Civil Aviation Authority', and 'Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority', wherever they might occur in laws and Royal Decrees related to climatic affairs with the phrases 'Environment Authority' and 'Chairman of the Environment Authority', as per prevailing circumstances.

Article (5) cancels the annex of climatic affairs specialisations attached to the Royal Decree No 85/2020 and cancels all that contradicts this Decree or contravenes its provisions.

Article (6) says that this

Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its data of issue.

Royal Decree No 61/2022 endorses Oman's joining the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Article (1) approves the Sultanate of Oman's joining the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, in accordance with the version attached to this Decree, subject to the reservation about the provisions of clause (1) of Article (23) of the above-mentioned convention.

Article (2) instructs the departments concerned to deposit the aforementioned convention's Accession Document in accordance with its provisions, without prejudice to the above-mentioned reservation.

Article (3) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced on its date of issue.

TURN TO P3

HIS MAJESTY SENDS WRITTEN MESSAGE TO QATAR EMIR



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has sent a written message to Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, dealing with the advanced, fraternal relations between the two countries and their peoples. The message was handed over by Najib bin Yahya al Balushi, Oman's Ambassador to Qatar, when he was received in Doha on Sunday by Shaikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar. The two sides discussed several matters of common interest during the meeting. — ONA

Oman-UAE rail to promote trade and social cohesion

DUBAI: The joint venture's Board of Directors of Oman Rail and Etihad Rail held its first meeting here on Sunday.

The inaugural meeting is held two days after the signing ceremony of the joint venture agreement which took place during the visit of Shaikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan, President of the United

Arab Emirates, to the Sultanate of Oman.

NEW PROSPECTS

The two countries seek to create new prospects in the infrastructure, transport, and logistics industries by connecting the two countries via rail in a manner that promotes trade and social cohesion.



During the meeting, the Board of Directors discussed the implementation plans, including technical studies and architectural designs, as well as environmental studies for routes, the business model and the commercial affairs of the joint venture. Emphasis was placed on the importance of fast tracking the execution of the project.

TURN TO P3

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HM issues Royal Decrees

FROM PAGE 1

Royal Decree No 62/2022 conducts placements and appointments in the diplomatic corps.

Article (1) transfers the following to the General Diwan of the Foreign Ministry: Yousef bin Issa bin Ali al Zedjali, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Russian Federation; Shaikh Juma bin Hamdan bin Hassan Al Malik al Shihhi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; Shaikh Ahmed bin Hashil bin Rashid al Maskari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Brunei Darussalam; Kifaya bint Khamis bin Miyah al Raeesiyah, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Spain; Munthir bin Mahfoudh bin Salim al Manthri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of the Philippines; Dr Ahmed bin Salim bin Mohammed BaOmar, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Italian Republic; Shaikh Hamad bin Saif bin Abdulaziz al Rawahi, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of India; Mubarak bin Salim bin Ali al Zakwani, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of South Africa; Eng Imad bin Hamoud bin Salim al Abri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Vietnam; Yousef bin Said bin Mohammed al Amri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Federal Republic of Germany.

Article (2) transfers Bad bin Mohammed bin Badr al Manthri, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Lebanese Republic, and appoints him as Oman's Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It also transfers HH Sayyid Nizar bin Al Julanda bin Majid al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Indonesia, and appoints him as Oman's Ambassador to the Italian Republic.

Article (3) appoints Maithaa bint

Saif bin Majid al Mahrouqiyah as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Germany; Talal bin Sulaiman bin Habib al Rahbi as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Federative Republic of Brazil; Hilal bin Abdullah bin Ali al Sinani as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Tunisia and Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed bin Said al Saeedi, as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic.

Article (4) grants the following the designation of "Ambassador" and appoints them as stated below: Plenipotentiary Minister Abdulghafar bin Abdulkarim bin Issa al Balushi as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the People's Republic of Bangladesh; Plenipotentiary Minister Saif bin Nasser bin Rashid al Bada'ei as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria; Plenipotentiary Minister Ahmed bin Ali bin Said al Rashidi as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka; Plenipotentiary Minister Mahmoud bin Hamad bin Nasser al Hassani as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Swiss Confederation; Adviser Mohammed bin Abdullah bin Awadh al Nahdi as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Republic of Cyprus; Adviser Hamoud bin Salim bin Abdullah al Tuwayah as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Russian Federation; Adviser Irma bint Said bin Mohammed al Kathiriyah as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam; Adviser Ru'aa bint Issa bin Ashraf al Zedjaliyah as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium; Adviser Sayyid Faisal bin Harib bin Hamad al Busaidy as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain; Adviser Omar bin Said bin Omar al Kathiri as the Sultanate of Oman's Ambassador to the Kingdom of Spain.

Article (5) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

Free vehicle inspection for manufacturing defects



AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCTOBER 2

Every year the number of vehicles increases on the roads in the Sultanate of Oman. Almost all major international carmakers have their products in the market, and due to the large inflow, there are cases of vehicles with manufacturing defects that need to be recalled immediately to avoid accidents and save precious lives.

To minimise the impact of vehicles with manufacturing defects on roads, there is a move to offer free vehicle inspection.

'Not possible to delay' a free inspection campaign has been launched to recall such vehicles. The Consumer Protection Authority has launched the initiative under the auspices of Dr Bakhait bin Ahmed al Mahri, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation for Higher Education, in the presence of Salim bin Ali al Hakmani, Chairman of the Consumer Protection Authority, and some senior government officials.

Not only in the Sultanate of Oman but the cases of manufacturing defective cars are reported worldwide. This prompted many countries to take legal, technical and supervisory measures to ensure the highest levels of accuracy in following up

The initiative will continue for a week, from October 2 to October 6, and consumers can register to book an appointment for the examination

on vehicles with manufacturing defects.

The Consumer Protection Authority launched an awareness programme, 'Recall that cannot be delayed' last August that aimed to familiarise employees in various divisions with the importance of recalling defective vehicles and to enhance their awareness of the need to follow up and respond to them due to its importance in maintaining the health and safety of its users from the potential dangers as a result that it has manufacturing defects.

In his comments earlier, Salim al Hakmani, Consumer Protection Authority Chairman, said; "This national campaign for the recall of vehicles comes within the framework of the continuous efforts undertaken by the Authority and its constant keenness to preserve the rights of consumers in line with quality and safety standards. It emphasises the existing cooperation with all parties concerned, agencies and supplier companies in the

local markets, to achieve the goals that guarantee the safety of all vehicles on the roads in the Sultanate of Oman."

The Consumer Protection Authority has registered about 9,192 vehicles with manufacturing defects. The defect may be in the driving system due to a snag in the electrical circuit of the steering wheel, defect in connecting the steering wheel, loosening of the steering column tension nut, oil leakage from the steering hose system, or potential danger may be the vehicle deviating from the correct lane and causing an accident.

The initiative is being implemented in cooperation with the National College of Automotive Technology, Amasco and OTE. This initiative will continue for a week, from October 2 to October 6, and consumers can register to book an appointment for the examination on the college's website. Vehicle companies targeted by the initiative on Honda, Subaru, Chevrolet, and Hyundai. Vehicles will be inspected at the National College of Automotive Technology from four to seven in the evening.

It aims to provide an opportunity for consumers to have their vehicles inspected by certified experts for free, answer their inquiries, and ascertain whether their vehicles are among the recalled vehicles.

Oman-UAE rail to promote trade, social cohesion

FROM PAGE 1

The Board also committed to adopting the highest global standards for security, safety, and sustainability throughout the development of the network, which will extend for 303 km, to provide safe and fast passenger transport and freight services.

The network will contribute to the growth of the two countries' national economies and will improve the efficiency of supply chains while facilitating cross-border trade by linking commercial ports to the railway network.

The Board of Directors comprises Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications, and Information Technology, Suhail Mohammed Faraj al Mazrouei, UAE Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Shaikh Nasser bin Sulaiman al Harthy, Acting Vice-President of Operations Affairs at Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Asyad Group, Said al Zaabi, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Etihad Rail Mobility, Eng Abdulrahman bin Salim al Hatmi, CEO of Asyad Group, and Eng Shadi Malak, CEO of Etihad Rail.

The Board members commended the wise leadership of the two countries for their unwavering support and strategic vision towards enhancing cooperation and joint action between the two countries across various fields. They also praised the



leadership's guidance and direction in the establishment of the joint venture to build and operate a railway network connecting Sohar Port with the UAE National Rail Network, as it is an extension of the longstanding collaboration of Oman and the UAE.

The Board of Directors also appointed Eng Ahmed al Hashemi as CEO of the company, and Eng Mohammed bin Zahran al Mahrouqi as Deputy CEO. Suhail Mohammed Faraj al Mazrouei, UAE Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, said that establishing the joint venture in line with both leaderships' directives for achieving sustainable development by elevating the transport and infrastructure sectors to higher levels, whilst supporting economic and commercial growth.

"The joint railway network will advance the land transport system between the two countries in line with the best-in-class criteria and standards, providing safe, reliable, and sustainable transportation,

which in turn, will further facilitate connectivity between industrial and commercial centres, and cement the longstanding social cohesion between the two countries."

Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, said: "The strategic initiative to develop a railway network between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates would cement the strong brotherly ties between the two countries and would also reflect their joint efforts to achieve social and economic integration."

"Through this partnership and the logistics progress it will bring about, various economic and trade activities that will reap several benefits, creating new opportunities and providing high-quality transport solutions that will contribute to establishing a connection between Sohar and the Free Zone, with vital economic and industrial zones in the UAE," he added.



Techno Plastic Industry takes immense pride in welcoming on board its new CEO, Mr Omar Ahmed Salim Qatan. With more than 40 years of experience, Mr Qatan is credited with managing, leading and overseeing the growth of some of the most renowned organisations in Oman and the last one is Oman Oil Market (SOAG). Techno Plastic wishes him the very best and firmly believes in his expertise to scale the company's growth and progress to newer heights in line with Oman Vision 2040.



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PURSUE THEIR
HIGHER EDUCATION
IN JORDAN, WITH
1,000 EXPECTED TO
GRADUATE DURING
THE ACADEMIC
YEAR 2022-2023

Oman, Jordan to deepen fraternal ties, strengthen cooperation in all fields

MUSCAT: Relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan assume significance due to their deep-rooted historical ties. These relations are set to accomplish more strategic goals under the two countries' wise leaderships of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdullah II of Jordan.

The high-profile talks scheduled to be held during the official visit of the Jordanian monarch to Oman, with effect from Tuesday this week, set a new milestone for bilateral cooperation and coordination on issues of common concern. The discussions are aimed to serve the interests of the two countries' peoples.

Since diplomatic exchange took

place in 1972, the two countries' stands have been identical in tackling regional and international issues. They endorsed dialogue as a successful means of ensuring international peace and security.

The two countries recently held a session of discussions in Amman where they affirmed their resolve to strengthen bilateral cooperation, as well as ways to enhance joint Arab action and address challenges. The visits exchanged by the two sides also contributed to upgrading the level of relations in various spheres, including the military aspect.

On the economic arena, statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) indicate that the volume of commercial exchange between

Oman and Jordan increased by 33.8% in 2021 to RO 61.8 million, compared to RO 46.2 million in 2020.

Statistics showed that Omani imports from Jordan in 2021 stood at RO 35.4 million, compared to RO 24.6 million in 2020, comprising a 43.8% increase. During the first six months of 2022, total Omani imports from Jordan stood at RO 6.7 million.

The volume of Omani exports to Jordan in 2021 grew by 22.4% to RO 26.4 million, compared to RO 21.6 million in 2020. During the first six months of 2022, total Omani exports to Jordan during the first six months of 2022 stood at RO 15.5 million.

The statistics showed that the

volume of Jordanian investments in Oman as at the end of 2021 stood at RO 230.4 million.

Cultural cooperation between Oman and Jordan covered a range of activities, including the signing of the cultural and educational accord in 1976 and the signing of executive programmes in the same fields between the two governments for the years 2002-2004.

The two sides also signed a number of agreements with civil society institutions, the last of which was a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Arab Thought Forum and the Omani Cultural Club.

The two countries also established the Omani Studies Unit at "Al al-Bayt University" in Jordan

in 1998, following a generous grant from the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

Cultural cooperation between Oman and Jordan also features in the form of intellectual and literary forums between the Omani and Jordanian writers. This is in addition to the two countries' shared activities during book fairs in Muscat and Amman.

As many as 3,500 Omani students pursue their higher education in Jordan.

The visit of King Abdullah II of Jordan to Oman will deepen the fraternal ties and strengthen commercial exchange and cooperation in the fields of tourism, scholarly and cultural specialisations. — **ONA**

Oman, Jordan relations based on brotherliness, common destiny

MUSCAT: Shaikh Hilal bin Marhoon al Maamari, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, has said that "the deep-rooted relations between the two countries earn a special significance under the wise leaderships of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and King Abdullah II of Jordan."

In a statement to Oman News Agency (ONA), the ambassador pointed out that Oman-Jordan relations lasted for decades and were further consolidated and developed during the reign of the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said and the late King Hussein bin Talal.

"Cooperation between the two countries was and is still tangible in educational, cultural and military spheres. This has been the outcome of the participation of the Jordanian community in Oman since the dawn of the blessed renaissance led by the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos," said Al Maamari, who valued the contribution of the Jordanian community to Oman's



development, notably in cultural, educational and media sectors.

"This relationship is developing and growing in all sectors, most significantly in the economic sector," said Al Maamari, who spoke about the availability of opportunities that can be utilised by the private sector on both sides, especially in the fields of investment, health, mining and tourism.

CULTURAL COOPERATION
Speaking about cultural cooperation between the two countries, the ambassador said, it

started upon the establishment of the Omani Studies Unit at "Al al-Bayt University" in Jordan. This is in addition to the two countries' organising joint programmes on the sidelines of exhibitions and cultural extravaganza and the exchange of visits by official and community delegations.

These events boost cultural communication, said the ambassador, who affirmed that the Omani literature is present in Jordanian festivals and universities. "We have seen poets and writers from both sides communicating via culture and literature platforms," the ambassador explained.

As many as 3,500 Omani students pursue their education in Jordan, with 1,000 expected to graduate during the Academic Year 2022-2023, said Al Maamari.

In a concluding note, the ambassador said that the forthcoming visit of King Abdullah II to Oman this week will have a positive impact at all levels, particularly in the economic arena, with chances to establish joint investment funds. — **ONA**

Jordan strives to cement ties with Oman, notably in economic spheres

MUSCAT: Amjad al Quhaiwi, Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the Sultanate of Oman, said that the two countries share model relations based on their deep-rooted historical ties.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, Al Quhaiwi pointed out that fraternal relations gain further strength and continuity under the wise leaderships of King Abdullah II of Jordan and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. Al Quhaiwi underscored the significance of ongoing coordination between the two countries on various regional and international issues, with the objective of unifying political visions in a manner that serves the interests of the two countries and the cause of Arab nation.

"Jordan views with optimism and confidence its relations with Oman during the reign of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik who is keen on utilising the outcome of bilateral relations for common benefits, as well as enhancing the Arab action. Oman is progressing with confidence --



moving from success to success — and the future is promising," said Al Quhaiwi.

He added that credit goes to the late King Hussein bin Talal and the late His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said for establishing these bilateral relations, based on grounds of goodness, love and peace -- more than 50 years ago. The two leaders navigated the two countries prudently during hard times and developed them into icons of progress and prosperity that set a model in the region, he pointed out.

Al Quhaiwi explained that

the exchange of official visits always lend strong impetus for cooperation in political, economic, cultural, social and other fields. He hoped that the visit of King Abdullah II to Oman will constitute a positive shift forward in meeting the aspirations of the two countries' peoples. The visit bears tangible signs of cooperation between the two countries, he added.

Al Quhaiwi also laid emphasis on the role of the private sector which, he said, shoulders a major responsibility for developing investment opportunities.

The ambassador stressed the need to activate the agreements and memoranda of understanding signed by the two sides. "We always pin hopes on communicating with the departments tasked with investment affairs in the two countries, with a view to expanding economic cooperation and establishing partnerships to promote commercial exchange. We hope that these aspirations would be realised via the Oman-Jordan Business Council," said Al Quhaiwi. — **ONA**



Memorandum inked to operate Wusool System

MUSCAT: The National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA) has signed a Memorandum of Operation (MoO) to operate “Wusool System” for the management of electronic documents at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

This came as part of the first phase of the “Wusool System” project, which is to be installed in 20 government departments in partnership and cooperation with the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

The MoO was signed by Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and Hamad bin Mohammed al Dhawyani, Chairman of the NRAA. The project constitutes a cornerstone initiative of digital transformation in the government sector. Besides enabling government departments to electronically manage their informational records—applying the latest global practices in the field, the new system will furnish a streamlined, secure environment for the data. — ONA

Programme on principles guiding state policy begins



MUSCAT: Acting in cooperation with the Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Labour on Sunday started a five-day programme on fundamental principles guiding state policy.

The programme, the 7th in a series, was opened at the

Diplomatic Institute by Dr Mahad bin Said bin Ali Baowain, Minister of Labour. It is attended by 50 directors general and state officials of equivalent ranking.

Sayyid Salim bin Musallam al Busaidy, Human Resources Development Under-Secretary

at the Ministry of Labour , said that this 7th edition of the programme features many visions for improving performance and developing tools of institutional action.

The programme reflects the major efforts exerted by the

Ministry of Labour, the Foreign Ministry and other institutions to forge a true partnership based on multi-faceted concepts serving the public interest, said Sayyid Salim, adding that the programme marks a turning point in national action.

— ONA

■ SURGERY PERFORMED USING NEW TECHNIQUE



MUSCAT: A team from the Royal Hospital's obstetrics and gynaecology department conducted Oman's first successful surgery using the new technique of “vNOTES”. Dr Thuraya bint Rashid al Rawahiyah, Senior Consultant, Oncology Surgery, at the Royal Hospital, said that “vNOTES” (vaginal natural orifice transluminal endoscopic surgery) has been used for uterus and ovary resection. Dr Thuraya told Oman News Agency (ONA) that “vNOTES” is the latest technology in gynaecologic surgery using the body's natural openings, like the vagina. “The process is fast and does not involve any external cuts. After a short period of mild pain, the patient reverts to normal life, escaping the complications of traditional surgeries,” Dr Thuraya confirmed. — ONA

Wadi Bani Khalid helps rescue 19 crew members from sinking ship

MUSCAT: Asyad Group's vessel, *Wadi Bani Khalid*, collaborated with the Indian Coast Guard to rescue 19 crew members of *MT Parth*, a ship that was sinking off the coast of Ratnagiri.

The ill-fated merchant ship, measuring 102 metres long and carrying 3,911 tonnes of bitumen was in transit from the city of Mangalore in the Indian state of Karnataka to the port of Khor Fakkan of the Emirate of Sharjah on Oman Sea.

MT Parth drowned 41 nautical miles west of the Ratnagiri coast. As soon as the *Wadi Bani Khalid* ship received the distress call, it responded immediately and rushed to rescue the crew of the sinking ship, in the face of such harsh navigational conditions as sea turbulence and strong winds.

Spokesperson of the Indian Coast Guard explained in a press release that while on regular patrols in the area, the guard received a distress call from *MT Parth* and immediately sent a request for assistance to nearby commercial ships. Asyad Group's *Wadi Bani Khalid* ship quickly responded by providing a helping hand, ensuring that all the sinking ship's crew was rescued and transported to receive necessary medical care and take other necessary official



procedures.

Commenting on the incident, the captain of *Wadi Bani Khalid* ship said: “After we received the distress call, we headed towards the nearest safe distance from the sinking ship and began lowering the rescue boat. The crew members who were asked to jump into the water and swim away from the stricken ship as soon as possible, were all saved into the rescue boat.”

He said the crew's ongoing training has played a significant role in providing various rescue services that meet the

highest maritime HSE standards.

Wadi Bani Khalid ship was recently recognised by the Automated Mutual-Assistance Vessel Rescue, AMVER, a computer-based global ship-reporting system sponsored by the United States Coast Guard that aims at preserving the safety of life and property at sea.

The mission of AMVER is to provide Search and Rescue authorities on demand with accurate information on the positions and characteristics of distressed vessels, making the maritime sector safer. — ONA

Ignore fake banking messages

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police has called upon people to ignore fraudulent messages claiming to ban their bank account to avoid falling prey to electronic fraud.

“Recently, fraudulent messages using the logos of official entities and local

banks have been circulated, claiming that your bank account will be frozen for security reasons. Thus, it is urged not to share the details of their bank cards to unknown individuals or organisations, to avoid being a victim of cyber fraud,” ROP said in a statement.

MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY Advertisement No. (36/2022)

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PRE/22/084	2022/MM/ QS-57	Supply & Installation of Pedestrian Rail at Al Ghubrah (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/094	2022/MM/ QS-58	Supply of Equipments and Hearse (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/103	2022/MM/ QS-59	Proposed Public Walkway in AL Amrat (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Specialist
PRE/22/115	2022/MM/ QS-60	Consultancy Services for Design of Epidemiological Deaths Building (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/116	2022/MM/ HQ-13	Design & Construction of Storm Water Drainage at Falaj Al Sham Area (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/118	2022/MM/ QS-61	Design and Construction of Pedestrian Bridge and Embankment Protection Works in Airport Heights (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/120	2022/MM/ QS-62	Design & Construction of Riprap Channel and Culvert in Al Amerat (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/121	2022/MM/ HQ-14	Design & Construction of Storm Water Drainage in Wilayat Boshier (E-Tender)	47	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Excellent
PRE/22/124	2022/MM/ QS-63	Treatment of Water Stagnation for Masar Project at Al Amerat (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Second
PRE/22/127	2022/MM/ HQ-15	Design & Construction of Drainage Woks at Al Mubaila South Phase -9 (E-Tender)	30	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/129	2022/MM/ QS-64	Design & Construction of Channelization and Protection Works of Wadi Boshier (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	First
PRE/22/134	2022/MM/ QS-65	Supply of Decorative Plastic Safety Barriers (E-Tender)	25	23/10/2022	13/11/2022	Specialist

Tender Conditions :-

- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically accompanied with an electronic copy of abond issued by any local bank in Oman addressed to Muscat municipality. The bond shall be (1%) of the tender value valid for ninety (90) days starting from the date of bids submission. Any tenders which do not meet the required bond shall not be accepted.
- Tender Bonds shall be E-Bond and to be submitted through E-Tendering system, addressed to Muscat Municipality.
- For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
- For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.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).

125 die after crowd crush at Indonesian football match

MALANG: At least 125 people died at an Indonesian football stadium when thousands of angry home fans invaded the pitch and police responded with tear gas that triggered a stampede, authorities said on Sunday.

The tragedy on Saturday night in the city of Malang, which also left 180 injured, was one of the world's deadliest sporting stadium disasters.

Arema FC supporters at the Kanjuruhan stadium stormed the pitch after their team lost 3-2 to the visiting team and bitter rivals, Persebaya Surabaya.

Police, who described the unrest as "riots", said they tried to force fans to return to the stands and fired tear gas after two officers were killed.

Many of the victims were trampled or choked to death, according to police. At least 125 people died, East Java deputy governor Emil Dardak told broadcaster Metro TV on Sunday evening, significantly lowering officials' earlier death toll of 174 because of double counting.

"124 have been identified and one has not. Some names were

"I deeply regret this tragedy and I hope this football tragedy will be the last in our country"

JOKO WIDODO
Indonesian President

recorded twice because they had been referred to another hospital and were written down again," he said, citing data collected by local police from 10 hospitals.

Survivors described panicking spectators in a packed crowd as tear gas rained down on them.

"Officers fired tear gas, and automatically people were rushing to come out, pushing each other and it caused many victims," 43-year-old spectator Doni, who declined to give his last name, said.

"Nothing was happening, there was no riot. I don't know what the issue was, they suddenly fired tear gas. That's what shocked me, didn't they think about kids, women?"



A candlelight vigil by Indonesian football supporters to show their condolences to victims of a stampede, in Jakarta. — AFP

President Joko Widodo ordered an investigation into the tragedy, a safety review into all football matches and directed the country's football association to suspend all matches until "security improvements" were completed.

"I deeply regret this tragedy and I hope this football tragedy will be the last in our country," Widodo said.

A hospital director told local TV that one of the victims was five years old.

Images taken from inside the stadium during the stampede showed police firing huge amounts of tear gas and people clambering over fences.

Amnesty International called for an investigation into why tear

gas was deployed in a confined space.

"Tear gas should only be used to disperse crowds when widespread violence has occurred and when other methods have failed. People must be warned that tear gas will be used and allowed to disperse," it said in a statement.

People carried injured spectators through the chaos and survivors lugged lifeless bodies out of the stadium.

"It was so terrifying, so shocking," 22-year-old survivor Sam Gilang, who lost three friends in the crush, said.

"People were pushing each other and... many were trampled on their way to the exit gate. My eyes were burning because of the tear gas. I fortunately managed to climb up the fence and survived," he said.

Video footage circulating on social media showed people shouting obscenities at police, who were holding riot shields and wielding batons.

Torched vehicles, including a police truck, littered the streets outside the stadium on Sunday morning. Police said 13 vehicles in total were damaged. — AFP

Yemen truce at 'dead end': Fighters

SANAA: The ceasefire in war-ravaged Yemen is at "a dead end", the Ansar Allah fighters said on Saturday in a statement, a day before the UN-mediated truce is due to expire.

Yemen's war between the Ansar Allah fighters and a coalition since 2014 has left hundreds of thousands dead and created what the United Nations calls the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

The temporary ceasefire, which took effect in April and has twice been renewed, is set to expire on Sunday, despite recent attempt by the UN envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, to extend it.



Members of Yemen's Al Zaranig tribe from the Mokha area take part in a camel-jumping contest during a traditional athletics festival in western province of Hodeida. — AFP

"Over the past six months, we haven't seen any serious willingness to address humanitarian issues as a top priority," the Ansar Allah

statement said, accusing the coalition of stalling in negotiations on measures that would "alleviate the suffering of the Yemeni people". — Reuters

DANCE DRAMA TO MARK FESTIVAL



Artists perform a dance drama 'Praise of Seven Hills' during the celebrations to mark the Hindu festival of Navratri in Chennai. — AFP

Bulgarians vote again in general election, anxious about prices

SOFIA: Bulgarians voted on Sunday in their fourth general election in 18 months, anxious about soaring consumer prices and energy costs ahead of a winter overshadowed by the Ukraine war.

While endemic corruption was the focus of the previous vote last November, economic woes are now top of voters' concerns.

The European Union's poorest member state is battling annual inflation of close to 20 per cent.

Krasimira Velkova, a 64-year-old economist from Sofia who came to cast her ballot shortly after polls opened, confirmed these fears.

"People worry about inflation, about the fact that when you enter a food store, a shopping trolley that's just half full costs a fortune. The difference compared to last year is absolutely staggering," she said.

"We are worried about how we'll get through the winter, how we'll bear the cold, if we'll be able to pay our bills," Velkova added.

Bulgaria's former premier Boyko Borisov, 63, could benefit from people's fears.

He held power three times and dominated politics for a decade and is now eyeing a comeback on



Bulgaria's former prime minister Kiril Petkov casts his ballot at a polling station during the country's parliamentary elections in Sofia. - AFP

The European Union's poorest member state is battling annual inflation of close to 20 per cent

a "return to stability" platform.

Polls on the eve of the ballot show support for his conservative GERB party rising, crediting it with about 25 per cent of the votes.

The Balkan country has been dogged by political instability since early last year, when GERB

lost power following massive anti-corruption demonstrations.

Borisov's rival, outgoing reformist premier Kiril Petkov, 42, has urged voters to let him "continue the change" he started but is lagging in the polls on around 16 per cent.

The Harvard-educated former entrepreneur stormed onto the political scene in 2021 and managed to piece together a precarious four-party coalition after winning last November's vote. However, after a stint in power of just seven months, he was toppled in a no-confidence motion.

In an interview, Petkov trumpeted his success in the fight against "corruption practices" that allowed his cabinet to redistribute public funds, offering pension rises and free kindergarten.

"So it's a great first step but we have a lot more work to do," he said.

"The challenge is to really show that the Bulgarians have made the choice — the choice for a new, European, progressive, transparent Bulgaria versus going back to the years of transition, to the politicians of corruption," he said. — AFP

KATHMANDU

US ski mountaineer gets Buddhist cremation

The body of renowned US ski mountaineer Hilaree Nelson, who died on Nepal's Manaslu peak, was cremated close to a Buddhist stupa in Kathmandu. Nelson's body was found on the slopes of the world's eighth highest mountain on Wednesday, two days after she disappeared as she was skiing down from its summit.

Monks chanted prayers and played traditional drums as her family and fellow climbers offered flowers and traditional Buddhist scarves on her body.



"The cremation was done today, attended by her brother, other climbers and officials," Jiban Ghimire of Shangri-La Nepal Trek, which organised the expedition, said.

LUCKNOW

26 killed as tractor trailer carrying pilgrims crashes

A tractor pulling a trolley packed with religious pilgrims in India overturned and plunged into a pond, killing 26 and seriously injuring 16, officials said.

The trailer was carrying around 50 people, mostly women and children, when the incident happened in Kanpur in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh on Saturday, senior local official Sudheer Kumar said.

"Twenty-six people died in the incident," Kumar said.



Traffic accidents are frequent in India with more than 150,000 people killed last year, or over 400 per day, according to official statistics which are likely an underestimate.

MANILA

Animal blessing ceremony held in the Philippines

Pomeranians Michi and Mochi were among 15 four-legged couples that tied the knot at a pet wedding ceremony in the Philippines that was held along with a special blessing of pets to mark World Animal Day.

Owners Ianne De Guia and Bryan Largo, who joined hundreds of other pet lovers for the animal blessing, said Michi and Mochi — dressed in a gown and tuxedo for the occasion — were able to cement their union after recently having puppies.



The canine couples took the plunge at a park by a shopping mall where hundreds of animals also received blessings in a drive-through and in-person ceremony.



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In brief

■ LONDON



KING CHARLES III NOT TO ATTEND COP27 SUMMIT

King Charles III will not travel to next month's United Nations climate summit in Egypt, Buckingham Palace confirmed on Sunday, after UK Prime Minister Liz Truss reportedly "objected" to the keen environmentalist attending. Britain's new monarch, who took the throne when his mother Queen Elizabeth II died last month, had intended to deliver a speech to world leaders gathering at the COP27 summit on November 6-18, the *Sunday Times* reported. But the plan has been axed after Truss opposed it during a personal audience with Charles at the palace last month, the newspaper said. — AFP

■ SARAJEVO



ETHNIC TENSIONS DOMINATE AS BOSNIA VOTES

Bosnians voted in general elections, following a campaign marked by threats of secession, political infighting, and fears of future turmoil as ethnic tensions in the country grow. Voters are casting ballots in a dizzying number of contests, including for the three members of Bosnia's tripartite presidency, the deputies of the central parliament and a string of local races. The Balkan state has been governed by a dysfunctional administrative system created by the 1995 Dayton Agreement that succeeded in ending the conflict in the 1990s, but largely failed in providing a framework for the country's political development. — AFP

■ OUAGADOUGOU



SITUATION 'IS UNDER CONTROL' IN BURKINA FASO: MILITARY LEADER

Burkina Faso's self-declared military leader Captain Ibrahim Traore said that order was being restored in the country, after violent protests against the French embassy and days of fighting as his faction moved to topple the government. Traore's team urged people to refrain from acts of vandalism at the embassy, targeted by protesters after an officer involved in the ongoing coup said France had sheltered President Paul-Henri Damiba at a French military base in the West African country and that he was planning a counter-offensive. — Reuters



A service member of Ukraine's National Guard walks on a bridge over the Siverskyi Donets river destroyed during Russia's attack on Ukraine in the town of Sviatohirsk, Donetsk region. — Reuters

Ukraine claims full control of key eastern logistics hub

KYIV: Ukraine on Sunday claimed full control of the eastern logistics hub of Lyman, Kyiv's most significant battlefield gain in weeks, providing a potential staging post for further attacks to the east while heaping further pressure on the Kremlin.

The stinging setback for Russian President Vladimir Putin came after he proclaimed the annexation of four regions covering nearly a fifth of Ukraine on Friday, an area that includes Lyman. Kyiv and the West have condemned the proclamation as an illegitimate farce.

"As of 1230, Lyman is fully cleared," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in a short video clip on his Telegram channel. "Thank you to our troops ... Glory to Ukraine!"

Russia's defence ministry said on Saturday that it was pulling troops out of the area "in connection with the creation of a threat of encirclement".

It did not mention the city in its daily update on fighting in Ukraine on Sunday, although it said Russian forces had destroyed seven artillery and missile depots in the Ukrainian regions of Kharkiv, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Donetsk. Russian forces

Lyman is key logistics hub in eastern Donetsk region as capture could aid attacks on neighbouring Luhansk region. Pope calls for end to 'spiral of violence and death'

captured Lyman from Ukraine in May and had used it as a logistics and transport hub for its operations in the north of the Donetsk region. Losing it is Russia's largest battlefield loss since Ukraine's lightning counteroffensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region last month.

Serhiy Gaidai, governor of the Luhansk region that neighbours Donetsk, said control over Lyman could prove a "key factor" in helping Ukraine reclaim lost territory in his region, whose full capture Moscow announced in early July after weeks of grinding advances.

Britain's Ministry of Defence described Lyman as operationally important as it commanded a key road crossing over the Siverskyi Donets River, behind which Russia has been attempting to

consolidate its defences. Russia likely experienced heavy casualties during the withdrawal, the ministry said in a statement. Russia had 5,000 to 5,500 troops in the city before the Ukrainian attack, a spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern forces said on Saturday.

The areas Putin claimed as annexed - the Donbas regions of Donetsk and Luhansk plus Kherson and Zaporizhzhia in the south - form a swath of territory equal to about 18 per cent of Ukraine's total surface land area.

"Over the past week, the number of Ukrainian flags in Donbas has increased. There will be even more a week's time," Zelensky said on Saturday in an evening address.

The battlefield setbacks have triggered a fresh wave of criticism within Russia of how its military operation is being handled. Britain's defence ministry said that was likely to intensify with further setbacks.

Putin ally Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of Russia's southern Chechnya region, on Saturday called for a change of strategy "right up to the declaration of martial law in the border areas and the use of low-yield nuclear weapons." — Reuters

Germany, Denmark and Norway to give howitzers

BERLIN: Germany, Denmark and Norway will supply Ukraine with 16 armoured howitzer artillery systems from next year, Berlin said on Sunday, as Kyiv seeks heavier weapons to boost its fightback against Russia.

The announcement came after German Defence Minister Christine Lambrecht visited Ukraine this weekend for the first time since Moscow's invasion in February.

Germany, Denmark and Norway had agreed to jointly finance the procurement of the Slovakian Zuzana-2 guns at a cost of \$90.2 million, said the defence ministry in

Berlin. They will be produced in Slovakia, with delivery to Ukraine to begin in 2023, it said. The new pledge still falls short of what Ukraine has been asking for. Kyiv has repeatedly sought Leopard battle tanks from Germany, but Chancellor Olaf Scholz's government has refused.

Scholz has said he does not want to go it alone on arms supplies and will only take decisions in consultation with his Western allies.

Speaking on public broadcaster ARD, Lambrecht again defended Berlin's weapons deliveries to Ukraine, insisting Germany was doing a lot to support Kyiv. — AFP



A man walks pass debris scattered on Pine Island Road in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian in Matlacha, Florida. — AFP

Hurricane Orlene headed for Mexico as Category 4 storm

MEXICO CITY: Powerful storm Orlene intensified to a Category 4 hurricane on Sunday on its way to Mexico's Pacific coast, where it is expected to make landfall on Monday night, the US National Hurricane Center (NHC) said.

"Extremely dangerous Category 4 Hurricane Orlene continues northward," the NHC said in a Sunday morning advisory, warning of "significant wind, storm surge and rainfall" in the Islas Marias and southwest Mexico.

At the time of the advisory

the hurricane was 170 kilometres southwest of Cabo Corrientes in the western state of Jalisco.

The NHC forecast that the storm would pass over the Islas Marias on Sunday night or on Monday morning, and reach the mainland by Monday night. It predicted it could gather further strength early on Sunday, but would then gradually weaken until landfall.

Mexico's National Water Commission (Conagua) also predicted that the storm would be a Category 1 or 2 hurricane by the time it moves onto land. — AFP

Lula leads opinion polls as Brazil votes

BRASILIA: Brazilians cast their votes on Sunday in the first round of their country's most polarised election in decades, with leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva expected to beat right-wing incumbent Jair Bolsonaro.

Most opinion polls have shown Lula with a solid lead for months, but Bolsonaro has signalled he may refuse to accept defeat, stoking fears of institutional crisis or post-election violence. A message projected on Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer statue ahead of the vote read: "Peace in the Elections."

Most surveys favour Lula, who was president from 2003 to 2010, by 10-15 percentage points.

If he wins more than 50 per cent of valid votes, which several pollsters show within reach, that would clinch an outright victory, foregoing a second-round vote.

Decked out in Lula stickers, Adriana Schneider was voting at a primary school in Rio de Janeiro. The university professor, 48, said Bolsonaro's administration had been "catastrophic" for investment in culture, arts, science and



A man gestures while waiting to cast his vote during the legislative and presidential election in Brasilia. — AFP

education.

"We're living under a barbaric government," she said.

Lula was jailed during the last

election, serving a conviction for graft that was later overturned by the Supreme Court, allowing him to face his fierce rival Bolsonaro

this year.

Voting in São Bernardo do Campo, Lula acknowledged the dramatic turnaround in his

Most surveys favour Lula, who was president from 2003 to 2010, by 10-15 percentage points

fortunes after a conviction that he says was politically motivated.

"It's an important day for me," he said. "Four years ago I couldn't vote because I was the victim of a lie ... I want to try to help my country to return to normal."

Bolsonaro voted in Rio, and said he expected to win the election in Sunday's first round, despite his poor showing in surveys.

The former army captain does not trust the pollsters, saying their results do not correspond with the support he sees at his campaign events.

"If we have clean elections, we will win today with at least 60 per cent of the votes," Bolsonaro said in a video posted on his social media before voting. — Reuters

Machines must now be trusted to translate



Sandhya Rao Mehta

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

September 30 is celebrated as International Translation Day and this is a good opportunity to reflect on the status and condition of translation today.

With technology, translation has got a massive boost, but that is not always thought of as a substitute for words that bring cultures together.

Translation is not a new phenomenon. Since the second century BCE, there exists recorded translation of religious and creative texts. Religious texts were routinely translated into various languages as they were carried across civilisations.

Translators face many linguistic and cultural challenges. They must constantly make choices regarding the meaning of words or phrases when used in different contexts:

Do they make sense literally? Do they have to be explained in another way? What impact does changing the words have on the text?

While literary translation already has all these challenges, it is even more so in legal or medical translation where the implications of the wrong choice of words could lead to crucial real world problems.

Today, much of this is being addressed by artificial intelligence.

There are many applications which provide end to end translations into many of the world’s languages. Entire speeches, reports and documents can be translated in a matter of minutes.

Speed, cost, the ability to multitask by outsourcing translation and maintaining privacy are

TRANSLATION CAN BE SEEN AS A SCIENCE, BUT IT IS MORE OF AN ART AND TRANSLATORS FACE MANY LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL CHALLENGES

considerable advantages to using technology for translation.

However, there are many obstacles to machine translation as of now. These include the fact that words in the original (source) text can have multiple meanings; the grammatical structure could be different but that is not reflected in the translation; pronouns in the source and target language could be

differently used.

Most of all, there are words in all languages which are essentially untranslatable. It is up to human to see how to substitute and lend meaning in such a situation.

Translation can be seen as a science, but it is more of an art. Language is creative and its use changes with time, as all languages evolve and meanings change. Technology may not be able to keep up with these changes, at least, not yet.

Having said that, machine translation is perhaps the only solution to the globalised world’s expectations of access to knowledge and information.

The popular anecdote of a German company negotiating with

a Korean one and signing papers in English is the quintessential example of how a common language which belongs to neither is used to document agreements.

Technology may here help both parties to use their own languages to some extent.

Instinctively, we dismiss technology in writing and communication, thinking of them as basically human acts. But the world now is too interconnected and networked to rely entirely on human knowledge and skills.

Trusting machines to do what we have done for thousands of years will require a giant leap, but it must be made to ensure that the world remains the village it has now become.

Immigration, identity shape election in French-speaking Quebec

MATHIEW LEISER

Does immigration threaten the unique culture of French-speaking Quebec? However controversial, the claim is being pushed hard by the Canadian province’s ruling party, whose brand of identity politics looks set to deliver them a win at the ballot box next week.

A French-speaking bastion in mostly English-speaking North America, Quebec has long defended tooth and nail the language of Moliere. It’s a fight taken up by the governing party since coming to power four years ago, the conservative Coalition Avenir Quebec (CAQ) — but with an added focus on immigration.

Incumbent Quebec Premier Francois Legault made his views clear at the outset of the campaign: unchecked immigration by non-French speakers risks undermining social cohesion in the province.

It would be “a bit suicidal” to take in more newcomers given the decline of French, Legault — whose party is leading in the polls ahead of Monday’s provincial election — argued again this week.

During a debate, his immigration minister, Jean Boulet, went further — and provoked an uproar — with the baseless claim that “80 per cent of immigrants do not work, do not speak French or do not adhere to the values of Quebec society.”

His comments are also glaringly at odds with the economic reality in the province of nearly 8.5 million inhabitants facing a severe labour shortage — one that could be remedied through increased immigration.

With an ageing population retiring en masse and an unemployment rate at a historic low, Quebec is looking to fill more than 250,000 jobs. And the government anticipates that number will keep rising — reaching some 1.4 million by 2030.

If re-elected, Legault, a 65-year-old multi-millionaire businessman, plans to keep annual immigration capped at 50,000 people.

But some observers, like the sociologist Jean-Pierre Corbeil, are ringing alarm bells over the growing political conversation in Quebec linking language and immigration.

“We tend to put all the responsibility (for the decline of French) on the backs of immigrants,” he said. “And that’s where it’s dangerous, there is a discourse of exclusion that is taking shape.”

“I find that it is extremely, I would almost say, unhealthy,” echoed linguistics expert Richard Marcoux. “We will really have to resume the discussion after the elections to be able to address immigration issues in a different way.” — AFP

Battered by floods and trapped in debt, Pakistani farmers struggle to survive



Christina Goldbaum

The writer is a correspondent in the Afghanistan bureau



Zia ur-Rehman

The writer is a Pakistani journalist, researcher and author

Abdul Razak walking through his farm, which remains flooded three weeks after the destruction

The young woman waded into the waist-deep floodwater that covered her farmland, scouring shrivelled stalks of cotton for the few surviving white blooms. Every step she took in the warm water was precarious: Her feet sank into the soft earth. Snakes glided past her. Swarms of mosquitoes whirled in her ears.

But the farmworker — Barmeena, just 14 — had no choice. “It was our only source of livelihood,” she told visiting New York Times journalists.

She is one of the millions of farmworkers whose fields were submerged by the record-shattering floods that have swept across Pakistan. In the hardest-hit regions, where the floods drowned entire villages, authorities have warned that the floodwater may not fully recede for months.

Still, wherever the water has receded even a bit, farm labourers are scrambling to salvage whatever they can from the battered remains of their cotton and rice harvests.

It is desperate work. Many already owe hundreds or thousands of dollars to the landlords whose fields they cultivate each year as part of a system that has long governed much of rural Pakistan.

Each planting season, the landlords offer the farmers loans to buy fertiliser and seeds. In exchange, the farmers cultivate their fields and earn a small cut

THE UNPREDICTABILITY OF THE SEASONS HAS LED SOME MEMBERS OF FARMING HOUSEHOLDS TO MIGRATE TO CITIES AS FARMERS LOOK FOR MORE STABLE JOBS. THAT, IN TURN, HAS LANDLORDS WORRIED ABOUT A COMING FARM LABOUR SHORTAGE

of the harvest, a portion of which goes toward repaying the loan.

But now their summer harvests are in ruins. Unless the water recedes, they will not be able to plant the wheat they harvest each spring.

Even if they can, the land is certain to produce less after being damaged by the floodwaters, from a cataclysmic combination of heavy glacier melt and record monsoon rains, which scientists say were both intensified by climate change.

Such extreme weather events that damage crop yields and sink farmers into mounting debt are becoming increasingly

common and are unlikely to end. In recent years, the unpredictability of the seasons has led some members of farming households to migrate to cities as farmers look for more stable jobs.

That, in turn, has landlords worried about a coming farm labour shortage, they say.

But other farmers feel they have no choice but to stay.

“Our life goes like that — sinking into debt, not earning the money to pay it back, and then we do it again,” said Mairaj Meghwar, 40, a farmer who lives in the village of Lal Muhammad in Sindh province, the region that sustained the most flood damage.

Lal Muhammad is home to around 40 families, their mud brick houses nestled between fields of tall grass and connected by dirt paths.

The nearest town is about an hour’s drive by motorcycle away, and on either side of the long, flat road are rolling fields of cotton.

Inside the village, children chased one another through the grassland while women collected basins of water from their single, rusty hand pump. A few cattle moaned from their makeshift pen of wood sticks.

Like others in neighbouring villages, most of the families here have tilled this land for more than 100 years.

For as long as Meghwar can remember, the rhythm of life has been driven by the land. Each fall, he spends two or three months watering, levelling and plowing the fields before sowing neat rows of wheat seeds by hand.

Each spring, his family pours into the fields to harvest the wheat and then prepares the land to plant cotton seeds that bloom each fall.

The harvests are his family’s lifeline. The cash they get from the cotton — never more than \$300 or \$400 — pays for the medicines, vegetables and other necessities they need. But even more important is the wheat, which provides his family a staple food to last the entire year.

“It is even more important than our children. We are living and we are dying for the wheat,” his relative, Padooma, 50, explained. Like many in rural Pakistan, she goes by only one name.

— New York Times



Internally displaced people use boats to cross the flooded area in Dadu district, Sindh province. – AFP

Challenges are thorn-crowned opportunities!



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami
aljahdhami22@gmail.com

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

told, it is extremely irritating when it comes to making your mind up on money making or a job selection!

Don't you worry at all; it is just a very normal feeling and thought that everyone gets, especially when not sure of what decision to make. Likewise, one might regret a choice or a decision that had been taken.

Thus, such scenarios stand as a learning experience! As Albert Einstein said, "A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new. This indicates that the person who is so careful that s/he never makes a mistake is unlikely to achieve anything of real value."

Whenever one does not give himself enough time to make his mind, he could get such kind of feelings or self-blame. Those very unpleasant thoughts and emotions remain itching in the mind and boiling in the hearts. However, it helps recalling things one has made or review a decision taken sometimes back; probably taken in a hurry or unplanned. With this critically distressing thinking and brainstorming, one gets to discover the slips and mistakes, which he/she learns from.

As it might be hard and intolerable experience; but with mistakes comes the learning lesson. One learns things from his reoccurring mistakes, so he can get things right in when taking a new decision. Hence, one shall never blame himself for making a mistake or undesirable decision for it could be the right one and he might realise that someday afterward. Post every experience that one comes across, there is a lesson behind that might not be discovered on spot. Yet, this is happening for one's own good; the message could be received sooner or later, one regards it a curse and a failure.

The way in which one perceives and looks at things really counts to get the right decision taken on time. If one's eyesight first hocks the positive side, then he/she will never feel lost; nothing is called a dead end or unsolved problem! Think positively and believe in the possibility to get things fixed the way you like. Problems are only opportunities with thorns on them. Opportunities do not come with their values stamped upon them.

One has to always remember, life is an experience and everyday is an opportunity to make a new happy ending. Live the moment and have some hope, which is the last to be ever lost in life. As Helen Keller, An American lecturer and creative author, said: "Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Every test in our life makes us bitter or better, every problem comes to break or make us. The choice is ours whether we become a victim or a victor. Sometime, you just need to be more positive and roll the dice to make things come the way you wish for.

In some circumstances, fate is the only justification one attributes to for what happens to him. True, it is fate that one always relates things to, but it depends on the way one looks at things. One's belief and confidence are behind the attitudes, perception of life and ultimately the decisions that one makes.

Making your mind on something is generally very difficult and challenging, regardless how important the matter is! Perhaps, one sometimes, takes a decision that could be regretted later. Undoubtedly, most of us have experienced such an incident in a way or another. It is of course frustrating and hard to feel that you made a wrong or unlikable choice. If truth be



HUMAN TOWERS

Members of the 'Jove de Tarragona' team attempt to form a 'castell' (human tower) during the 28th edition of the 'castells' competition at the Tarraco arena in Tarragona on Sunday. These human towers, built traditionally in festivals within Catalonia, gather several teams that attempt to build and dismantle a human tower structure. – AFP

The populist climate threat

ANA TONI, IZABELLA TEIXEIRA AND LAURENCE TUBIANA

Reactionary populism is now the biggest obstacle to tackling climate change. With outright climate denial no longer an option, populist politicians have increasingly positioned themselves as climate doubters and delayers, and this new approach is proving to be quite insidious.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change warns that global greenhouse-gas emissions must peak within three years to keep the Paris agreement's 1.5° Celsius target in reach; by slowing effective action, the tactics of today's populists are becoming an existential threat.

This trend is reversible, but it is tenacious. Following former US President Donald Trump's dismantling of America's climate commitments, the Biden administration has managed to pass landmark climate legislation despite notable headwinds.

But opportunities for populist climate spoilers remain. A recent study in Nature shows that, even though supporters of climate policies vastly outnumber their opponents nationwide, most Americans believe the opposite to be true.

Given this "false social reality," the climate legislation promises to be a wedge issue in November's midterm elections.

Perhaps even more significant is Brazil, where reactionary populism threatens to become normalised under President Jair Bolsonaro. It is no coincidence that Steve Bannon, Trump's former chief strategist, sees Brazil's election as an inflection point for the international system: in his words, the "second most important election in the world."

Bannon-style tactics have prevailed in many countries in recent years, poisoning the public discourse on issues such as immigration, reproductive rights, and vaccines.

There are multiple reasons why climate action is an especially appealing target for aspiring and incumbent authoritarians, but none has anything to do with the climate itself.

The first reason is the perceived cost. Even though decarbonising and building more resilience into the economy will ultimately be much cheaper than covering the costs of a runaway climate crisis, such outlays will forever be exposed to political opportunists' bad-faith attacks.

Moreover, populists will smear policies geared towards international accords like the 2015 Paris climate agreement as an abdication of sovereignty.

It is no surprise to see Brexit architect Nigel Farage now agitating for a referendum on the United Kingdom's stated commitment to achieve net-zero emissions.

A simplistic notion of national sovereignty has also underpinned

Bolsonaro's refusal to discuss the Amazon in international fora, even though its role as a carbon sink is vital for the rest of the world.

Bolsonaro's failure to fight criminal activity in the Amazon has allowed for the wanton destruction of Brazil's forests, rivers, and people (including indigenous groups, environmental activists, and journalists).

As is true of other right-wing populists, "sovereignty" for him amounts to claiming rights but denying the responsibilities that come with them.

Out of either cynicism or naivety, populists refuse to acknowledge that stronger national borders cannot solve our biggest problems.

That is as true for climate change and biodiversity loss as it is for this year's energy and food crises, Covid-19, and mounting debt distress.

As a result, climate action and reactionary populism could remain tangled for decades to come, amid climate disruptions, sharpening inequalities, and a social contract fraying everywhere.

According to a recent study of 25 countries over more than a decade, right-wing populist parties have had a consistently negative impact on climate ambition, making international targets even harder to reach.

As the host of the foundational 1992 Earth Summit, Brazil previously had a reputation as a leading consensus-builder in multilateral negotiations; yet in the space of just a few years, it has come to be associated with diplomatic volatility and environmental destruction.

If we are going to manage the increasingly disruptive effects of climate change, collective intelligence must prevail over populist division and disinformation. Some countries are already showing the way.

In Australia, for example, voters ousted a conservative government that had become one of the most obstinate climate laggards in the G20.

And in Slovenia, a populist prime minister was denied a second consecutive term when his party was defeated

by the environmentalist Freedom Movement party.

Could the same message gain traction in Brazil? Recent polling shows that 81 per cent of Brazilians want presidential candidates to protect the Amazon, and 65 per cent consider such protections to be important for economic development. Over 90 per cent know that climate change is happening, and over 75 per cent attribute it to human activity.

As in many countries around the world, social movements in Brazil have been organising on an unprecedented scale. Groups from the Amazon — especially those representing traditional communities, women, and young people — are leading the charge, and others, including financial and private-sector players, have joined with them.

Bolsonaro, meanwhile, has remained hostile towards climate ambition, painting all environmental concerns as the sinister creation of shadowy international interests.

The irony, of course, is that today's "anti-globalist" populists rely on their own well-funded transnational network of propagandists, donors, and fellow-travellers.

As a recent New York Times investigation shows, Hungarian energy companies that have profited from the sale of Russian oil have channeled massive funds to politically aligned charities, where the funds then make their way to conservative broadcasters and opinion leaders in the United States.

An international system subverted by populist priorities would be catastrophic for open societies and effective climate policies. Those of us who believe in science, the wisdom of local communities, and the power of diplomacy must get wise to the threat. If populism is normalised, it will derail effective climate action just when it is needed most.

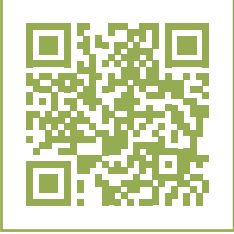
The window for preventing catastrophic consequences is closing. Climate policies have become populists' most inviting target; the rest of us must become populists' most formidable adversaries. ©Project Syndicate, 2022



Bolsonaro's failure to fight criminal activity in the Amazon has allowed wanton destruction of Brazil's forests.

sport

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KIPRUTO, YEHUALAW TRIUMPH AT LONDON MARATHON

LONDON: Kenyan Amos Kipruto marked his London Marathon debut with a decisive victory on Sunday as Ethiopian 23-year-old Yalemzerf Yehualaw became the youngest winner of the women's race despite falling in the closing miles.

It was a maiden London victory for Yehualaw in what was just the second marathon of her career.

The 30-year-old Kipruto, a world bronze medallist in Doha in 2019, crossed the line in London in two hours, four minutes and 39 seconds after breaking away late on.

Leul Gebresilase of Ethiopia finished second in 2:05:12, with Bashir Abdi of Belgium third in 2:05:19. Ethiopian distance great Kenenisa Bekele was fifth with compatriot Sisay Lemma, last year's London Marathon winner, seventh.

An elated Kipruto said: "This is my London debut and it's a wonderful day.

"I decided to make a decisive break because of my training. I was confident and I knew when to go."

Bekele said he still hoped to break the marathon world record even though he's aged 40 and arguably no longer the force he was when winning three Olympic gold medals, 17 world titles over cross-country, track and road.

Kenyan Eliud Kipchoge smashed his own world record by half a minute in last week's Berlin Marathon in a time of 2:01:09. But Bekele, a former longtime holder of both the 5,000 and 10,000 metre world records, was clear about his ambition when asked after Sunday's race if the marathon world record was still in his sights.

"Yes, that's my main goal," he replied.

Yehualaw's winning time of 2:17:26 was just three seconds outside the mark she set at Hamburg in April when making the fastest debut in any women's marathon and the third fastest in the corresponding London race. Defending London champion Joyciline Jepkosgei was second, the Kenyan finishing in 2:18:07, with Ethiopia's Alemu Megertu third in 2:18:32.

- Fans inspire Yehualaw after fall - Yehualaw's victory was all the more impressive as she appeared to trip on a speed bump with six miles to go, before hitting the ground and banging her head as well as hurting her hip and knee.

Nevertheless, the women's 10 kilometre world-record holder recovered to rejoin the leading pack and then surged clear four miles from the finish, with Jepkosgei unable to reel her in. Yehualaw's breakaway included an astounding 4:43 mile split in the 24th mile.

"I did not see the bump coming. I have some feeling in my hip and knee," she said. "I had confidence I could run well. I am so happy to win on my first time in London. People were shouting a lot and it inspired me."

Several leading runners were ruled out of Sunday's race through injury, including British hope Mo Farah, while four-time winner Kipchoge opted against competing after his Berlin heroics.

"Kipchoge is an inspiration for us all and he is a legend for the young generation in Kenya," said Kipruto. "He is another level in sport and has been a mentor to me."

The women's race was without world record-holder Brigid Koskei, the 2021 and 2021 champion. The Kenyan withdrew because of a hamstring injury.

There was a Swiss double in the wheelchair competition on Sunday as Marcel Hug and Catherine Debrunner set new London course records in the men's and women's races respectively. — AFP



Ethiopia's Yalemzerf Yehualaw crosses the line to win the women's elite race. — Reuters

Kenya's Amos Kipruto crosses the line to win the men's elite race. — Reuters



Oman boys aim for strong start in Asian Cup qualifiers

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 2

Oman boys will aim for a strong start as they will take on the Lebanon team on Monday in the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers in Muscat. The match will start at 17:00 at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

In the following match, Bahrain will meet Qatar at the same venue and the fixture will begin at 20:45. In earlier matches of the group on Saturday, Qatar managed to open the qualifiers with a crucial 2-1 win over Iraq while Bahrain edged Lebanon 1-0.

The newly appointed head coach of the Oman national U-17 team, Anwar al Habsi, said that the main goal is to build a team for the future.

“I took charge of the team recently. The team had a good preparatory plan during the previous period. Our main focus is to establish a strong national team for the future. The team has been clubbed in a tough group but the chances are equal for all the teams. As the national team is ranked in the first pool, we will fight to capture the direct qualifier spot,” he added.

Oman will compete in Group C besides Iraq, Qatar, Lebanon and Bahrain teams. The qualifiers began in Muscat on Saturday and will conclude on Sunday.

Coach Anwar al Habsi commented on the challenges that faced the national team and he said: “I was appointed as the head of coaching staff one month ago. I was very close to the

team as I served the team a couple of months ago as assistant coach. We are in a team building process and this stage requires patience from all. The objective is not to accomplish titles but our focus is to create a strong national team that will add positively to the senior national teams in the future,” he said.

Responding to a query on the closeness of the matches, coach Anwar clarified that this is a challenge for the team. “I have prepared the players for all the situations. The team had played two friendly games against Saudi Arabia and India in different line-ups to ensure better readiness for the team,” he ended.

The Oman players are in good shape after completion of abroad camp in Saudi Arabia under the watchful eyes of head coach Anwar al Habsi. The 10 days external gathering in Dammam city featured two friendly games against Saudi Arabia and India teams.

The first warm-up game against the camp hosts ended at 2-2 draw while Oman junior boys suffered a 3-1 defeat against the Indian team.

Despite the results, the friendlies provided a better technical image for the coaching staff to work and address the weak areas. Also, both preparatory fixtures acted as a crucial opportunity for the national head coach Anwar al Habsi to finalise the starting line-up of the team prior to qualifiers start.

ICC U19 Men’s Cricket World Cup Qualifier

MUSCAT: Singapore and Hong Kong registered convincing victories over Thailand and Qatar respectively to assure themselves of a spot in the semifinals of the ICC U19 Men’s Cricket World Cup Division – 2 Asia Qualifier at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds on Sunday.

In the Group B action, Hong Kong wrapped up the proceedings early in the day against Qatar as they raced to an eight-wicket victory while

Singapore posted an emphatic 167-run win over Thailand.

With two successive wins for both Singapore and Thailand, the game between them on Tuesday will decide the group topper.

The winner of Group B will take on the loser of Monday’s Group A match between Oman and Bahrain while the loser of Thailand and Singapore match will face the winner of Group A match in the semifinals.

At the OCA 1 ground, Singapore elected to bat first and the batters made merry as they scored 248/6 in 50 overs.

Last match centurion, Sidhant Srikanth continued his rich vein of form as he hammered an unbeaten 72 off 80 balls. His inning was studied with five boundaries and a maximum. Vihaan Maheshwari was the other half-centurion with a solid 52 off 79 balls. Handy contributions from Pratham Somani, Aaryan Modi, Pranav Maheshwari and Abhuday Chhajer, helped Singapore reach a formidable total. Wiraphan Ngowhuad was the most successful bowler (2/41).

Chasing a tough target, except for Thailand skipper Chaloe mwong Chatphaisan, none of the other batters could stay at the crease. Except for Chatphaisan’s 51, none could reach double digits as they were bowled out for 81 in 33.4 overs.



Singapore captain Jeevan Santhanam was the pick of the bowlers with 4/25. Equally impressive was Adwitya Bhargava, who claimed 3/6 in 4.4 overs.

Man of the match Sidhant Srikanth said: “Going into the match, which was a must-win game for us, I feel that we performed very well under pressure.

“We are looking forward to the next game and the semis. We would like to finish on top of the table and then win the semis to qualify into the Division 1 Qualifier. If we play to our potential, we can beat any team here.”

Vora, Bhagwat shine for Hong Kong Hong Kong’s Darsh Vora ran through the Qatar top-order to leave them reeling at four for three in just 4.2 overs. The early collapse never allowed Qatar to bounce back as they were bowled out for 123 in 40.1 overs.

Tailender Luqman Mehmood top-scored with 24 to help his team cross the 100-mark. Captain Jack Joseph made 22 and was one of the three victims of Aarush Garg, who took 3/18.

Hong Kong were never in trouble in reaching the target as they chased it down in 27 overs for the loss of two wickets – the openers – who fell to Aryan Surani in the same over.

Parth Bhagwat and Ansh Doshi then shared a 101-run third wicket partnership to lead the team to victory as they scored 127/2.

Doshi was unbeaten on 39 off 51 deliveries while Bhagwat’s knock of 61 was laced with ten boundaries.

Man of the match Bhagwat said: We are really happy with the way the team played today. We wanted to bowl first and to restrict Qatar to 123 was a good job by our bowlers. It was a good batting wicket and I am glad to get some runs and along with Ansh it was a nice performance ahead of the final round league match.

Spurs win brings back confidence to Gunners: Arteta

ANDY JALIL
LONDON, OCT 2

Arsenal notched up a third consecutive Premier League home victory and their seventh from eight league games, winning 3-1 against their north London rivals Tottenham who have failed to win their last 12 league visits to Arsenal. It keeps the Gunners at the top of the table.

Manager, Mikel Arteta said: “This should give everyone confidence and belief. It was a great day. A result like this against Tottenham is so meaningful because it’s more than just three points. We all know what is at stake in this game. It gives me a great feeling when I look at the table and see the position the team is in. But I leave it to other people to decide if we are title contenders.”

Arteta added: “There are things to improve and that’s the direction we’re going. I could feel the passion the day they came back from international duty. You have to play with passion and coolness and they did it brilliantly today.”

Arsenal started the game at a fast pace and attacked early. Gabriel Martinelli’s volley was tipped round the post and Bukayo Saka kept probing constantly. Thomas Partey kept winning possession and Martin Odegaard directed the play in midfield.

Spurs had a good early chance to score when Son Heung-Min’s free kick found Eric Dier who passed to Richarlison but his shot brought out a fine reaction save by Aaron Ramsdale in the Arsenal goal.

Arsenal opened the scoring in the 20th minute when Saka made space on the right before passing to Ben White who spotted Partey just outside the box and his superb curling shot from 25 yards found the right top corner of the net.

Spurs were able to equalise just eleven minutes later when Richarlison progressed into the box beating one tackle but was fouled in the next tackle by Gabriel Jesus. The resulting penalty was successfully taken by Harry Kane for his 14th goal in North London derbies and with

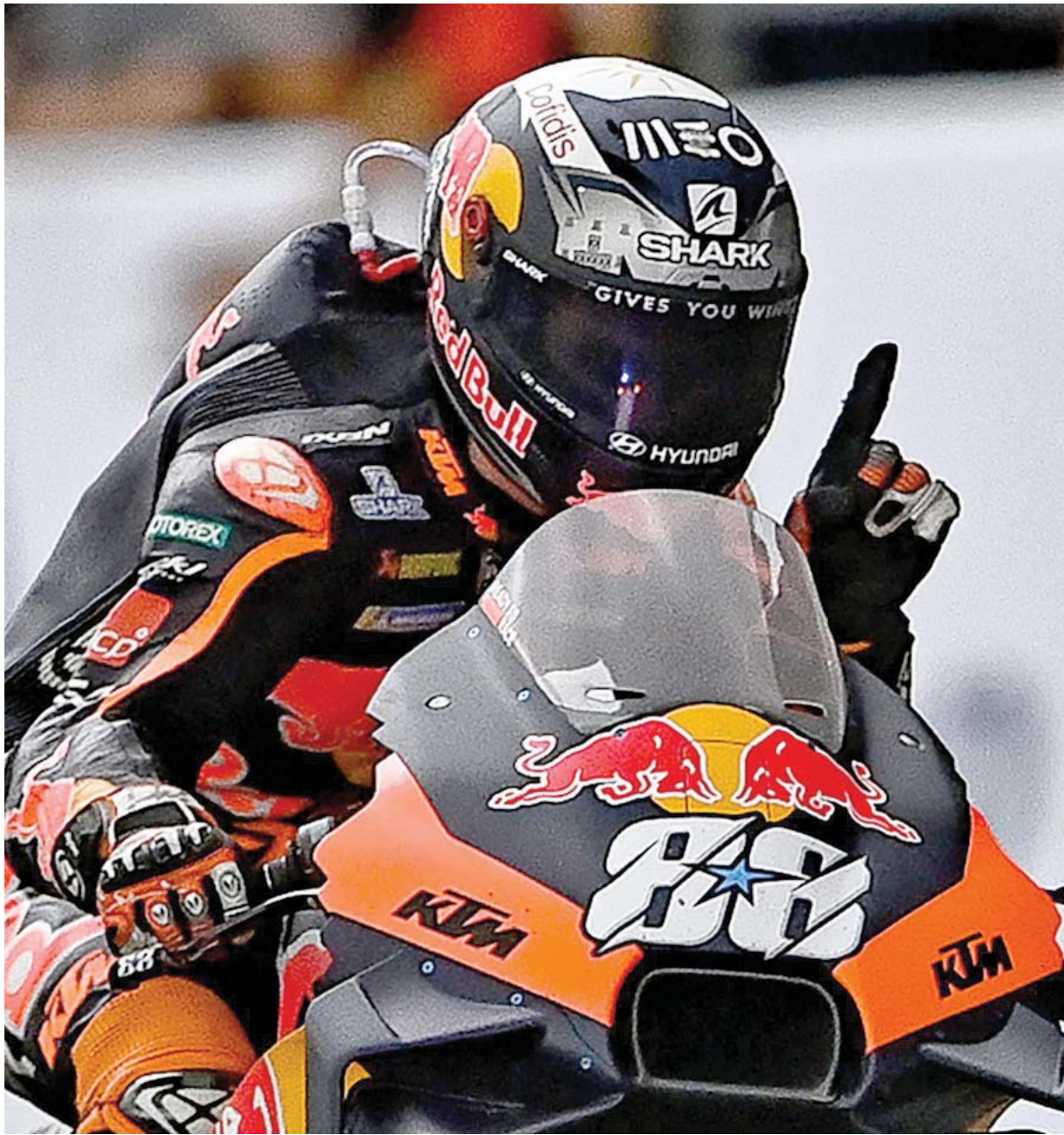
that he became the first player in Premier League history to score 100 away goals.

Just four minutes into the second half, the Gunners, who had much the better of the game, regained their lead. Saka’s low shot was parried by Lloris and Cristian Romero instead of clearing it mis-kicked it towards his goalkeeper who should have easily gathered the ball but let it slip through his hands for Jesus to quickly put it over the line.

Spurs then had the disadvantage of playing most of the second half with ten men with Emerson Royal receiving the red card for a rash, lunging tackle on Martinelli who was sprinting down the right. Five minutes later they extended the lead with Martinelli receiving the ball from Partey and passing it to Granit Xhaka who drove in a left-footed low shot.

Spurs manager, Antonio Conte, unhappy with his player’s sending off, said: “Sometimes you are lucky with the decisions and sometimes you are not but for sure the red card killed the game.”





KTM’s Oliveira wins rain-affected Thai GP as title race hots up

BURIRAM: KTM rider Miguel Oliveira held his nerve in rainy conditions to win the Thai Grand Prix in Buriram on Sunday as Francesco Bagnaia made up significant ground on world championship leader Fabio Quartararo who finished 17th. Oliveira crossed the line 0.730 seconds ahead of Ducati duo Jack Miller and Bagnaia at the Chang International Circuit, in a race significantly delayed by rain. “It was a long race, but I can’t complain. Every time we get a chance to race on the wet, I’m always super fast,” said Oliveira, who also showcased his wet-weather skills this season in his victory at the Indonesia MotoGP. “When it started raining, I

had flashbacks of Indonesia, but I tried to keep my feet on the ground and not make mistakes. I’m happy with this end of season win.” Bagnaia was made to work for his third-placed finish by Pramac Ducati’s Johann Zarco, but held on to reduce Frenchman Quartararo’s lead in the standings from 18 points to two. “I’m very happy, it’s like a win for me this podium,” Bagnaia said. “I want to thank Jack (Miller), he gave me a motivational chat before the race and we spoke a bit.” Quartararo had a disastrous start to the race, dropping down from fourth on the grid to 17th

place on the first lap before ending up outside the points. Aprilia Racing’s Aleix Espargaro also regained ground in the overall standings as he reduced the gap between him and Quartararo to 20 points despite finishing 11th after being given a long-lap penalty for a collision with Brad Binder. Honda’s six-times MotoGP champion Marc Marquez finished fifth, ahead of Enea Bastianini and Maverick Vinales, while Marquez’s brother Alex was eighth. Pole-sitter Marco Bezzecchi could only manage 16th place after being forced to relinquish his lead early on due to a position drop penalty. — Reuters

Oman junior squads prepare for Pan Arab Golf Championships in Tunisia

MUSCAT: After a break of three years the Pan Arab Junior Golf Championships make a welcome return at Golf Citrus, Hammamet, Tunisia from October 3 to 9. Around one hour from the capital Tunis the stunning 45-hole complex, set amongst pine forests and olive groves, will play host to the best youth golfers from the Pan Arab region. Under the watchful eye of National Team Manager Peter Bailey, Oman’s juniors have been readying themselves to compete at Under 18, Under 15, and Under 13 levels. The last time the championship was played in 2019 Oman picked up the bronze team medal in the Under 15 division as well as an individual bronze medal in the Under 13’s. Peter said: “Each of the golf courses in Oman have been really supportive with the pre-event preparation taking place at Ghala Golf Club, Al Mouj Golf, Ras Al Hamra Golf Club, and most recently at Muscat Resorts, which is due to reopen to the public in the coming months, where the team got to experience the new top tracer range. The players are all excited and

we look forward to having a great week in Tunis.” Selection for the teams was based on the players performance in the ongoing GOjuniors Tour events supported by Oman LNG, these events are played throughout the year on rotation at each of the golf courses in Muscat and provide the opportunity for junior golfers based in the Sultanate of Oman to compete, develop their skills, and also meet other golfers. To supplement this an extra series of qualifying events was held over the summer to identify the most in form golfers to represent Oman. In the Under 18’s division Ayman al Busaidy and Al Munther al Hinai, both of whom played in the previous staging of the Pan Arab Championships, will secure another national team appearance. The Under 15’s team is made up of Adam al Barwani, Faris al Busaidy, and claiming his first national team cap Mahir Sampat. The Under 13 players travelling to Tunisia will be Mohib al Kathiri and Yusuf al Rumhy, both of whom will be earning their first national team call up. The

teams will be accompanied to Tunis by the official Oman Golf Association delegation including Ahmed al Jahdhamy (OGA General Secretary), Masoud al Barwani (OGA Treasurer), Ghalib al Busaidy (OGA Board Member), and Peter Bailey (National Team Manager). Mundhir al Barwani, Chairman of the Oman Golf Association, said: “We wish all our players good luck in Tunis. The standard of golf at the Pan Arab Championships is very high with experienced teams like Morocco and Tunisia competing alongside the GCC teams including Oman. We have several younger players who will be having their first experience of national team golf for Oman, and we hope that under Peter’s guidance they enjoy their introduction and have a great week. We must thank all of those involved in supporting junior golf development including the golf clubs themselves, our sponsors and partners Oman LNG, Sohar Aluminium, Moore Stephens, and Shell as well as the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth.”

Shotokan karate inter-club tourney concludes

MUSCAT: The indoor karate championship competitions organised by the Shotokan Karate Centre concluded at the sport hall of the Jaber bin Zaid School in Al Watayyah on Saturday, with the participation of 85 male and female players representing the centre’s branches in the Governorate of Muscat. The championship competitions were conducted by a team of international and national judges from the Shotokan Karate Centre, where the players were distributed according to their ages into

several categories, namely: the male category of 16 years and above in kata, and categories (6-15 years old males) in the kata and kumite, as well as the female categories of (6 years to 15 years old) in kata and kumite. At the end of the tournament, a medal awarding ceremony was held for the first three places in each category, under the patronage of Jihad bin Abdullah al Sheikh, Vice-President of Oman Sports Club, in the presence of a large number of parents. The Shotokan Karate Centre holds this tournament annually

with the aim of providing the players with more experience, friction and competition among themselves and to keep pace with the updates added to the international karate rules. The members, instructors and players of the Shotokan Karate Centre extended their sincere thanks to the management of Jaber bin Zaid School in Al Watayyah in the Wilayat of Muttrah for the constructive and fruitful cooperation and contribution to the success of such events that motivate youth in the sports field.



Strong contests mark fourth round of Asian Amateur chess

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, OCT 2

The fourth round of the Asian Amateur Chess Championship registered very tough competitions as the participants aimed to raise their points ahead of the final ninth round on Wednesday. At the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex and in the open section competitions, third-ranked Pakistani player Junaid Sohail registered his fourth consecutive win in the tournament as he edged Iran’s Majid Bagheri while Iranian Mahmoody M Sadegh defeated India’s Velava Ragavesh to claim his third point. Oman’s Mahad al Amri suffered a defeat against Iranian Sobhan Zahmati who made his tally to four points. Kyrgyzstan’s Zhanybek Dadabaev managed to register victory over Murad Ba Amir from Yemen.



In the women’s category, Qatar’s Salama al Khelaifi won against Amal Fadel from UAE while Oman’s Al Anoud al Ghafri edged Saudi’s Afnan Hassan al Ghubaishi. India’s Dakshikaa managed to beat Salma al Dhaffari from UAE. In other interesting fixtures, Oman’s Anat al Aisae won against her teammate Abrar al Busaidy while Sawsan al Aradi from Bahrain stunned Pakistan’s Aayat Asmi. Record attendance Saudi Arabian arbiter Abdullah Khayat said that the tournament is going smoothly as it was planned. “I would like to thank all the efforts that have been taken towards hosting this event. The event registered a record in the number of participants as there are more than 200 players representing 23 countries. The event recorded strong competitions in all the

previous rounds and many new faces showed top performance despite there not being any rated players,” he added. The Saudi referee said also that the Asian Amateur Chess Championship featured participation of all the Gulf countries’ players. “Attendance of all the Gulf countries’ players added technical value for this event. Thanks to Oman and OCC for organising this event. Special thanks for the committee’s efforts to expand and spread the sport in Oman and the region.” Abdullah Khayat also commented on Omani arbiters’ attendance in this tournament. “Oman’s umpires showed a positive presence in this championship. In all the events, the arbiters are learning from each other and these events are great opportunities for them to develop,” he ended.





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Private developers sought for satellite port in Dhalkout



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 3

The Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has invited local and investment developers to submit their proposals for the development and operation of a satellite port at Dhalkout in Dhofar Governorate.

The tender is in line with the Omani government's efforts to strengthen maritime logistics all along the country's coastline through the establishment of port infrastructure at key locations.

Interested developers with proven experience in port development and operation have until October 16, 2022 to submit their proposals outlining their plans to upgrade and expand the existing facilities with a view to catalysing economic investment in Dhalkout wilayat.

The project is part of the Ministry's vision to support economic diversification through investments in a multimodal transport and logistics sector, particularly maritime ports, while also enhancing their administrative, organisational and operational efficiency.

(With inputs from ONA)

Salalah Port to invest \$66 million to service mega containerships

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 2

Port of Salalah plans to invest \$66 million towards the construction of civil infrastructure necessary to support the installation of special cranes to handle Ultra Large Container Vessels (ULCVs) that will begin arriving at the maritime gateway starting from 2025.

The port has also agreed to enter into an agreement with APM Terminals BV for the lease of 10 ULCV cranes and other supporting equipment to enable the handling of a new generation of mega containerships.

Upon the completion of the civil infrastructure work, the cranes will be installed and brought into operation in 2025, the port said in a filing to the Capital Market Authority. The tenure covering the lease of the cranes will commence once they are in operation, it noted.

ULCVs in question are mega sized container ships that are 366 metres long and capable of carrying over 14,500 containers. Port of Salalah has also approved a related party transaction with



Maersk covering a Volume Commitment Agreement with the port.

The agreement will enable the development of the Container Terminal to service Ultra Large Container Vessels, it said.

In the first half of this year, the Container Terminal handled around 2.241 million TEUs, up from 4.6 per cent from the figure of 2.142 million TEUs handled during the corresponding period of 2021.

The General Cargo Terminal handled about 9 million tonnes of general cargo comprising mainly limestone, gypsum, methanol and cement, up from 8.8 million tonnes in the same period last year. The General Cargo Terminal is also the main driver of the general cargo business at the Port of Salalah.

Also in the first half of this year, Port of Salalah received 3 mobile cranes to enhance general cargo handling capabilities in order to improve the productivity of cargo handling operations at the port.

One of the largest multi-purpose ports in the Middle East, Salalah Port is one of the region's main transit ports, offering the highest capacity to connect shipping in Oman.

In 2021, the container terminal handled 4.5 million TEUs compared to 4.3 million TEUs in 2020, marking the highest rate in its history.

(With inputs from ONA)

After successful khareef season, winter tourism now beckons in Salalah

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, OCT 2

Having attracted large numbers of holidaymakers during the just-concluded khareef season, the tourism and hospitality industry in Salalah has now set its sights on ramping up tourist inflows into Dhofar Governorate during the upcoming winter season as well.

The issue was among a number of topics discussed during a recent meeting hosted by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism with local industry representatives on the occasion of the World Tourism Day.

At the meeting, private sector representatives shares their thoughts on how the two sides – government and private – need to work together to position Salalah as a year-round holiday destination and not predominantly limited to the khareef season.

It was also announced at the meeting that the Frankincense Festival at Samharam in Taqah Wilayat will continue till the



end of this year. Furthermore, buoyed by the success of the Empty Quarter Festival, a new edition of this event will be held next year as well.

Officials disclosed that Salalah Airport will handle as many as eight flights per week, bring tourists from Slovakia, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic during the winter season. This is in addition to charters due to arrive from other popular source markets.

A strong proponent of year-round tourism in Dhofar is Murat Sak, Executive Hotel Manager – Hawana Salalah, a prominent Integrated Tourism Complex set up in Dhofar Governorate.

Speaking to the Observer, Sak said the khareef season had witnessed a sharp increase in arrivals compared to the severe slump of the past two years when the pandemic had shuttered the sector. He credited efforts made by the authorities, as well as the local tourism industry, for this success – efforts that should be replicated to support winter tourist inflows as well, he said.

“We must focus efforts on building the winter holiday season, which spans six months compared to the 3-month khareef season, while khareef festivities run for only 45 days,” he said.

Commenting on the promising potential during the winter season, he stated: “Our guests come from all over Europe and the Middle East with roughly 25 per cent each from Germany, Italy and

OFFICIALS DISCLOSED THAT SALALAH AIRPORT WILL HANDLE AS MANY AS EIGHT FLIGHTS PER WEEK, BRING TOURISTS FROM SLOVAKIA, ITALY, POLAND AND THE CZECH REPUBLIC DURING THE WINTER SEASON. THIS IS IN ADDITION TO CHARTERS DUE TO ARRIVE FROM OTHER POPULAR SOURCE MARKETS.

Poland and remaining 25 per cent shared between France, Slovakia, Czech and Middle Eastern countries.”

According to Sak, interest in the governorate's rich natural, archaeological and historical heritage is strong among winter tourists.

“Most of them are interested in knowing more about Oman and its culture. There's a big demand for desert trips, with around 50 per cent of our guests booking a trip to spend a night in the desert. Others request tours of the city and of archaeological sites in the region.”

106.9% rise in hotel revenues in Oman

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, OCT 2

The revenue of 3-5 star hotels in the Sultanate of Oman by the end of August 2022 recorded a surge by 106.9 per cent to stand at RO 108.334 million compared to the same period in 2021, according to the latest data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The number of guests in the 3-5 star hotels increased by 34.2 per cent till the end of August 2022. Occupancy rate in those hotels went up by 22.4 per cent by the end of August 2022 to stand at 42.5 per cent compared to 34.7 per cent during the same period in 2021.

The number of GCC guests recorded a significant growth rate of 1250.9 per cent, from 7,874 guests by the end of August 2021 to reach 106,371 guests by the end of August 2022.

European guests recorded a rise by 615.9 per cent from 26,400 guests by the end of August 2021 to reach 189,008 guests by the end of August 2022.

However, the number of Omani guests declined by 14.9 per cent from 556,035 by the end of August 2021 to 473,232 by the end of August 2022.

The number of American guests till the end of August 2022 stood at 35,803, comprising an increase by 201.5 per cent compared to the same period in 2021, while the number of guests from the African continent stood at 5198, constituting a surge by 101.9 per cent compared to the same period in 2021.

Moreover, the number of Asian guests went up by 40.2 per cent from 91,273 till the end of August 2021 to reach 127,995 guests during the same period in 2022.

3 students from Oman won in GPCA’s innovation competition

MUSCAT: The Gulf Petrochemicals and Chemicals Association (GPCA), the voice of the chemical industry in the Arabian Gulf, has announced the winners of the second edition of the GPCA Innovation Competition ‘BIG Ideas Wanted’. The competition was held as part of the 7th GPCA Research and Innovation Conference, which took place under the theme ‘Catalysing a Sustainable Future through R&I’.

Muzna bint Sultan al Jabriyah from Sohar University, Sultanate of Oman, won first place in the Undergraduate category of the GPCA Innovation Competition for her ‘Utilisation of a novel marine based green corrosion inhibitor for petroleum industry applications’. Her project involved the synthesis of a novel eco -friendly corrosion inhibitor from locally available cheap biomass, crab shell, for protecting pipelines in petroleum industries.

The second place in the Undergraduate category was claimed by Amna bint Wahab al Rasbiyah from the National University of Science and Technology, Oman, for her ‘Synthesis and application of silica and calcium carbonate nanoparticles in the reduction of organics from refinery wastewater’.



The winning research involved the utilisation of synthesised nano particles for the reduction of chemical oxygen demand (COD) from refinery wastewater. In the Postgraduate category, the third place was claimed by Sadik Rahman from Sultan Qaboos University, Oman, for his research project entitled ‘Evidence study for simultaneous desalination, acid and base production in a novel design of bio-electrochemical reactor using petrochemical wastewater treatment’. This promising novel design of a bio-

electrochemical reactor enables the extraction of valuable chemicals from wastewater treatment and desalination. Besides a monetary prize, the winners received the opportunity to present in front of global and senior industry executives at the 7th GPCA Research and Innovation Conference. Their contribution to the field of chemistry research and innovation was recognised for its impact on the industry and its potential to transform the environmental, health, safety, and sustainability

performance of chemical processes and operations. Now in its 2nd edition, the GPCA Innovation Competition is aimed at bridging the gap between industry and academia and stimulating applied research and innovation in the field of chemistry in the Arabian Gulf Region. Through the initiative, GPCA will further engage university students in chemical research and innovation and provide a valuable opportunity for university students from the region to gain exposure to the global chemical industry.

Exceptional experiences in the Lincoln Aviator

MUSCAT: The Lincoln Aviator takes luxury experiences to higher levels with its keen attention to details and its focus on offering fine experiences to passengers. The Aviator grabs instant attention with its stylish exterior that highlights its luxury stance. To promote thrilling driving experiences, the Lincoln Aviator is equipped with a standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine that is paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission. The Aviator delivers an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration. The three-row luxury SUV is equipped with all-wheel drive capability. The Lincoln Aviator offers drivers an engaging drive with the Lincoln Drive Modes’ five signature settings — Normal, Conserve,



Excite, Slippery and Deep Conditions. This feature allows owners to further customise their driving experience, while a 10.1-inch standard configurable LCD instrument cluster confirms their choices with beautiful, easy-to-read dynamic graphics and prompts. Putting on a show right from the start, the Air Glide Suspension with Dynamic Lower Entry automatically lowers the vehicle to “greet” the

driver, adding a new level of sophistication to Lincoln’s signature welcome lighting embrace. The convenience of this feature makes loading cargo easier as well. Adding to smiles on every journey is available technology that enables Aviator to “see” most potholes or uneven pavement and immediately make suspension adjustments to keep the ride as smooth as possible. Adaptive Suspension with Road Preview uses an advanced forward camera to constantly scan the road, seamlessly adjusting the suspension as needed. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co LLC. Please log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

ahlibank wins best performing company

MUSCAT: Endorsing its consistent growth in the banking horizon of the Sultanate of Oman, ahlibank was recognised as the ‘Best Performing Company in the Large Cap’ at the prestigious Alam Al-Iktisaad Awards 2022, held on September 28. Hana bint Mohammed al Kharusiyah General Manager — Corporate Banking received the Award on behalf of the Bank.



Having won the award in the same category consecutively in 2018 and 2019, the 2022 Award further affirms ahlibank’s growing strides in Oman’s banking horizon. The current year has seen it augment its financial performance over the same period last year, achieving an increase of 18.6% in the second quarter. Organised by Alam Al-Iktisaad, the red-carpet event unfolded in the presence of Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, who presided as the Chief Guest, with Shaikh Salim bin Mustahail al Mashani, Vice Chairman of Muscat Overseas Group, as the host of the evening. The attendees included business leaders, CEOs and senior government officials from a cross-section of industries and government bodies, as well as key decision-makers from the world of business and economy.

be’ah engages ahlibank with Synergy Consulting to offer financial advisory

MUSCAT: Oman Environmental Service Holding Company SAOC (be’ah), the state-owned waste management operator in Oman, announced that ahlibank with Synergy Consulting will act as financial advisers on Phase 2 of its Industrial Waste Treatment Facility (IWTF) in Suhar, Oman. The financial advisory engagement will see ahlibank and Synergy Consulting, developing a detailed financial model and commercial feasibility analysis to ensure sound implementation of IWTF Phase 2. The services provided by the reputable bank and prestigious consulting agency will ensure appropriate funding and alignment with the strategic and operational objectives set by be’ah. With the second phase of the



IWTF project being implemented, be’ah aims to create an integrated treatment facility to manage and treat industrial and non-industrial hazardous wastes in Oman. The new facility will provide advanced waste management capabilities

that enable the implementation of be’ah’s waste sector strategy. Moreover, this crucial project will help Oman capture its full potential for industry development and diversification, by providing increased waste management

capacity, to the highest standards, in Oman. The IWTF project was designed to be implemented in phases, with phase 1 already operational and consisting of three engineered landfills, one solidification plant and several storage facilities. As envisaged, Phase 2 will comprise an incineration plant with an annual capacity of 30,000 tonnes and a physical/chemical treatment facility with an annual capacity of 10,000 tonnes. The coming addition will be an important addition to be’ah’s strategic assets and enable it to meet the expected demand of the Sultanate of Oman’s growing industrial base and create a sustainable and robust waste management sector aligned with the targets of Oman Vision 2040.

MSX records smallest decline in GCC during September 2022

JOMAR MENDOZA
@JmObserver



In comparison with the other GCC markets, Oman’s stock exchange witnessed a decline during September 2022, according to the latest monthly report by Kamco Invest. However, the decline in the MSX30 index was the smallest in the GCC at 1.2 per cent to close at 4,528.3 points. Similarly, the MSX Shariah index, showed a marginally stronger monthly decline of 1.58 per cent during September 2022.

Consistent gains over the previous three months prior to September-2022 pushed the MSX 30 Index at the number two position in the GCC in terms of YTD-2022 returns that reached at 9.7 per cent at the end of September 2022. In terms of sectoral performance, all the three reported segments closed in the red during September-2022.

The Industrial Index, the previous months largest monthly gainer, registered the largest decline during the month at 4.6 per cent followed by Services and Financial indices with monthly declines of 3 per cent and 1.8 per cent, respectively.

In terms of company performance, SMN Power Holding topped the gainers list with a gain of 21.4 per cent. Dhofar International Development and Al Ahlia Insurance followed as the second and third largest gainer with 12.7 per cent and 9.8 per cent share price increases, respectively.

Al Ahlia Insurance has recently appointed a new CEO which has received necessary regulatory approvals. On the decliners side, Al Hassan Engineering Company reported a decline of 45.5 per cent followed by Dhofar

Generating Company and Raysut Cement Company with declines of 20 per cent and 16.7 per cent, respectively. Trading activity showed steep decline during September 2022 after witnessing gains in August 2022.

Monthly value of shares traded reached the lowest level since the start of the year to reach RO 44.4 million vs RO 77.7 million during August 2022, a fall of 42.8 per cent.

Monthly volume of shares traded also reached their lowest level since the start of the year at 184.7 recording a decline of 41.2 per cent as compared to 314.3 million shares during August 2022.

Bank Muscat topped the monthly value traded chart for the second consecutive month with trades at RO 25.2 million followed by Galfar Engineering and Bank Dhofar with total trades at RO 17.5 million and RO 14.4 million, respectively.

In terms of volume of trades, Bank Muscat again topped with 14.7 million shares followed by OmanTel and Galfar Engineering with volume at 3.3 million shares and 2.9 million shares, respectively.

In terms of investor participation, the value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached RO 8 million recording 17.4 per cent growth.

Comparatively, the value of shares bought by Omanis reached RO 40 million recording an increase of 82.6 per cent.



Opec+ to consider oil output cut of more than 1 million bpd



DUBAI: Opec+ will consider an oil output cut of more than a million barrels per day (bpd) when it meets on October 5, Opec sources said on Sunday.

The figure is slightly above estimates for a cut given last week, which ranged between 500,000 bpd and 1 million bpd.

Opec+, which combines Opec countries and allies such as Russia, is meeting in person in Vienna for the first time since March 2020. "It is a meeting that is taking place at a very interesting global time," one of the sources said.

The output cuts are being considered on the back of a slide in oil prices from multi-year highs reached in March and market volatility.

Saudi Arabia, Opec's de facto leader, first flagged the possibility of cuts to correct the market in August.

— Reuters

Oman-Brazil JV's investment in local supply chain development tops \$1.2 billion

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, OCT 2

Vale in Oman, a joint venture of Brazilian-based global mining giant Vale and OQ, says its mega iron ore pelletising plant in Sohar Port has so far invested around \$1.2 billion in the local supply chain as part of its commitment to in-country value (ICV) development.

This figure, according to a high-level official, represents the aggregate of investments made by Vale in Oman into the localisation of its supply chain since it commenced operations in Sohar just over a decade ago in April 2011.

The Rio de Janeiro-headquartered mining and metals conglomerate has invested around \$1.25 billion in an industrial complex comprising an iron ore pelletising plant with a capacity of 9 million metric tonnes per year and a distribution centre with a through-put capacity of 40 million metric tonnes.

Sohar Port's deep water capability allows for the company's 400,000-tonne capacity Valemax vessels to bring iron ore for



pelletising at the Sohar complex. Much of this output is shipped to Direct Reduction Iron (DRI) mills distributed around the Middle East region as feedstock in the production of steel products, including reinforcing bar (rebar).

Of late, its ramped up commitment to environmental, social and sustainability goals has earned Vale in Oman recognition for its contribution, according to Nasser bin Sulaiman al Azri (pictured), Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, Vale in Oman.

"In the last 10 years, we have invested \$1.2 billion in supply chain development, more than \$10 million in sustainability and social responsibility projects and \$87 million to have environmentally friendly operations," said Al Azri.

"Vale has invested in the deployment of advanced



Vale in Oman's industrial complex at Sohar Port

technologies in our pelletising and port operations in order to adhere to the environmental measurement, in accordance with the Environmental Regulations of the Environment Authority. Our technologies include dust monitoring systems, emission controls, wind fencing, use of solar panels and poles for lighting, as well as special spraying systems for pelletising. Furthermore, we ensure to update our ISO 14001 Certificate, reflecting the company's commitment to controlling our environmental impact."

Recently, the company partnered with a number of prestigious local and international organisations in sponsoring the 'Not Discovered Yet' project – an initiative of a female Omani entrepreneur that seeks to strengthen Oman's positioning as a unique tourist destination.

Al Azri explained: "Not Discovered Yet encompasses many of the targets that we support. We are a huge advocate of women in business, and have internal gender parity goals, which is why we are pleased to support an Omani

entrepreneur with a Vision 2040 focused agenda. Not Discovered Yet is a project that aims to show Oman and its natural beauty to the world, and position the Sultanate of Oman as an attractive tourism destination in line with Oman Vision 2040. However, with the quality of sponsors and supporters, the story extends beyond the natural beauty of Oman, to also position it as an attractive business destination that has sustainable development high on its agenda," he further stated. Also, with the aim of making a positive economic and environmental impact on local communities, Vale supports CSR initiatives in education, culture and sport, entrepreneurship, environment and health, he said.

"We continue to work with a number of Omani owned businesses and suppliers to ensure that our economic contribution remains in the Sultanate of Oman. Internally, we take career development very seriously and our Omanisation rates are far above the median, with a 75 per cent Omani workforce and 80 per cent Omani top management," Al Azri added.

Implementing renewable energy for a sustainable society: The Sultanate of Oman's goals and roadmap



MARYAM AL NOFLI

Oman is one of the solar belt countries and possesses high solar radiation intensity. The Sultanate of Oman is characterised by its proximity to the Saudi Arabia desert, bordered by the north and west, and the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean to the south. High atmospheric temperature prevails throughout a major part of a year. It has a long coastline of nearly 3165 km from the northern Hormuz Strait to the Republic of Yemen borders, covering three separate broad seas: Sea of Oman, Arabian Sea, and the Arabian Gulf. Oman's climate varies across the country and can be split into three climatic regions.

A subtropical climate prevails within the coastal region, dry climate dominates in the interior part, and more benign weather and tropical climate in southern part, particularly in Dhofar Governorate which is due to the influence of monsoon rains during June to September. The peak temperature of the country normally reaches 45°C during the summer, but the mean summer temperature is around 33 °C due to the high humidity. Winter temperatures are mild, ranging between 15°C and 23 °C.

Oman has substantial wind and solar energy potential and a strong commitment to clean energy investments. According to the recent report of Intergovernmental

Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), by 2050, the world's supply and demand of fossil fuels should be drastically reduced by 95 per cent for coal, 60 per cent for oil, and 45 per cent for natural gas from the current level. By an executive order, Oman joined the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement as part of its strategy to utilise renewable energy sources, notably solar energy.

The Government of Oman has taken several actions to improve the clean energy generation. The most significant step toward this direction is the establishment of a ministerial committee and technical teams to coordinate the efforts taken to develop renewable energy and hydrogen sectors.

Moreover, a programme that emerges from specialised pathways with a governance system will be launched to ensure sound planning and implementation in accordance with the directives of this context.

Oman is preparing to begin several renewable energy projects to help satisfy the rising demand for electricity during the following six years.

The 7-year statement was released by the Oman Power and Water Procurement Company (OPWP), which includes projections for the years 2021–2027. The company also disclosed the procurement of at least three wind-based projects during this period, besides launching the fourth solar PV project. By 2027, it also intends to purchase 2,200 megawatt capacity independent renewable energy-based projects for main grid.

Oman, which ranks third in the Middle East and North Africa, in terms of renewable energy, and 15th in terms of rising economies, continues to push for the use of renewable energy sources. Oman



is in a strong position to adopt an ambitious strategy for energy diversification and renewable energy, according to Bloomberg's 2021 Clement Scoop Assessment, which concentrates on investments in global energy source diversification as well as evaluating countries' abilities to attract capital for low-carbon technologies while building a greener economy.

According to Oman News Agency, Oman gained in the evaluation index, which includes 136 countries around the world, including 29 developed and 106 emerging markets, by furthering its trend of diversifying energy sources through the expansion of renewable energy projects.

Within Oman Vision 2040, Oman has devised a policy regarding transition to alternative energy, which it is putting into practice with the help of the Authority Public Services Regulation. The goal is to boost its use rate to 39 percent by 2040.

In order to support plans for economic diversification and advance sustainable energy technologies, this step aims to facilitate the most effective exploitation of energy sources and to take care of the development of renewable energy projects. With the intention of liberalising the electricity market, luring more investment, and building the Ibr

solar project, its largest renewable energy project, with a capacity of 500 MW.

Further, Oman opened the first immediate power market in the Middle East in January as part of this plan. Wind power has also been introduced as a renewable energy source in Oman, with the Dhofar wind power plant in Shaleem and Halaniyat Islands having the largest production capacity in the region at 50 MW. Furthermore, Oman has recently announced plans to build two new utility-scale solar power projects in the wilayat of Manah, Al Dakhiliyah Governorate with a combined capacity of 1,000MW.

Oman's power infrastructure and hydrocarbon reserves pose a challenge to economic growth due to its total reliance on fossil fuels, increasing population, and rapid industrialisation in cities such as Duqm, Sohar, and Salalah. Oman's strategic importance and geographical location make it feasible to harness renewable energy technologies on both small and large scales for further economic development. It not only helps to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, but helps to create a cleaner and sustainable environment.

Renewable energy research & development and high-technology services could generate new business and employment in Oman, ushering in a paradigm

shift in the diversification of the Omani economy. Oman has one of the greatest levels of solar energy density in the world. There is great potential for expanding solar energy resources throughout the country.

The interesting fact is the available solar energy in Oman has the ability to supply enough electricity to cover the domestic electrical needs of the country and export some electricity.

Moreover, significant wind energy potential along Oman's southern coast and mountains north of Salalah is identified. Wind speeds in these places are equivalent to those observed at inland European sites having substantial number of wind turbines in operation. Wind speeds are optimum in the summer months, which correspond to peak periods of electricity demand in Oman.

Until recently, renewable energy sources were not considered priority for development in Oman, partly also because fuel market fluctuations made it economically challenging to do so. The reason is attributed to several factors, the most important of which are: the cost of generating electricity from conventional power plants is cheaper than that of generation from renewable energy sources. Several factors can be addressed to reduce the gap between cost of power from fossil fuels and renewable energy:

- Attempting to raise the prices of fossil fuels.

- A significant reduction in the capital cost of renewable energy conversion system due to the advances in technical expertise and wider use.

- Modifying the cost of petroleum production to incorporate the environmental

harm posed by emissions.

Renewable energy project developers encounter a number of challenges. These are related to a variety of issues, some of which are related to the underlying technology and associated cost structures, while others are related to the nature of the power market in which their outputs are sold.

Cost competitiveness and cost structure, intermittency, scale, and legal framework are some of the barriers. A few companies in Oman that are involved in renewable energy (solar)-related activities have also been identified. They have three characteristics: business type, product type, and service type.

Oman, represented by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is attempting to develop and implement studies, plans, and policies to optimise energy utilisation and interest in the development of renewable energy projects in various Oman provinces. The goal for renewable energy contribution in power generation is 11 per cent and 30 per cent by 2023 and 2030 respectively.

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals, in collaboration with the Authority for Public Services Regulation, supervises the implementation of public policy in the electricity and renewable energy sectors. It is done through the adoption of programmes that enable operators to achieve the approved goals of diversifying energy sources and increasing the share of renewable energy in line with sustainable development plans to exploit the available sources in Oman.

(The author is a lecturer at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences - Shinas. She can be contacted at alnoflimaryam@gmail.com)

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

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Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrashdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Sohar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com

#Living_with_COVID19



A slice of Thailand in Muscat

By Kaushalendra Singh

It was a pleasant surprise for walkers, shoppers, casual and even regular visitors at Shatti al Qurum on Wednesday. They were greeted with Thai hospitality at the Waterfront, where a full-scale Thai Festival was in progress. With the enthusiastic participation of Thai nationals with products and services in the Sultanate of Oman and Thailand, the venue gave the visitors a feeling of a slice of Thailand in Muscat. The festival, which ran from Wednesday to Friday, had almost everything representing Thai culture. It was an excellent opportunity for those who visited Thailand and wanted to revisit the 'taste of Thailand' or even for those with any holiday plans shortly. The participants included hotels, hospitals, tour operators, and airlines which found the festival an opportunity to showcase their prod-

ucts and services. Cosmetics, day-to-day herbal cures and fresh eatables brought from Thailand, especially for the festival, were great in demand among the Thai expatriates, while people from other nationalities were seen asking for Thai Food and products. The participants were happy with the response from citizens and expatriates on the first day of the festival, while the second and third days evoked more crowds at the festival venue. The event opened with a cultural show depicting the heritage and culture of Thailand. The soft music, elegant dance moves and captivating facial expressions attracted every visitor, while many others just got attracted to the dais soon after the music started before the performances. "The Festival aimed at promoting the essence of Thainess, art and culture along with the business potentials. By walking through the mesmerising Thai bazar, embel-

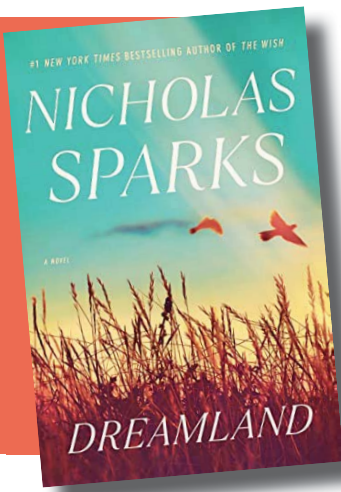
lished with countless colourful lanterns and lights, the visitors tasted delicious Thai street food from live cooking stations and enjoy various products that range from cosmetics to cooking, and fruits & vegetables freshly imported from Thailand," said a Thai embassy official present at the festival venue. "Besides walking through the food street, the festival brought every evening the unique experience of Thailand, presented by specially arranged cultural performances and demonstrations of traditional art and craft from local artists such as umbrella painting and fruit and vegetable carving," the official said. The was organised with support from Thai investment companies in Oman, PTTEP, Piyavet hospital, BPK rehabilitation and Physiotherapy centre, and Centara hotel group. The festival also reflected how close and connected Thai companies are with the Omani society in areas like energy, health wellness, tourism and hospitality.



READ

DREAMLAND BY NICHOLAS SPARKS

Musicians from different backgrounds are attracted to each other and a mother flees with her son from an abusive husband.



THE FALCON

An auctioneer presents a white Gyr Falcon (Gerfalcon) during the Abu Dhabi International Hunting and Equestrian Exhibition (ADIHEX) in the Emirati capital. The bird was sold for the equivalent of \$270,000. — AFP



DESCENDANTS

Descendants sit next to covered boxes containing the ancestral remains of Maori and Moriori that were returned from the Natural History Museum Vienna during a welcoming ceremony at Te Papa, the national museum of New Zealand in Wellington. The remains of scores of Indigenous Maori and Moriori people began a journey home to New Zealand on September 27, officials said, most of them stolen by a notorious 19th-century Austrian grave robber. — AFP





Singapore food vendors launch first hawker center in New York

A SINGAPORE-STYLE hawker center has opened in New York for the first time, bringing flavors from the Southeast Asian island's mix of Malay, Chinese, Indian and other cultures to an American food court.

Urban Hawker, in midtown Manhattan, features 17 vendors handpicked by the food hall's curator, KF Seetoh, with 11 coming directly from hawker centers in Singapore. Each stall specializes in a well-known dish such as chilli crab, oyster omelettes, Hainanese chicken rice or nasi lemak, a fragrant rice dish.



"I came across Singaporeans who had been living in the United States in New York for like 20, 30, 35 years, and they still miss Singapore food," said Seetoh.

"Street food in Singapore is not something you burn or deep fry. It's fairly complex. They take six hours just to prepare a meal to get it ready at 10 a.m. or 11 a.m."

The idea for the food hall was born when Seetoh met late U.S. celebrity chef Anthony Bourdain in 2013 in Singapore at a street food event. Bourdain was enthusiastic about the idea of a New York hawker market.

Seetoh later approached



Eldon Scott, president of Urbanspace, a property manager who curates immersive public markets,

who quickly agreed. "The amazing thing about him saying yes was that he's never been to Singapore,"

Seetoh said.

Seetoh hopes that this hawker center will be the first of many in the country.

"It's just like exporting grandmother's deliciousness, the food that I grew up with," he said. "Food was good but something was missing without plastic plates, cutlery, and sweltering heat," said Magdalene Sim, a Singaporean, on social media. "The queues were the same though."

Customer Julie Lee, on her third visit, raved about Hainan Jones' chicken over rice. "Everyone should give it a try. So much flavor, so tender," she said.

— Reuters

TRAVEL TALES

Nature's cleaners: Cyprus returns rare vultures to wild



WITH A WINGSPAN as wide as a basketball hoop is tall, it took just a few flaps for the vulture to soar to freedom towards the glittering seas off Cyprus.

Griffon vultures, birds that perform the vital job of clearing carcasses that could otherwise spread disease, are on the "brink of extinction" on the Mediterranean island due to poisoning, experts warn.

But 15 have been returned to the wild in recent weeks in a bid to boost numbers, nearly tripling the population to an estimated 23, helping restore an iconic species critical to the health of the ecosystem.

"They are nature's clean-up crew," said Melpo Apostolidou, from BirdLife Cyprus, an environmental group coordinating the vulture reintroduction programme.

"They provide an efficient, cost-effective and environmentally beneficial carcass disposal service."

With a white head and graceful sand-coloured wings stretching up to 2.8 metres (over nine feet) they are as majestic as eagles.

The eight birds released on Wednesday were the last of a batch of 15 birds, rehabilitated after being injured as juveniles in Spain before being brought to Cyprus.

Since December, they were acclimatising in an aviary in the hills some 15 kilometres (10 miles) from the port city of Limassol.



NOTHING TO BE AFRAID OF

Vultures are scavengers not hunters, neatly cleaning up fallen carcasses before they rot in the sun.

A dozen birds — known collectively as a "wake" of vultures — can clean a single sheep carcass in an hour.

They do have an image problem: their eating habits of dining on the dead means some see them sinister harbingers of doom.

But wildlife vet Constantinos Antoniou said there was no cause for alarm.

"They are an integral part of our ecosystem, and have been for thousands of years," Antoniou said, who provided technical support for the release, including fixing GPS trackers to their backs.

"Unless you are dead, you have nothing to be afraid of, because vultures feed only on carcasses: they have no interest in humans or pets."

Once they were a common sight over Cyprus. In the 1950s, there were several hundred birds across the island.

But amid poisoning, hunting, habitat loss, disturbance of breeding colonies and birds flying into electricity wires, numbers had crashed to just eight earlier this year.

"Poisoning is a big problem," said Andreas Christoforou, a government wildlife protection officer, who with sniffer dog Sophie searches for illegally-laid poison placed by farmers and hunters to kill foxes and feral dogs.

"Those laying poison face punishment, but it is hard to catch them."

Christoforou and Sophie, a border collie, have located some 10 poisoned baits in the past six months.

He explained that since vultures often feast together, one poisoned carcass can wipe out several.

In May, at least three vultures were found dead after eating poison.

FLAGSHIP SPECIES

If vultures went extinct, it could impact our own health and well-being in the long-run, said Haris Hadjistyliis, from the Game and Fauna Service.

"In the past they were seen as very helpful because they were so important in clearing carcasses, removing sources otherwise of bacterial disease," Hadjistyliis said.

"We cannot ignore history, for we never know what we might face in the future... everything that exists has a reason to exist, with a role to play in the ecosystem."

Today, livestock carcasses are collected for cremation, but feeding them to vultures could provide a simpler and eco-friendlier way, even reducing greenhouse gas emissions, experts from BirdLife argue.

In time, conservationists hope the vultures could bring in revenues through tourism, noting that feeding platforms in Spain have become popular for visitors.

The birds were released as part of a wider 1.3 million euro programme, largely from the European Union's environment and climate action fund, to boost key species in a bid to restore ecosystems.

As the birds were freed, another vulture released in a previous batch soared on the other side of the valley, as if waiting for the rest to join.

"These are a flagship species, and if we are losing a flagship species, what is happening to the rest of biodiversity?" said Apostolidou. "It is a huge battle." — AFP



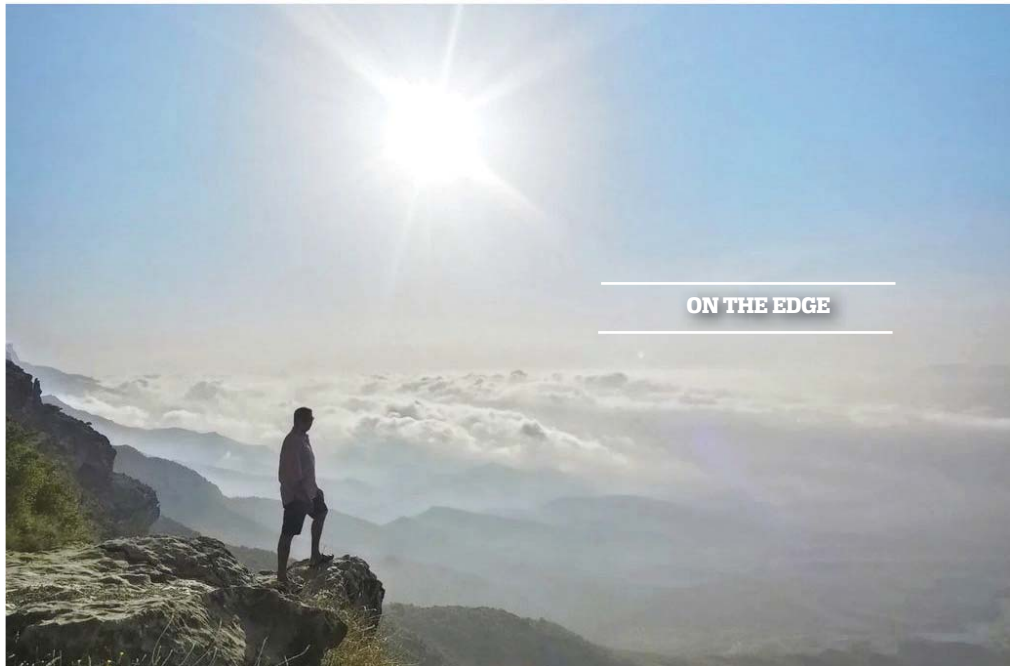
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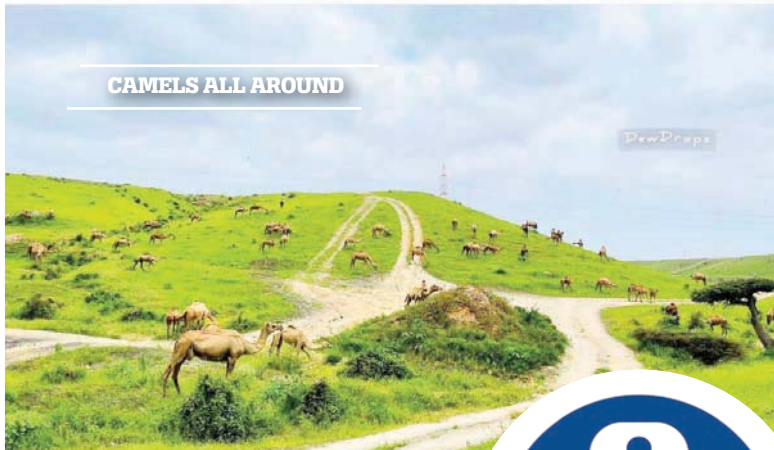
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AROUND THE WORLD

DISCOVERY

What caused holes in Sue the T. rex's jawbone? Scientists are stumped



SUE, THE BIGGEST and best preserved Tyrannosaurus rex ever unearthed, no doubt was a fearsome beast when this predator prowled what is now South Dakota about 67 million years ago at the twilight of the age of dinosaurs.

But even this huge dinosaur, whose fossils are displayed at the Field Museum in Chicago, was not invulnerable. A prime example of this is the series of circular holes in Sue's jawbone that continue to baffle scientists. New research seeking an explanation for these holes has managed to rule out one major hypothesis, though the answer remains elusive.

Researchers said a close examination of the eight holes — some the diameter of a golf ball — on the back half of Sue's left lower jawbone, or mandible, determined that they were not caused by a type of microbial infection as some experts had proposed.

The holes were found to differ from bone damage caused by such an infection, said Bruce Rothschild, a medical doctor and research associate at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh, lead author of the study published this week in the journal *Cretaceous Research*.

Sue, measuring 40-1/2 feet long (12.3 metres), represents one of the world's best-known dinosaur fossils. Tyrannosaurus was one of the largest land predators ever, inhabiting western North America at the end of the Cretaceous Period.

Field Museum paleontologist and study co-author Jingmai O'Connor noted that about 15% of all known T. rex specimens have holes similar to Sue's.

The researchers explored whether the holes had been caused by an infection involving microbes called protozoans. One common protozoan disease known to occur in birds, which evolved from feathered dinosaurs, as well as in people is called trichomoniasis, caused by a parasitic protozoan. Trichomoniasis in people, though not birds, is a sexually transmitted disease.

O'Connor noted that one falcon diagnosed with trichomoniasis had shown damage in its jaw, but it differed from Sue's holes.

The bone around Sue's holes showed signs of healing, indicating that whatever caused them did not kill the animal. Similarities were observed between Sue's healing and the healed breaks in other fossilised bones as well as healing bone seen around holes made in the skulls of ancient Inca people in Peru.

The cause of Sue's holes remains a puzzle.

Rothschild proposed the possibility of claw damage during mating, or as he put it: "mounting from back or top with claws striking the posterior mandible." Sue has a feminine name — honouring the woman who discovered the fossils in 1990 — but the dinosaur's sex is unknown. "I honestly have no clue what formed them," O'Connor said. "I really do not think they are bite marks or claw marks."

"A pathology that commonly affected T. rex individuals, that caused large holes to open up in the jawbone but only in the back of the jawbone, but didn't kill the T. rex because the holes started to heal, at least in Sue — it's weird," O'Connor added. "So many hypotheses have been put forth only to be shot down. It's a good paleontology mystery — my favourite."

The holes were not the only examples of damage endured by Sue, a dinosaur that lived about 33 years.

"Sue was quite old when it died and it shows numerous injuries and pathologies," O'Connor said. "It had gout in its hands. It had fallen on its right side, busting its ribs — they healed, though. It had torn a ligament in the right arm — healing. It had a horrible bone infection in its left leg. It had arthritis in its tail. It would not have been a happy camper the last year of its life." — Reuters

FASHION

Hermes takes polished fashion to desert rave set at Paris Fashion Week

HERMES ARTISTIC director Nadege Vanhee-Cybulski seized on the vibes of the Burning Man Festival, adding swirls of color and utilitarian touches to a sleek spring and summer collection sent down the runway on Saturday to techno beats.

"A rave in the desert," announced show notes which were handed out by attendants in suits who also greeted guests with glasses of champagne.

The audience was seated on risers facing a hulking set in the shape of a mound of desert sand — a white form that came alive with moving colours when the show started.

Models marched around the plushly-carpeted set on cubist-style platform sandals.

The first look was classic Hermes: a pale, tan leather shirt and trouser ensemble, the top with a collar and wide sleeves, while pant legs were gently cinched at the bottom.

A burst of russet-coloured looks came later, followed by silky dresses in large patches of orange and pink, garments crafted from perforated leather and slightly bolder, graphic prints outlined with black.

Tent-like straps lifted panels from hems and decorated bared midriffs, while laces ran up and down seams and a minimalist military-style leather vest had a slim backpack pouch.

Celebrities and international crowds have flooded the French capital for Paris Fashion Week, which winds up on October 4, and has marked the fashion industry's sweeping return as the post-pandemic boom in luxury sales continues.

Italian fashion house Valentino shows on Sunday, while Chanel and Louis Vuitton hit the runway on Tuesday. — Reuters



OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

The Visit (Part 2)

THE MINUTE the artist set his foot in Kitzania, he was pretty nervous. Never being around cats meant that he had the typical misconceptions of all non-cat owners: cats are sly and good for nothing but eating and sleeping (I couldn't agree more with the last part).

My curious indoor cats were lying around when he arrived. He was impressed by Naeemo's cute looks and asked about her name. Mom answered: "Naeemo. She's a true lady! You'll love her!"

My aunt disagreed instantly while Naeemo kept giving me her usual told-you-so looks that I ignored. The next day, the cats were too curious to stick to the plan we discussed in our meeting. Sinan kept following the artist around the house — almost stalking him — and tried to get into his bedroom, which was kept locked as it had many plastic bags (Sinan's biggest complex). Yet he managed to slip in and pee on them when nobody was looking. Even Poppy who never left her territory got interested and came out in the evening while we were watching TV in the living room. She insisted on saying hello by rubbing herself on my aunt's back before sitting opposite of the artist and staring at him indifferently.

He wondered loudly if she was the blind one as her eyes looked funny. I corrected him: "Nope! This is the cross-eyed one!" Poppy wasn't impressed by the nickname.

As an apology, the artist quickly offered her a photo session, which she ignored and watched TV instead. The three weeks spent in Kitzania were a true learning experience for the artist. He discovered a new cat fact every single day.

For example: he was astonished to know that like humans, cats got fatal diseases such as kidney failure and cancers. However, he never understood how I could tell my cats apart when all tabbies and all black ones looked alike (at times he thought

that Sinan, Poppy, and Azhar were the same cat!).

In his country, stray cats were of a different breed and tabby colour never existed — he called it green. He concluded that tabbies were untrustworthy, especially after Sinan's successful attempts in breaking into his room more than once!

I gave him a tour around Kitzania and Dogzania (the wadi where I fed the stray dogs). He was impressed by my pack of wadi dogs and being an artist commented on their beautiful brown coat colour, something I'd never noticed before.

Hajras the dog came visiting out of curiosity and was welcomed by the Kitzanians' hisses and crouched bodies! While touring Kitzania, the cats kept scattering around the artist as they were surprised by his heavy steps, especially Azhar who planned to say hello but ran away instantly!

That very evening the artist heard a big fight outside and wondered about it. I assured him that it was normal as Kitzanians were protecting their territory from intruders (or fighting with each other to kill time if not each other!).

Kiki — who was hiding for days assisting the situation before showing up — decided to introduce herself in her special way. She performed an impressive acrobat where she chased a fly and flipped in the air to catch it, which left the artist awestruck (her daily routine, nothing new really!).

Duja made an appearance and was given a pity look. His patchy tail gained him the nickname 'sausage cat' and a baffled exclamation: "Did he just meow and call you Mama?" The thing that the artist didn't know at the time was that he was being watched and studied by fat Mansoor. (To be continued...)

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



art & life

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MONDAY | OCTOBER 3 | 2022

To tackle a kimchi crisis, South Korea banks on massive cabbage warehouses

SOUTH KOREA'S kimchi makers are in serious pain — brought low as a climate change-induced shortage of cabbages sent prices rocketing this year, exacerbating damage inflicted by cheaper offerings from Chinese competitors.

Such is the sense of crisis surrounding the spicy pickled side dish eaten daily by many Koreans and central to Korean identity, that the government recently laid out plans to construct two massive cabbage storage facilities.

At 9,900 square metres each, the facilities to be built in the rural counties of Goesan and Haenam will, combined, be equivalent to three football fields in size. They will be able to store 10,000 tonnes of cabbages and pickle 50 tonnes of cabbages daily.

Construction, expected to cost taxpayers 58 billion won (\$40 million), is due to be completed in 2025.

For local kimchi makers struggling to purchase sufficient cabbages at current high prices, government intervention to store the produce and supply the industry at affordable rates can't come soon enough.

A climate shift in recent years that has brought higher temperatures and heavier rain has damaged cabbage crops, curtailing supply. This year, prices of cabbages doubled in less than three months, part of a broad spike in infla-

tion to 24-year highs hit in July.

"We used to purchase cabbages in June then store them for use later when cabbage prices climb, but this year we are already out of stock," said Ahn Ik-jin, chief executive of kimchi maker Cheongone Organic.

"We used to produce 15 tonnes of kimchi a day but now we are only producing 10 tonnes or less," he said. His company has had to raise its kimchi price by two-thirds to 5,000 won (\$3.5) per kilogram.

South Korea's kimchi industry has been on a slippery slope for quite some time.

Chinese imports, often priced at about a third of locally made kimchi, have surged over the past two decades to account for 40% of the domestic market for commercially made kimchi.

Add in weak cabbage harvests over recent years and much of the industry has just crumbled. (While kimchi can be made from other ingredients, about three-quarters of commercially made kimchi is cabbage-based.)

Last year, almost half of South Korea's 1,000-odd kimchi makers either shut down permanently or temporarily or switched over to other products, according to a study by Korea Rating & Data.

Korean kimchi makers are hoping the government's plan will at least

prevent home-grown producers from losing further ground.

For its part, the government hopes the storage complexes will also "greatly contribute to strengthening domestically made kimchi's position globally," said Lim Jeung-guen, deputy director of the agricultural ministry's food industry promotion division, adding that more complexes could be built if the first two work out well.

The country's kimchi exports surged 10.7% to a record \$160 million last year, riding a wave of interest in Korean culture propelled by the likes of boy band BTS and Netflix's dystopian drama "Squid Game".

Domestically, however, concern is growing that the cabbage shortage will also torpedo the tradition of 'Kimjang' — the making and sharing of kimchi among families, friends and communities, often conducted in but not limited to November.

According to an official at the Hanaro Mart supermarket chain, sales of ready-made kimchi have climbed 20% since August compared to the same period from a year earlier.

"I normally make kimchi myself but the cost of ingredients has gone up so much," says Kim Sook-kyung, 72, as she bought ready-made kimchi at a supermarket in Seoul.

"I plan to mix making and buying kimchi going forward." — Reuters

