

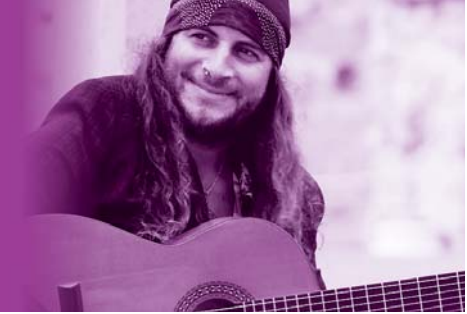
Central cooling plant for Innovation Park Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation on Sunday signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement with Tabreed Oman, the leading operator of sustainable district cooling plants in Oman. The agreement was signed by Dr Rahma bint Ibrahim al Mahrouqiyah, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, and Eng Abdullah bin Said al Hinai, CEO of Tabreed Oman. According to this agreement, Tabreed Oman will undertake the construction of the central cooling plant for Innovation Park Muscat and operate it in accordance with the highest technical and professional standards. The sustainable cooling plant will be located within Innovation Park Muscat, with a total land area of 1,500 square metres. — ONA



P19

A PASSION PROJECT OF SPANISH DIRECTOR



P15

NEW JV TO DRIVE GROWTH OF EV INFRASTRUCTURE IN OMAN



P10

GRIEVING KOPECKY WINS FIRST STAGE OF WOMEN'S TOUR DE FRANCE



■ **ROME**

HM GREETINGS TO ITALIAN PM

ROME: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Foreign Ministry, took part in the International Conference on Development and Migration being held in Rome under the auspices of Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy. At the beginning of his meeting with the Italian Prime Minister, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Head of Oman's delegation, conveyed greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik along with best wishes of success to Meloni in organising and hosting the International Conference on Development and Migration, wishing the Italian people continuous growth and prosperity. — ONA

DETAILS ON P2

■ **MUSCAT**

MRI-GUIDED BREAST BIOPSY INTRODUCED

The Department of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre (SQCCRC) inaugurated an advanced technique called 'MRI-guided breast biopsy' for the first time Oman. MRI-guided biopsy is an invaluable technique for extracting tissue samples from breast lesions that are identified through MRI. This procedure provides a high level of accuracy in diagnosis, risk assessment, and personalised treatment planning for patients. This screening tool discovers pathological changes before even seen by mammogram and breast ultrasound. **SEE ALSO P5**

■ **SALALAH**

MINERALS SECTOR RECORDS 11% GROWTH

An increase of 11 per cent was registered in the total revenue of the minerals sector during 2022 compared to 2021, according to the data of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals. The total sales value of mineral ores (metallic and non-metallic) amounted to about RO 98 million and the total production of mineral ores (metallic and non-metallic) amounted to about 63 million tonnes. The volume of sales of building materials in the local market amounted to about 16 million tonnes, which is fully proportional to the local demand for building materials in 2022. **DETAILS ON P13**

K H A R E E F D H O F A R 2 0 2 3

First edition of 'Flowers and Life Festival' in Salalah from July 27

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in conjunction with Taiseer Platform, government institutions, and private sector establishments will organise the first edition of 'Bloom Hawana Salalah Festival' (Flowers and Life Festival).

The event will be organised as part of the activities of Khareef Dhofar season 2023. The festival will take place from July 27 to August 11 at Hawana Salalah, Dhofar Governorate.

The opening ceremony of the festival will be held under the auspices of Shaikh Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI).

The festival is expected to attract around 10,000 visitors a day.

It aims to provide an immersive and unforgettable experience that combines



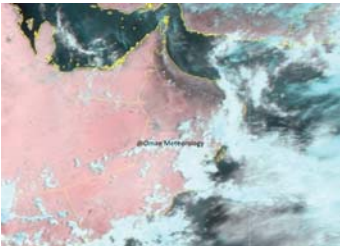
creativity and entertainment in a delightful environment. Through partnering with different government parties and private sector companies, Taiseer Platform aims to contribute to the promotion of Khareef Dhofar, and thus enhance the position of Oman as a distinguished destination for tourists and

visitors. The Festival includes a mini-exhibition of plants that grow in the land of Dhofar. The talented Omani youth will add a distinctive touch and enrich the festival across the event sites, such as painting, playing music, street theatre, and other arts, along with many other youth talents and creations.

The Festival also includes an entertaining Bloom Challenges corner for families, youth, and children, which will be available free of charge for entertainment, enthusiasm, and excitement lovers. It includes fun and exciting games, in addition to a mini corner for birds and pets that harmonise with visitors and the festival's agenda.

The 'Bloom Hawana Salalah' festival will be held in Marina Hawana Salalah, and it is expected to enrich visitors with many unique and new activities.

Marwan bin Abdulhakim al Ghassani, Director, Tourism Promotion Department at the Directorate-General of Tourism, Governorate of Dhofar, said that this festival is organised in line with the approach of the authorities concerned with distributing tourist traffic to tourist destinations and sites in the Dhofar Governorate during the Khareef season. — ONA



Oman braces for rain and rough seas

MUSCAT: The Oman Meteorology Office said the Sultanate of Oman is likely to get affected by an air trough of low pressure extending from western India over the next few days, starting from Monday.

According to the Met's forecast, clouds advection and possibility of sporadic rain ranging between (10-30 mm) are expected over the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah, starting on Monday evening. The impact zone of the air trough will gradually cover other governorates, including Al Wusta and Dhofar, on Tuesday and Wednesday, the latest weather maps and analysis by the National Multi-Hazard Early Warning Centre indicated on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the weather will be cloudy to partly cloudy over the rest of the governorates, with the possibility of scattered and occasional thunderstorms around the Al Hajar Mountains during this period.

The sea state will be moderate to rough along the Sea of Oman with maximum wave height ranging between (1.5-2.5 metres).

The sea condition is expected to be rough along the coastal strip of the Arabian Sea with waves reaching around four metres, according to the Met Office.

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) calls on everyone to take caution, avoid crossing wadis and not to venture into the sea during this time.



OMANI CULTURE SHINES AT TATTOO BASEL

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Royal Cavalry of the Royal Court Affairs, and the Royal Guard of Oman, concluded its participation in the 2023 Tattoo Basel Military Music Show, held in Basel, Switzerland, with the participation of musical groups from different countries of the world. In the corner dedicated to Oman, a group of musicians from the Royal Cavalry and the RGO played various pieces of music and presented Omani sweets, incense and frankincense to the visitors. During the Open Day for children, musicians played musical compositions and introduced them to the various types of music and its instruments and their uses, in addition to training them to ride horses. — ONA

Pope calls for more climate action by world leaders

ROME: As heatwaves, floods and wildfires ravage parts of the globe, Pope Francis called on political leaders from all countries to do more to combat climate change. "We are experiencing, here and in many countries, extreme climatic events," the leader of the Catholic Church told worshippers on Sunday after the traditional Angelus prayer in St Peter's Square in Rome. "And, please, I renew my appeal to the leaders of nations to do something more concrete to limit polluting emissions. It is an urgent challenge and cannot be

postponed, it concerns everyone. Let us protect our common home!" Pope Francis told the roughly 20,000 faithful gathered in the square. Pope Francis specifically mentioned the recent floods in South Korea. Italy and much of southern Europe have also been hit by repeated heatwaves in recent days, and wildfires forced the evacuation of thousands from the Greek island of Rhodes on Sunday. Pope Francis on Sunday also recalled the plight of thousands of migrants who have been stuck



A firefighter tries to extinguish a wildfire burning near Asklipio on the island of Rhodes, Greece. — Reuters

in the deserts of North Africa for weeks. European and African governments must take care of these people, he said. "The Mediterranean should no longer be a scene of death and inhumanity," the pontiff said. **WILDFIRE ON GREEK ISLAND:** Meanwhile, thousands of tourists and residents fleeing a wildfire on the Greek island of Rhodes huddled in schools and shelters on Sunday, with many evacuated on private boats from beaches as flames menaced resorts

and coastal villages. Thousands spent the night on beaches and streets. Tour operators Jet2, TUI and Corndon cancelled flights leaving for Rhodes, which lies southeast of mainland Greece and is famous for its warm seas and ancient sites. The fire left trees black and skeletal. Dead animals lay in the road near burnt-out cars. The fire brigade said 19,000 people were moved from homes and hotels, calling it the biggest safe transport of residents and tourists Greece has carried out. — dpa/AFP



Royal Office Minister receives UK ambassador

MUSCAT: Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Numani, Minister of the Royal Office received in his office on Sunday Dr Liane Saunders, appointed-ambassador of the United Kingdom (UK) to the Sultanate of Oman.

During the meeting, the two

sides reviewed relations between Oman and the UK.

They also reviewed areas of cooperation and means of promoting them to serve the joint interests, in addition to touching on a number of matters of common interest. — ONA

Oman participates in migration conference in Italy

ROME: The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Foreign Ministry, took part in the International Conference on Development and Migration being held in Rome under the auspices of Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy.

At the beginning of his meeting with the Italian Prime Minister, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, Head of Oman's delegation, conveyed greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik along with best wishes of success to Meloni in organising and hosting the International Conference on Development and Migration, wishing the Italian people continuous growth and prosperity.

On her turn, the Italian Prime Minister expressed her sincere appreciation and gratitude to His Majesty the Sultan for Oman's



participation in the International Conference on Development and Migration. She also wished His Majesty and the Omani people permanent progress and welfare.

The conference aims to address the phenomenon of migration and combat human trafficking,

promote economic development within the framework of multilateral cooperation and find solutions to the challenges facing many countries of the world with regard to migration, illegal movement, smuggling and trafficking of migrants. This

can be realised by launching a platform for joint cooperation between all countries concerned to ensure the active participation and mutual commitment of all countries receiving and exporting migrants, as well as international organisations.

Participants in the conference explored mechanisms for strengthening legal tracks, and ways to contribute to joint development projects that serve the aspirations of all countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which constitute the grounds for security, stability, and economic and social progress.

The conference was attended by representatives of the countries of the world, including heads of states and governments, in addition to some international bodies and organisations. — ONA

Social Protection Law has benefits entailed for expatriate workers also

VINOD NAIR

@vinot_nair

The Social Protection Law promulgated by the Royal Decree 52/2023 is seen as a landmark as it expands the social security cover to expatriate workers who will be covered for employment injury, maternity, and sickness under the same terms as national workers.

Perhaps for the first time in the GCC, it offers a social insurance scheme for maternity and paternity, and sickness cash benefits, according to legal experts.

Mohammed al Tai, a legal counsel at decree.om, said, "The Social Protection Law is one of the most important laws to come out in recent years and it is a great example of the efforts that the government is making in realising Oman Vision 2040." He said the protections offered by this law are very wide in scope and while Omanis are the primary target of these protections, and some also apply to non-Omanis.

The protections offered by this law fall under two main categories: Social protection and social insurance. The social protection benefits include the elderly benefit, the persons with disabilities benefit, the orphans and widows' benefit, the childhood benefit, the family income support benefit, the first-time job seekers benefit, and the maternity benefit. Social insurance includes insurance for the elderly, disability, and death; insurance against work injuries and occupational diseases; employment security insurance; insurance against sick and extraordinary leaves; maternity leave insurance; and social health insurance.

The Social Protection Law mainly provides outlines and leaves many of the details for an executive regulation that will be issued separately later.

Regarding the family income support benefit, a non-Omani widow whose Omani husband dies and has no Omani children is entitled to this benefit if she resides in Oman for a continuance period after the death of her husband.

Regarding the insurance against work accidents and

Social Protection Law responds to the needs of society: ILO official

MUSCAT: Peter Rademaker, Deputy Regional Director for Arab Countries at the International Labour Organization (ILO), reaffirmed that the Social Protection Law is "a bold reform" that responds to the needs of the Omani society.

The new system is in line with the standards of the ILO, he added.

In a statement to Oman News Agency, he said that the scheme provides greater protection for various segments of society, which covers the elderly, people with disabilities, and others.

He added that the social protection system will have a positive impact on the labour market, by giving workers a



clearer picture of the benefits they will receive, which will help them better determine their job choices.

He pointed out that these remarkable reforms allow Oman to provide the necessary protection for workers in light of diverse challenges they may face in their lives, which will increase their contribution to

the promotion and development of the economy.

He pointed out that the social protection system, in light of the current global conditions of soaring inflation and other challenges, will increase the cohesion and competitiveness of Omani society.

The Deputy Regional Director for Arab Countries at the ILO further said that the organisation provided support through its specialists on various aspects of the social protection system, such as allocating benefits against costs, economic modelling, and keeping pace with international standards while taking into account the local context. — ONA



occupational diseases, this applies to non-Omanis based on the categories and rules to be issued by a decision by the Board of Directors of the Social Protection Fund.

Regarding the death pension, non-Omanis can be beneficiaries of this if they reside in the Sultanate of Oman.

About sick leave and extraordinary leave insurance apply to non-Omanis based on the categories to be issued by a decision by the Board of Directors of the Social Protection Fund.

Regarding maternity leave insurance, this applies to non-Omanis based on the categories to be issued by a decision by the Board of Directors of the Social Protection Fund.

Regarding the savings system established by this law, this is compulsory for non-Omanis, and it will replace the end-of-service gratuity for them.

The disbursement of the contributions made to the savings system will be governed by executive regulation.

The savings will be disbursed



to the employee in a few cases, including the end of the employment relationship, his death, his disability, or the employee making contributions for a period not less than 180 months.

MATERNITY LEAVE

All employed non-Omani mothers of newborns will have job-protected maternity leave for 14 weeks at full pay, financed based on a one per cent contribution from the employer.

All employed non-Omani

fathers of newborns will have job-protected paternity leave for seven days at full pay, financed from the same fund as maternity benefits.

There will be uniform employment injury insurance for all employed workers in Oman, including non-Omanis (to be implemented within three years), financed based on a one per cent contribution from employers.

WORK INJURIES

As per the law, a work injury is any injury resulting from an accident that occurred to the insured during or because of work, or an injury to one of the occupational diseases shown in the list of occupational injuries and diseases and other diseases to be specified by a decision based on a proposal from the medical committee.

Every occupational disease whose symptoms appear within one year from the date of termination of the insured's service, unless the list of occupational injuries and diseases indicates a longer period for some occupational diseases, and the first medical diagnosis related to the occupational disease is considered as the date of the injury.

Every accident that occurs to the insured during the period he is going to start his work or returning from it, or during his movement from his place of work to the place where he takes his food or establishes his prayers in or near the place of work, and it is always stipulated that the coming and going is without stopping or deviating from the normal route, or that the route he took is considered an acceptable path to go to work or return from it, and the accidents that occur during the movements of the insured that he carries out with the intent of performing a task entrusted to him by the employer.

Cases of injury resulting in total disability or death due to accidents on the way from the permanent place of residence to the place of residence to perform work, in accordance with the conditions set out in the Regulations on Occupational Injuries and Diseases.

CPA launches unified contracts initiative



BALQEES AL ORAIMI

MUSCAT, JULY 23

The General Directorate of Studies and Development at the Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) has launched Unified Contracts Initiative for several sectors in the Sultanate of Oman to ensure better services to consumers and facilitate all existing procedures in the market, with a focus on aluminium workshops, kitchens, and electrical and electronic goods.

Al Muntasir bin Salam al Harassi, Consumer Protection Department Director in Barka, says the initiative is based on basic principles to realise the goals of Oman Vision 2040 and international, regional and Arab experiences based on the Consumer Protection Law.

According to Al Harassi, the initiative's objectives are to define the rights of the suppliers and consumers during and after the purchase process and to provide the consumers safety in the market.

It also includes fighting all forms of commercial fraud, limiting negative practices, identifying problems facing the consumer and providing solutions to them, reducing complaints and problems that the consumer may face, and improving the quality of the awareness programmes offered by the Authority to the consumer.

"The initiative will be implemented in two phases. The first will focus on drafting, reviewing and approving contracts, while the second phase will apply to commercial establishments and others. There will be a follow-up mechanism to ensure the implementation of the initiative in the coming years by measuring verification indicators every year to overcome the difficulties and challenges and achieve desired results.



Combating human trafficking top on Oman's agenda

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JULY 23

According to reports by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Human trafficking is a global problem, with an estimated 25 million victims. The Sultanate of Oman remains committed to combating this issue, taking decisive actions to address this phenomenon and safeguard human rights. As the global prevalence of human trafficking cases escalates, Oman implements effective measures to confront this crime.

Human trafficking poses a grave international concern. It gravely threatens human rights and subjects millions of individuals to exploitation in forced labour, prostitution, and slavery. In response, the international community has united to combat this crime.

Governments and international organisations across the globe are collaborating to eradicate this phenomenon. Nonetheless, significant challenges persist, including the absence of stringent laws in some countries to combat human trafficking and ensure justice for victims. Moreover, the intricate nature of these



Oman's participation in global efforts to combat human trafficking works as a driving force in the region to combat human trafficking. It reaffirms Oman's commitment to upholding human rights and preserving human dignity

Transnational Organised Crime according to the Royal Decree (6/2015) as well as the accession of the Sultanate of Oman, according to Royal Decree (46/2020), to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which is concerned with granting economic, social, and cultural rights to non-self-governing individuals, including workers. Royal Decree also issued the Human Trafficking Law No. (126/2008), which defined the crime of human trafficking and drew broad lines for combating human trafficking in Oman. Accordingly, the National Committee for Combating Human

Trafficking was established, and its terms of reference were defined in accordance with Article (23).

Recently, the Foreign Ministry issued a statement highlighting that the most common forms of human trafficking include exploitation of domestic labour and sexual exploitation.

"The Ministry is working in partnership with the National Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, the Public Prosecution Office, the Royal Oman Police, the Ministry of Social Development, the Ministry of Labour, and the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs to effectively deal with this international problem" the Ministry added in a statement.

Oman's participation in global efforts to combat human trafficking works as a driving force in the region to combat human trafficking. It reaffirms Oman's commitment to upholding human rights and preserving human dignity. Despite persistent challenges in this battle, Oman and the international community intensify cooperation and coordination in confronting human trafficking, protecting its victims, and collectively striving to eradicate this phenomenon.

Visa-free to Türkiye for Omanis soon



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, JULY 23

Omani and Turkish citizens will be soon able to travel to both countries without an entry visa.

"A request to cancel entry visas for both countries has been submitted and it is expected to be approved before the end of this year," said Mehmet Hakimoglu, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to the Sultanate of Oman in an interview with ONA.

He added that the number of Omani tourists going to Türkiye is constantly increasing with 130,000 of them visiting the country in 2022.

The ambassador stressed that he is currently seeking to enhance tourism cooperation between the two friendly countries by organising events and meetings that would contribute to attracting Turkish tourists to visit the Sultanate of Oman and to know more about the tourism potentials that characterise the Omani governorates and states.

The volume of trade exchange between the Sultanate of Oman and Türkiye has been growing

and increasing since 2017, to reach nearly \$2 billion dollars in 2022, while the total Omani imports from Türkiye amounted to \$1.58 billion, and the total Omani exports to Türkiye amounted to \$465 million.

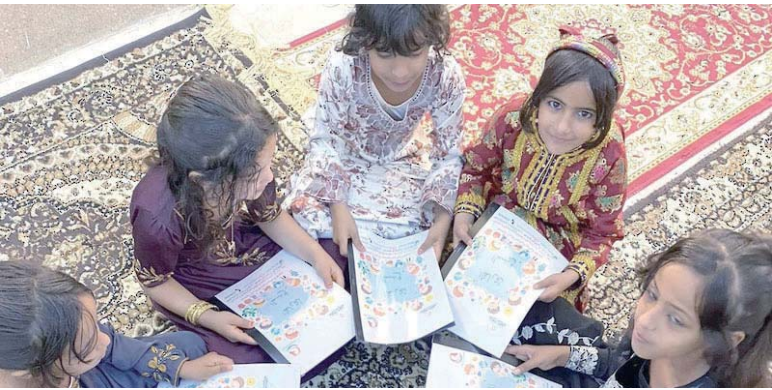
He said that work is underway to establish a Turkish industrial zone in the Special Economic Zone at Al Duqm, which will provide production, employment, income, and export for the economies of both countries and will have a significant impact on bilateral relations.

The Turkish envoy said that his country attaches special importance to investing in the Special Economic Zone at Al Duqm.

Hakimoglu also expressed his gratitude and thanks on behalf of the Turkish people for the aid sent by the Sultanate of Oman to the areas affected by the earthquake that struck 10 Turkish provinces last February.

He praised the role played by the National Search and Rescue Team of the Civil Defense and Ambulance Authority of the Sultanate of Oman in assisting those affected by this earthquake.

■ 'READING CARAVAN' CONCLUDES



MUSCAT: Organised by the Cultural Committee of the Omani Women Association, the wilayat-wide initiative themed 'Reading Caravan' concluded on Sunday in the Wilayat of Al Qabil, attracting over 300 participants from the wilayat's various villages. The committee had rolled out the initiative as part of its objectives to spread the culture of reading, instil its significance in today's school students, and induce parents to encourage their kids to read and develop their intellectual skills. The reading-driven campaign targeted remote areas of the wilayat and covered various activities, including the 'little reader', drawing, painting and fruitful training workshops. — ONA



Journey into nature's beauty: Saudi tour offices introduced to Khareef Dhofar

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, JULY 23

The General Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate concluded an introductory visit by various tourist offices in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The visit aimed to showcasing the attractions of Khareef Dhofar season in 2023.

Working in collaboration with Alila Atnow Mirbat Resort and flynas Saudi Arabia, the visit spanned four days and was part of a larger effort to revitalise tourism and develop the sector at regional and international levels, as set forth by the ministry.

Marwan bin Abdul Hakim al Ghasani, Director of the Promotion Department at the General Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, explained that the visit was the result of combined efforts between the ministry and tourism partners to boost interest in the Khareef Dhofar season. To further enhance the appeal of the season, mobile promotional workshops were organised in partnership with various



stakeholders in the tourism sector.

Dhofar Governorate is home to numerous captivating tourist attractions, and the region's well-connected roads make it easily accessible. Notably, the construction and maintenance of the roads have been carried out with careful consideration for safe and integrated urban and economic development.

Flynas has been contributing significantly to connect visitors to Dhofar. After operating three flights per week from Riyadh during the previous year's Khareef season, it now runs direct flights from three Saudi cities (Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam) at a frequency

of 12 to 13 flights per week, facilitating travel for over 4,400 visitors to Dhofar Governorate.

Salalah Airport had announced that it is scheduled to receive a total of 2,679 flights between June 21 and September 21. These flights include 1,456 domestic flights and 1,223 international flights.

Salalah Airport will welcome 536 direct flights from the United Arab Emirates, served by various Emirati airlines operating from airports in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah. Among these airlines, Wizz Abu Dhabi and Air Arabia will operate 87 and 93 flights, respectively. Sharjah Airport will operate 175 direct

flights, while flydubai will provide 181 direct flights from Dubai Airport.

Moreover, 188 flights from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, operated by flynas Saudi Arabia, will connect Dhofar with Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Breda. Additionally, 270 direct flights from Hamad International Airport in Qatar and 83 direct flights from Kuwait Airport will facilitate travel from the State of Qatar and the State of Kuwait, respectively.

Kuwait Airways, Jazeera Airways, and Kuwait Airways will operate 57; 26, and 83 direct flights, respectively, further enhancing accessibility to Dhofar Governorate.

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Nama Dhofar Services invites the specialize companies to participate and submit their offers for the below said tender in Dhofar Governorate.

Tender Number	Tender Name	Last Date for Collection of Tender Documents	Time & Last Date for Proposal Submission	Tender Fee (OMR) Including VAT (5%)
DISC/ 2023/117	CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE OF SECURITY GUARD ROOMS IN SOME VITAL LOCATIONS	7 th August 2023	30 th August 2023	RO. 52.500

- To view the tender details, you can visit www.dhofarservices.nama.om / scan the QR code
- The deposit at the last day of purchasing should be before 3.00pm.
- Bids shall be submitted online through using "isupplier portal". No hard copies are accepted.
- The company is not obliged to accept the lowest or any other bid.
- In the event of receipt of the tender document on behalf of another company, the interested purchasers in the above tender document should provide details of the person's name and the company details.
- For any clarifications contact us on:
Tel No. 23232554
email: purchase@dhofarservices.nama.om

Dhofar Integrated Services Company S.A.O.C.
CR Number 2185229, P.O. Box 2609
PC 211, Salalah - Sultanate of Oman
Phone Number 23232523, Fax 23261183
www.dhofarservices.nama.om



H A V E F U N B U T

DON'T MISS WELLNESS

THE MINISTRY HAS RECOMMENDED VISITORS TO CHOOSE APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR FOR PLACES WITH SLIPPERY SURFACES

AVOID CONSUMING UNCOVERED OR IMPROPERLY STORED FOOD

TO AVOID MOSQUITO BITES, THE MINISTRY HAS ADVISED PEOPLE TO WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING

VISITORS SHOULD KEEP IN MIND SOME LIKELY INJURIES DURING THE SEASON AND WAYS TO HANDLE THEM

APPLY SUNSCREEN TO PROTECT THE SKIN FROM THE SUN

FIRST AID IS A CRUCIAL PART OF GENERAL HEALTHCARE, WHICH IS CRITICAL IN PROVIDING INITIAL CARE DURING EMERGENCIES

KEEP ALL MEDICAL DEVICES AND MEDICATIONS IF THE VISITOR HAS ANY CHRONIC ILLNESS

SPRAINS ARE ONE OF THE MOST COMMON HEALTH ISSUES IN SLIPPERY SALALAH. IT IS ADVISABLE TO STOP DOING ANY EXERCISE OR ACTIVITY IMMEDIATELY AFTER AND REST

D U R I N G K H A R E E F

MAI AL ABRI
MUSCAT

Khareef possesses a unique charm with its scenic landscapes. It attracts tourists to Salalah from other parts of Oman and various other countries in the region.

The rush of people from all sides to enjoy Khareef necessitates precautions to prevent injuries and ensure safety. The Ministry of Health has provided guidelines to visitors, urging them to appreciate the beauty of this season while remaining vigilant, as certain risks and dangers may arise, necessitating carefulness and readiness.

In this season, the weather is characterised by continuous drizzling, increasing the likelihood of minor injuries that may require first aid. These injuries include falls while hiking the mountains or walking in plains where the ground is slippery due to fallen leaves and dampness from rain showers. It is essential to be prepared with first aid and take precautions to avoid potential dangers like slips and falls.

The ministry has recommended visitors to choose appropriate footwear for places with slippery surfaces, apply sunscreen to protect the skin from the sun, and avoid consuming uncovered or improperly stored food.

CHRONIC ILLNESS

The visitors are also requested to keep all medical devices and medications if the visitor has any chronic illness that requires specific equipment. They have been asked to be particular about cleanliness and hygiene while using public places and restroom facilities. To avoid mosquito bites, the ministry has advised people to wear appropriate clothing that covers exposed parts of the body to reduce the chances of



bites. It also recommended to use mosquito repellents, skin moisturisers, and protective lotions and avoid mosquito-infested areas as much as possible.

First aid is a crucial part of general healthcare, which is critical in providing initial care during emergencies.

Visitors should keep in mind some likely injuries during the season and ways to handle them.

Sprains are one of the most common health issues in slippery Salalah. It is advisable to stop doing any exercise or activity immediately after and rest; elevate

the affected area to reduce swelling, apply a cold pack wrapped in a cloth to the injured area for 20 minutes every 2 to 3 hours, use a compression bandage to support the injured area, seek medical attention if there is severe pain or if the condition does not improve.

Snakes pose another challenge. In some places, Khareef brings an increased risk of encountering snakes. If a snake bites someone, it is advisable to keep the person calm and still to slow down the spread of venom, immobilise the bitten limb below the heart level, remove any tight clothing or accessories near the bite site, seek immediate

medical attention or call for emergency assistance.

Food poisoning is yet another situation people should avoid while in crowded places. During Khareef gatherings and celebrations, there is a risk of food poisoning due to consuming contaminated or improperly stored food. If someone shows symptoms of food poisoning, it is advisable to ensure rest and plenty of fluids intake to prevent dehydration from vomiting or diarrhoea and seek medical attention if symptoms persist for more than three days or if there are underlying health conditions.

IF SOMEONE SHOWS SYMPTOMS OF FOOD POISONING, IT IS ADVISABLE TO ENSURE REST AND PLENTY OF FLUIDS INTAKE TO PREVENT DEHYDRATION FROM VOMITING OR DIARRHOEA AND SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF SYMPTOMS PERSIST FOR MORE THAN THREE DAYS OR IF THERE ARE UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS



SQCCCRCLaunches service to diagnose high risk cases of breast cancer



MUSCAT: The Department of Radiology and Nuclear Medicine at Sultan Qaboos Comprehensive Cancer Care and Research Centre SQCCCRCL inaugurated an advanced technique called ‘MRI guided breast biopsy’ for first time in Oman.

MRI guided biopsy is an invaluable technique for extracting tissue samples from breast lesions that are identified through MRI. This procedure provides a high level of accuracy in diagnosis, risk assessment, and personalised treatment planning for patients. This screening tool discovers pathological changes before even seen by mammogram and

breast ultrasound.

The group of patients that mostly will benefit from this service is high risk patients for developing breast cancer (strong family history, genetic predisposition, etc) who are undergoing regular MRI breast screening.

The incidence of breast cancer continues to top the list among all cancers affecting people in the Sultanate of Oman, with 31 per cent were diagnosed in the third and fourth stages according to Ministry of Health report of 2019. The presence of such advanced technology will give an opportunity for early detection and improve the survival rates.

Campaign against Aedes mosquitoes continues

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JULY 23

The Musandam Municipality, represented by the Department of Health Affairs and the General Directorate of Health Services in Musandam Governorate, continues its relentless campaign against the Aedes mosquito.

This proactive initiative aims to curb the spread of diseases transmitted by the Aedes mosquito, such as dengue fever, Zika virus, and chikungunya through a combination of public awareness efforts, strategic partnerships, and comprehensive pest management strategies.

To combat the presence of the Aedes mosquito effectively, the Musandam Municipality has deployed a dedicated team from the Municipal Preventive Health Department and the field survey team of the Ministry of Health. Together, they have been working diligently to eliminate breeding sites in various areas and residential neighbourhoods throughout the governorate.

One of the aims of the campaign has been to raise public awareness regarding the dangers posed by the Aedes mosquito and the preventive measures essential to protect against mosquito-borne diseases.



Through various media channels, the municipality has effectively disseminated information about the mosquito's breeding habits, emphasising the importance of maintaining clean and healthy surroundings and providing guidance on how to avoid mosquito bites.

To ensure the efficacy of control efforts, the concerned

department of Musandam Municipality has established a robust monitoring system. Regular inspections are conducted to identify potential breeding sites, including stagnant water bodies and neglected containers. Once identified, the mosquito larvae are promptly eliminated, and measures are taken to prevent further breeding, such as backfilling swamps and ponds.

Collaboration with the Ministry of Health has also been pivotal in this endeavour. The municipality works hand-in-hand with the ministry to conduct routine disease surveillance, enabling early detection and rapid response to any suspected cases of mosquito-borne diseases.

Adopting a proactive and effective approach, the

municipality has introduced sprayers to combat the Aedes mosquito effectively. Additionally, prompt waste removal and the elimination of weed growth in affected areas have been implemented to maintain a clean environment and limit mosquito breeding grounds.

The control of the Aedes mosquito is an intricate and challenging undertaking, demanding continuous efforts and proactive measures. The concerned department of Musandam Municipality remains committed to this mission. By employing a multi-faceted approach that includes public awareness campaigns, collaborative initiatives, integrated pest management strategies, and vigilant monitoring.

Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Defence

ENGINEERING SERVICES

TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT

Ministry of Defence invites Contractors specialized in the under mentioned works and registered with the Govt. Tender Board and Ministry of Defence to participate in the following tender.

Tender No.	Tender Name	Contractors Grade	Last Date to Obtain Tender	Tender Submission Date	Tender Price (RO)
014/2023	HVAC system works - Muaskar Al Murtafa'a (MAM) - Muscat	Excellent & specialized in HVAC system	10 August 2023	18 September 2023	608/- RO
015/2023	Building works - Thumrait Air Base	First and above	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	132/- RO
018/2023	Building works - Musannah Air Base	First and above	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	222/- RO
019/2023	Electromechanical Services at Shafaa Camp	First and Above - specialized in HVAC system	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	67/- RO
021/2023	Building works - Adam Air Base	Excellent	10 August 2023	18 September 2023	680/- RO
022/2023	Building works - Thumrait Air Base	Excellent	10 August 2023	25 September 2023	535/- RO
023/2023	HVAC system works - Ghala Air Base	First and above - specialized in HVAC system	10 August 2023	18 September 2023	225/- RO
024/2023	HVAC system works - Muaskar Al Murtafa'a (MAM) - Muscat	First and Above - specialized in HVAC system	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	150/- RO
025/2023	HVAC system works - Thumrait Air Base	First and Above - specialized in HVAC system	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	200/- RO
026/2023	Operation and Maintenance work - Various locations	First and Above - specialist in Elevators Maintenance	10 August 2023	4 September 2023	100/- RO
027/2023	Building works - Mussandam	Excellent	10 August 2023	25 September 2023	962/- RO
030/2023	Building works - Thumrait Air Base	First and above	10 August 2023	11 September 2023	191/- RO

*For more information about the above Tenders please visit gate number (14)

- Tender Documents (Electronic Tender Document) can be obtained from the Tender office, Gate No: 14, Muaskar Al Murtafa'a after payment of the tender fee indicated above.
- The Payment should be made electronically by using SMART CARD, VISA CARD and VISA ELECTRON. Sunday to Thursday (0900 – 1300 Hours).
- The Bid to be accompanied by Tender Bond in the value of (1%) of the bid value in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Certified Cheque issued by a local bank and addressed to HE the Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Bids are to be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to HE the Chairman of Tender Committee and marked with Tender Number and Name. Name of Bidder or any other marks should not be printed on the envelopes.
- Bids to be deposited in the Tender office at Gate No: 14 Muaskar Al Murtafa'a before 1300 hours on the assigned day for submission of the Tender.
- We would like to draw your attention to the importance of adherence to the submission date, request and any queries related should not be submitted to MODES fourteen days prior to submission of offer & that queries must be on electronic (Microsoft word).
- You are requested to submit the following items within your tender submission, failure to submit the required information may result a disqualification of your offer without any further notification.
 - Percentage of Omanisation within the company supported by an authenticated certificate from the Ministry of Labour (Updated Copy).
 - Detailed priced breakdown to be specified as per scope of works and drawings.
 - Full set of stamped drawings and documents, Tender Form and Tender Bonds to be submitted as hard copy and others documentation shall be as **SOFT COPY** (USB) in two separate files:
 - Financial (bill 1&2 separated file from bill3)
 - Technical files.
 - Confirmation of site visit.
 - All addendums and circulars.
 - List of sub-contractors/suppliers and their acceptance letter to this project.
 - List of current and executed projects for the last Five years.
 - Valid Registration Certificates from Tender Board.
 - Financial Statement for the last Three years.

ROP arrests one for promoting counterfeit currency

MUSCAT: The Muscat Governorate Police Command, in cooperation with the General Department of Investigation and Criminal Investigation, arrested an expatriate of Arab nationality on Sunday on charges of fraud and promoting counterfeit currency. He was caught through his dealings with the owners of shops selling jewellery and valuables. ROP stated that it is completing the legal procedures against him.

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

ROYAL HOSPITAL

ANNOUNCEMENT FOR TENDER

THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF ROYAL HOSPITAL INVITE SPECIALIZED COMPANIES TO SUBMIT TENDER

TENDER NO.	DESCRIPTION	LAST DATE FOR COLLECTION OF TENDER DOCUMENT	BID SUBMISSION CLOSING DATE ON/BEFORE 10:00 AM MONDAY	ELIGIBILITY	TENDER FEE (NON-REFUNDABLE)
2667/2023/ MOH/ DGRHP-131	UPGRADATION & REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING PABX TELEPHONE EXCHANGE SYSTEM IN BOUSER POLYCLINIC AT ROYAL HOSPITAL	6/AUG/2023	28/AUG/2023	SPECIALIZED COMPANIES REGISTERED WITH TENDER BOARD	25 RIALS

- Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.
- For any Clarification, you may contact via Telephone: 24402200, Email id etenderhd@ita.gov.om

Cambodia’s ruling party says on course for ‘landslide’ in one-sided poll

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia’s ruling party declared on Sunday it was on course for a “landslide” victory in an election where all meaningful opposition to long-time ruler Hun Sen was eliminated before polling day.

The 70-year-old former Khmer Rouge cadre has ruled since 1985 and faced no real contest in the vote, with opposition parties banned, challengers forced to flee and freedom of expression stifled.

His Cambodian People’s Party (CPP) is expected to retain all 125 seats in the lower house, prolonging his grip on power and paving the way for him to hand the reins to his son in a dynastic succession some critics have compared to North Korean politics.

The only serious opposition party was disqualified on a technicality in the run-up to the polls and it will be a surprise if any of the 17 other small, poorly funded parties win seats.

“We are winning a landslide,” CPP spokesman Sok Eysan said around two hours after polls

closed, with counting underway.

He later said the party had won “between 78 and 80 per cent of the votes” according to its own count.

Some provincial results are expected to trickle in overnight, though the final tally of seats will not be officially confirmed for several weeks.

More than 9.7 million people were registered to vote in Cambodia’s seventh election since the United Nations first sponsored polls in 1993 after years of conflict, including the era of the genocidal Khmer Rouge, devastated the country.

Whatever hopes the international community might have had for a vibrant, multi-party democracy in Cambodia over the past 30 years have been flattened by the juggernaut of Hun Sen’s rule.

Voter turnout recorded at around 9:00 pm (15:00 GMT) was 85 per cent and Hun Sen said this showed support for opposition groups had collapsed.

— AFP



Election officials prepare to count ballots at a polling station in Phnom Penh. — AFP

Netanyahu gets pacemaker ahead of key judicial vote



Protesters stage demonstrations against Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu a government’s judicial overhaul, in Jerusalem. — AFP

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he was “doing great” on Sunday following surgery to fit a pacemaker, as his hard-right government’s controversial judicial overhaul plan neared a key vote in parliament.

Tens of thousands of protesters have again taken to the streets against Netanyahu’s proposal to curb the powers of judges, which critics fear will undermine Israel’s democracy, while lawmakers started discussing a major plank of the package.

A vote is expected in the Knesset on Monday on a bill that would limit Supreme Court judges’ ability to strike down government decisions they deem

“unreasonable.”

As the crisis looked set to come to a head, Netanyahu’s office announced overnight that the 73-year-old would undergo surgery to fit a pacemaker, days after he had been hospitalised for a reported spell of dizziness.

On Sunday afternoon, Netanyahu thanked his supporters for their concern and the doctors at Sheba Medical Center for their care.

“As you can see, I am doing great,” a seated Netanyahu said in a video released by his office.

“We’re continuing our efforts to complete the legislation, and the efforts to do it in agreement (with the opposition),” he said, wearing a suit jacket open at the neck.

“Either way, I want you to know that on Monday morning I’m joining my friends at parliament,” he said, with a spokesman for the hospital saying that the premier was still at Sheba.

Earlier in the day, Sheba said Netanyahu’s condition was “good,” and that he remained in the cardiology department for observation.

Netanyahu’s government, which includes far-right and ultra-Orthodox Jewish allies, argues that the proposed reforms will prevent overreach by unelected judges and ensure a better balance of power.

Opponents accuse Netanyahu, who has been fighting corruption charges in court, of a conflict of interest and some protesters have

labelled him the “crime minister.”

“We have to keep up the pressure, we have to safeguard our democracy,” said one demonstrator, Amir Goldstein, who had spent the night in a protest camp outside parliament.

Inside the chamber, centrist opposition leader Yair Lapid said: “We want to continue to live in a Jewish and a democratic state ... We must stop this legislation.”

Scheduled trips Netanyahu had been due to make to Turkey and Cyprus this week have been postponed because of his medical condition, but no new dates had yet been fixed, said his office, where Deputy Prime Minister Yariv Levin temporarily assumed the premier’s duties. — AFP

Rockets, shells kill 20 Sudan civilians: lawyers, medics

WAD MADANI: At least 20 Sudanese civilians have been killed by rocket fire on residential areas of one of Darfur’s main cities and by shelling near hospitals in North Kordofan state, lawyers and medics said on Saturday.

The doctors’ union said that since Friday morning shells had struck near four hospitals in the North Kordofan state capital El-Obeid, killing four civilians and wounding 45.

In the South Darfur state capital Nyala, the local lawyers’ union said that rocket fire had killed 16 civilians.

The Darfur region, already ravaged by brutal conflict in the

early 2000s, has seen some of the worst of the violence since fighting erupted in mid-April between Sudanese rival generals vying for power.

“During an exchange of rocket fire between the army and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), 16 civilians were killed on Friday, according to a preliminary toll,” the lawyers’ union said.

And at least one man was killed by a sniper, it added.

In the West Darfur capital of El Geneina, near Chad, snipers have reportedly been targeting residents from rooftops since fighting began, and tens of thousands have fled across the border.



A picture taken from Omdurman shows smoke billowing north of Khartoum. — AFP

The war, which broke out in the capital Khartoum on April 15 and spread to Darfur later that month, has left at least 3,000 dead across Sudan, according to a conservative estimate.

It pits army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan against his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary RSF.

Fighting in Darfur, an RSF stronghold, has recently concentrated around Nyala, after brutal clashes in El Geneina where the United Nations had reported atrocities.

Battles have also continued in and around Khartoum. Residents reported on Saturday the first

army air strikes on villages in the Al Jazirah state, just south of the capital.

The fertile land between the White Nile and Blue Nile rivers now hosts several hundred thousands of the estimated 3.3 million people the war has displaced.

If fighting expands into Al Jazirah, they may be forced to flee again.

The humanitarian workers who support them would have to move as well, but fear the many bureaucratic challenges in relocating their operations.

Analysts say both warring sides would like to see the battlefield expand. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

YAOUNDE

12 die in Cameroon building collapse

At least 12 people were killed and 21 injured, five seriously, on Sunday when a building collapsed in Cameroon’s business hub Douala, firefighters and local authorities said.

The four-storey block collapsed onto another residential building around 1:00 am (00:00 GMT) in the north of the city, a senior fire brigade official said on condition of anonymity.

Charles Elie Zang Zang, a Douala municipal councillor,



added rescue services were searching through the rubble for survivors. Douala’s Laquintinie hospital stated it had taken in 13 patients and said two — a girl of three and a young woman of 19 — had died. — AFP

TEHRAN

4 policemen shot dead in southeast Iran

Four Iranian policemen were killed on Sunday after attackers fired on a patrol in the restive southeastern province of Sistan-Baluchistan near the border with Pakistan, state media reported.

“Three policemen were martyred in a terrorist attack on a police patrol unit,” state news agency IRNA reported.

A fourth died later after succumbing to his wounds, state television reported.

The circumstances of the attack were not immediately



clear. Unrest in the impoverished Sistan-Baluchistan province has involved drugs-smuggling gangs.

Two policemen and four assailants were killed in a grenade and gun battle in the province during an attack later. — AFP

BEIJING

Heavy rain kills 5, 3 missing in China

Five people died and three others were missing after floods caused by heavy rain hit eastern China, state media reported today.

China National Radio said the massive floods swept through a village in the Fuyang district of the city of Hangzhou, engulfing many villagers’ houses on Saturday afternoon.

Local authorities were conducting rescue operations and relocating affected residents.

The rain later led to partial mountain collapse and mudslide,



affecting multiple areas in the district and more than 1,600 households suffered power outage, CCTV said. Every year, seasonal flooding hits large parts of China, particularly in the semitropical south. — Reuters



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7

In brief

■ MANGU



TENS OF THOUSANDS DISPLACED BY CLASHES

At least 80,000 people have been displaced in three months of intercommunal violence in a north central Nigerian state, a local official said, as the army reinforced security to end the clashes. Nigeria's military chief of staff, Major-General Taoreed Lagbaja visited Mangu, in Plateau State, to mark the start of special operations to "stamp out" the crisis.

The clashes are just one of the major security challenges, where armed forces also battle heavily armed bandit gangs and separatist tensions.

Mangu district has been one of the epicentres of the recent violence with villages ransacked and farmland destroyed.

■ ATHENS



WILDFIRES PROMPT BIGGEST EVER EVACUATION

Locals and tourists fled hotspots on the Greek island of Rhodes on Sunday, as firefighters battled a blaze that had sparked the country's largest-ever fire evacuation.

Firefighters were bracing for high winds that have been forecast for the afternoon and that could hamper their efforts.

"This is the biggest fire evacuation ever in Greece," Konstantia Dimoglidou, Greek police spokeswoman said.

"We had to evacuate an area of 30,000 people." Police said that authorities had transported some 16,000 people across land, with 3,000 evacuated by sea, and others fleeing by road or under their own transport.

■ LIMA



POLICE CLASH WITH PROTESTERS AGAINST PRESIDENT

Protesters and police clashed during renewed demonstrations against Peru's interim President Dina Boluarte in the capital Lima, where demonstrators are demanding she step down and hold elections.

Boluarte came to power in December after former leftist president Pedro Castillo was ousted and arrested, triggering accusations of power grabbing and setting off months of nationwide demonstrations.

The ensuing crackdown by security forces left almost 50 people dead, according to an estimate by Human Rights Watch, which accused the authorities of extrajudicial and arbitrary killings.

Russia strikes Odesa as Putin claims counteroffensive 'failed'

KYIV: Russia's latest strike on Odesa on Sunday killed two people and severely damaged a historic Orthodox cathedral, drawing a vow of retaliation from Ukraine's leader.

The 18th century Transfiguration Cathedral, the biggest Orthodox church in Odesa, lies within the Unesco-protected historic city centre.

The strike on the port city, which Russia has pounded since quitting the Black Sea grain deal last week, came just hours before Russian President Vladimir Putin met his Belarus counterpart for talks.

Putin claimed Kyiv's counteroffensive had "failed" as he met his closest ally, Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko, in Saint Petersburg — the first time since Minsk helped end a revolt by Russian Wagner fighters.

On the Black Sea in Odesa, locals looked in disbelief as the Transfiguration Cathedral — originally built in 1794 under imperial Russian rule — was badly damaged.

President Volodymyr Zelensky vowed retaliation: "They will definitely feel this," he said.

Images showed smashed mosaics on the cathedral floor as workers cleared the rubble.

"There was a direct hit to the cathedral, it completely damaged three altars," Father Myroslav, the assistant rector of the cathedral said.

He said icons were pulled out from under the rubble and that



A view shows the Transfiguration Cathedral damaged by Russian missile strike, in Odesa, Ukraine. — Reuters

the shrine is "very badly damaged inside", with "only the bell tower intact".

Clergymen said a security guard and a priest readying for a morning liturgy were inside during the attack but both survived.

Russia blamed the cathedral damage on Ukrainian air defence.

Moscow said it had hit all its

intended targets in the Odesa strike, claiming the sites were being used to prepare "terrorist acts" against Russia.

As Odesa cleared rubble from the Russian strikes, Putin hosted his ally Lukashenko in his native city of Saint Petersburg, claiming that the Ukrainian counteroffensive to take back land captured by Russia had failed.

The Belarus strongman now hosts Wagner fighters on his territory, after brokering a deal that convinced its leader Yevgeny Prigozhin to end a march on Moscow and exile himself to Belarus.

"They are asking to go West, ask me for permission... to go on a trip to Warsaw, to Rzeszow," Lukashenko said, referring to

Wagner fighters

"We are controlling what is happening (with Wagner)," he said, thanking Putin for vowing to defend Belarus should it be attacked.

After their talks, Putin and Lukashenko greeted crowds in the naval town and base of Kronstadt on Kotlin Island in a rare walkabout. — AFP

Spain votes in snap election with right favoured to win

MADRID: Spain voted on Sunday in an early general election in which the conservative Popular Party (PP) was tipped to beat Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists, but likely to need the far-right to govern.

PP leader Alberto Nunez Feijoo, a former civil servant, said he hoped "Spain can start a new era" after he cast his ballot in Madrid.

Final opinion polls allowed under Spanish law and published on Monday suggested the PP was on track to win the most seats in the 350-seat parliament, but fall short of a working parliamentary majority.

Sanchez, in office since 2018, warned during an ill-tempered TV debate with Feijoo that a PP-Vox coalition government would "take us into a dark time warp that will leave us who knows where."

This is the first national election in Spain's modern history to be held at the height of summer, when many people are on holidays.

Turnout as of 2:00 pm stood at 40.5 per cent, up from 37.9 per cent at the same time during the last general election in 2019.

The figure does not include the record 2.47 million registered voters who cast an absentee ballot.

Sanchez, 51, called the snap polls after his Socialist party



Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez votes during the general snap election in Madrid, Spain. — Reuters

and its far-left junior coalition partners suffered a drubbing in May local and regional elections.

Under his watch the economy has outperformed most of its European Union peers, growing by 5.5 per cent last year, and inflation has dropped below the European Central Bank's 2.0 per cent target this year, a rarity in Europe.

He has also introduced popular measures such as a sharp rise in the minimum wage, higher pensions and free commuter rail travel.

Many voters are especially angered by his occasional deals with Bildu, the heir of the

political arm of the disbanded armed separatist group ETA which is blamed for over 850 deaths in its decades-long campaign of bombings and shootings for an independent Basque homeland.

Another major blow to Sanchez's popularity was a botched law on sexual consent approved last year which led to roughly 100 convicted offenders being released from jail because of the way it redefines offences.

Analysts could not rule out the possibility that neither side could secure a working majority, which would force a repeat election as happened in 2019. — AFP

Italy PM Meloni seeks to build alliance to tackle illegal migration

ROME: Illegal flows of migrants are damaging all countries across the Mediterranean, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni said on Sunday, as she sought to forge a broad alliance of nations to fight human trafficking.

Softening her past hard-line rhetoric, Meloni told an international conference in Rome that her government was open to taking in more people through legal routes as "Europe and Italy needed immigration."

But she said more needed to be done to prevent migrants trying to make the perilous Mediterranean crossing via unauthorised means.

"Mass illegal immigration harms each and every one of us. No one benefits from this, except criminal groups who get rich at the expenses of the most fragile and use their strength even against

the governments," she said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen echoed Meloni's point about offering legal routes into the 27-nation European Union (EU).

The EU and Tunisia, a major departure point for migrants, last week signed a "strategic partnership" deal that includes cracking down on human traffickers and tightening borders.

Europe has pledged 1 billion euros in aid to help Tunisia with its battered economy, with 100 million euros especially earmarked for tackling illegal migration.

"We want our agreement with Tunisia to be a template. A blueprint for the future. For partnerships with other countries in the region," von der Leyen told the conference. — Reuters



Italian PM Giorgia Meloni meets with Tunisia's President Kais Saied during an international conference on migration, in Rome. — AFP

The writer is Assoc
Prof, Dept of English
Language and
Literature, SQU

paggers, those after that have only seen smartphones and increasing choices of emojis.

Interspersing pictures in the middle of a sentence is not a big deal for them. These pictures are often used for emphasis, to substitute an elaborate idea, or just for fun.

Does this compromise our use of language?

Not at all, according to most linguists. *Forbes* magazine quotes Dr Anne Framroze: “Emojis are a kind of representational language, and all languages evolve. This is nothing new. Words have always taken up new meanings, meanings that reflect the texture and contours of the time and place in which they’re used.”

Emojis, however, cannot stand on their own. It is impossible to create a sentence with pictures unless it is some kind of challenge to decipher the meaning. Cognitive scientists have found that humans do not always attribute the same meaning to pictures, so the possibility to miscommunicate or misunderstand is still quite high. Nouns can be projected in an emoji but grammatical considerations like tenses and prepositions cannot be, potentially leading to

EMOJIS
REPRESENT A
COLLECTION OF
THOUGHTS THAT
IS ACTUALLY
INVENTIVE AND
THOUGHTFUL.
FAR FROM
TAKING AWAY
FROM LANGUAGE,
EMOJIS ACTUALLY
ADD TO THE
REPERTOIRE OF
EMOTIONS AND
IDEAS

confusion.

Closer home, Oman was part of a Unicode Consortium which looked into how a single Arabic script could be used online, creating a code that would merge many dialects. Emojis which represented Arabic culture were also discussed and integrated.

There is much research on the use of emojis in the Arab world, with the face with tears of joy, the red and black heart, and the face with hearts as eyes being some of the most popular.

Emojis are just another facet of the rich way in which language is used. Purists may think of how its use is diluting traditional words and sentences, but civilisation has always moved through human imagination and creativity.

Using emojis to represent a collection of thoughts is actually inventive and thoughtful. Far from taking away from language, it is actually adding to our repertoire of emotions and ideas.

Sandhya Rao Mehta is Associate Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature, Sultan Qaboos University.

GLENN CHAPMAN

After a wildly successful first few days, Threads popularity has waned in the weeks since Meta launched its challenge to Twitter, which lives on despite its problems.

The average amount of time people spend on Threads daily has plummeted more than 75 per cent since the platform made a rock star debut on July 6, according to data from Sensor Tower, a market analysis firm.

Threads was quickly billed as a potential death knell for Twitter, a platform that has tumbled into chaos under the leadership of mercurial tycoon Elon Musk.

The launch saw sign-ups of more than 100 million users in less than five days, smashing the record of AI tool ChatGPT for fastest-growing consumer app and creating relief and excitement amongst early adopters fleeing Twitter.

“I actually closed down my Twitter account after starting Threads,” said Brooklyn resident Lauren Brose, head of marketing at a tech start-up.

“I used to love Twitter. After Elon Musk took over Twitter, I found that the entire environment just changed completely.”

But weeks later, Threads has since seen a “material decline in new sign-ups,” Sensor Tower said.

Twitter continues to dominate its space as a platform for online comment and news, and Musk “would have to completely destroy it” to drive away its audience for good, according to Silicon Valley investor and analyst Jeremiah Owyang.

“Will Threads kill Twitter? Absolutely not. It’s just not equivalent,” he said.

Threads went live on Apple and Android app stores in 100 countries at its launch, though it is not available in Europe because parent company Meta is unsure how to navigate the European Union’s data privacy legislation.

Twitter is thought to have around 200 million regular users but it has suffered repeated technical failures since Tesla tycoon Musk bought the platform last year and sacked much of its staff.

Musk, also the boss of SpaceX, has alienated users by introducing charges for previously free services and allowing banned right-wing accounts back on the platform.

There is little doubt that Threads had a major leg up compared to other wannabe Twitter alternatives.

Several rivals have emerged but most are niche platforms without the capacity to grow at the necessary scale to dethrone Twitter.

— AFP

Cara Buckley

The writer is the
climate reporter at NYT,
part of 2018 Pulitzer
winning team

People who follow a plant-based diet account for 75 per cent fewer greenhouse gas emissions than those who eat more than 3.5 ounces of meat a day, and a vegan diet also results in significantly less harm to land, water and biodiversity, according to new research from the University of Oxford.

While the link between animal agriculture and environmental harm is well established, earlier studies used scientific modelling to reach those conclusions.

By contrast, the Oxford research drew from the actual diets of 55,500 people — vegans, vegetarians, fish eaters and meat eaters — in the United Kingdom and used data from some 38,000 farms in 119 countries.

The peer-reviewed study, led by Peter Scarborough, a professor of population health at Oxford, was published on Thursday in the journal *Nature Food*.

If meat eaters in the United Kingdom who consumed more than 3.5 ounces of a meat a day (slightly less than the size of a quarter-pound burger) cut their intake to less than 1.7 ounces a day (roughly the amount of a single McDonald's meat patty) it would be the equivalent of taking 8 million cars off the road, Scarborough said.

The study found that, compared with meat-heavy diets, vegan diets resulted in 75 per cent less land use, 54 per cent less water use, and 66 per cent less biodiversity loss.

A vegan diet avoids all animal products, including meat, eggs and dairy.

In terms of greenhouse gas emissions, people who ate more than 3.5 ounces of meat daily accounted for 22.5 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions a day due to, among other variables, the farming of livestock and land used to grow animal feed. People who ate less than 1.7 ounces of meat accounted for about half that amount, or about 11.8 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions, while fish eaters accounted for 10.4 pounds of carbon dioxide a day, and vegetarian diets produced 9



Vegetables for sale at the farm stand on the corner of White Street and West Broadway in the Tribeca neighbourhood of New York.

A NEW RESEARCH FROM THE
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD HAS FOUND
THAT VEGANS AND VEGETARIANS
WERE ON AVERAGE YOUNGER THAN
FISH AND MEAT EATERS

pounds of carbon dioxide daily.

Vegan diets had the lowest totals, accounting for 5.4 pounds of carbon dioxide a day.

There were parallel effects on freshwater pollution and biodiversity loss by diet type. In terms of land and water use and effects on species' extinction, vegetarians, fish eaters and low-meat diets had similar results.

The study also found that vegans and vegetarians were on average younger than fish and meat eaters.

Scarborough said while critiques of plant-based diets often highlighted environmental effects of select vegan foods, such as the volume of water required to produce almond milk, the new research showed that plant-based diets had far less of an environmental toll than animal-based ones, regardless of how the food was produced.

In the Oxford study, meat was defined as all land animals.

Earlier research has found that organic cow, chicken and pig meat production is just as harmful to the climate as conventional livestock farming.

“What our work says is even in the worst-case scenarios, the environmental footprint of not only vegan diets but low-meat diets are much, much better than high meat consuming diets,” Scarborough said.

“This reinforces the message that the amount of meat we consume is strongly related with our environmental footprint,” Scarborough said.

“Small changes from being a high meat eater to a low meat eater can make a huge difference in environmental impact.”

Globally, the food system is responsible for about one-third of planet-heating emissions, 70 per cent of freshwater use and 78 per cent of freshwater pollution. To slow the worst climate effects, the United Nations has called for a drastic reduction in meat consumption.

The Oxford study was funded by the Wellcome Trust, an independent global charity based in London focused on health research.

— The New York Times

To comment & email: opinion@omanobserver.om

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A religious, historical milestone

The new Hijri year has kicked off announcing the start of a new chapter in the book of life. A few days back, Muslims all over the world commemorated the start of the Islamic calendar and referenced the event of Hijrah. The word ‘Hijrah’ is referred to the migration of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from the city of Mecca to Medina in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This was the central historical event in the early days of Islam.

In fact, this event marked a turning point in Islamic history as it led to the foundation of the first Muslim state at that time. The migration of the Prophet took place on the first of Muharram and was designated to be the actual starting date of the calendar.

The most important dates in the Islamic calendar are the first of Muharram, the Islamic New Year, the 27th of Rajab, Ascension Day, the first of Ramadhan, the first day of fasting, the first of Shawwal, Eid Al Fitr, 8–10 of Dhul Hijjah, Haj to Mecca and 10th of Dhul Hijjah, Eid Al Adha.

For religious reasons, every Hijri month is marked not by the start of a new moon, but by a physical sighting of the curved moon at a given setting.

To Muslims, the Hijri calendar is not just an old system of time calculation and dating important religious occasions such as fasting during the month of Ramadhan and Haj, the pilgrimage. Rather, it brings a much deeper religious and historical significance to all Muslims.

As another year has passed, a new one has just started to remind us of the glorious memories of the significant day on which the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) migrated to Medina. The blessed migration mirrored an honourable challenge for human excellence and presented several lessons of patience, control, knowledge, and wisdom.

It stands as an improvement for



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TO MUSLIMS, THE HIJRI CALENDAR IS NOT JUST AN OLD SYSTEM OF TIME CALCULATION AND DATING IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS OCCASIONS BUT HAS A MUCH DEEPER RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

future generations to take advantage of, so they will be able to clear up all the difficulties and overcome the hardships they come across.

The Almighty Allah has sent the Prophet Muhammad with guidance to renew the call for Islam; the religion of all the Prophets and Messengers who came before him. All of them in succession conveyed the religion, which Allah accepts to their respective audiences until the religion was fully completed by revealing the Quran to the last Prophet Muhammad.

As the verse confirms, ‘Say you we believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes of Al Asbat, and that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to (all) prophets from their Lord: We make no difference between one and another of them: And we submit to Allah in Islam.’

As a Messenger of Allah, the Prophet Muhammad was ordered to ask people to convert to Islam and spread its rules among all people in Mecca. At the onset of his call, just a few people believed in him and the majority rejected his call and denied his prophethood.

They used to worship idols, bury their newly born female daughters alive and commit many acts of evilness and dishonesty.

Thereafter, the Prophet advised his companions to migrate to another city called Habasha where there was a just Christian king who welcomed Muslims and believed in them.

When the number of believers increased in Medina, Allah revealed to the Prophet to migrate to that city. Then, all Muslims started migrating one after another in compliance with the order of Allah and in obedience to the order of the Prophet.

The Prophet’s migration to Medina started a new era for he could unite all believers as if they all had a heart of a single man. It was a dawn that enticed millions of people from every corner of the universe.

REGAL IMPERSONATION



A cosplayer dressed as Star Wars Queen Amidala poses outside the convention centre during San Diego Comic-Con International in San Diego, California. – AFP

Food sovereignty increases food security

If you are looking for an argument in West Africa, try asking which country serves the best jollof. While Senegalese can claim to have invented the popular rice-based dish, Nigerians, Ghanaians, and others across the region will fiercely defend their own recipes as the tastiest. But one thing is not in dispute: Much of the rice now used in jollof is grown not by West African farmers, but in India, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Rice has been cultivated in Africa for more than 3,000 years, and it is now grown by more than 35 million farmers in 40 countries across the region. After maize, it is Africa’s most important food staple. Yet Asian rice accounts for over 40 per cent of consumption in the region, making Africa the world’s largest import market for the grain.

Though the Senegal River Valley was one of the world’s earliest rice centres, Senegal’s farmers now struggle to compete in the country’s urban centres against imports from India.

This development is symptomatic of a wider loss of food self-reliance in Africa, owing to population growth, urbanisation, and an expanding middle class’s increased demand for food. While smallholder farming and rural livelihoods still account for over half of employment on the continent, African farmers have been pushed out of local markets, and the region’s overall food import bill has risen from \$7.9 billion in 1993-95 to \$43.6 billion in 2018-20.

No region faces a more severe food-security crisis. One in five Africans – some 260 million people, most of



Kevin Watkins

The writer is a former CEO of Save the Children UK, is a visiting professor at the Firoz Lalji Institute for Africa

SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS OF AFRICAN POLITICAL LEADERS HAVE PAID LIP SERVICE TO FOOD SELF-RELIANCE, WHILE OPENING THE FLOOD GATES FOR IMPORTS OF THE ‘CHEAP FOODS’ THAT ARE CONSIDERED INTEGRAL TO INDUSTRIALISATION. NOW, THE SYSTEMATIC NEGLECT OF SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE HAS CREATED A DANGEROUS VICIOUS CYCLE

them in rural areas – are going hungry. Progress toward the United Nations’ goal of achieving “zero hunger” by 2030 stalled in 2014 and, following the supply-chain disruptions triggered by Russia’s full-scale attack of Ukraine, has gone into reverse. Sharply rising food import bills are amplifying inflation in a region where food accounts for over 40 per cent of the average consumption basket.

Millions of people are being pushed into poverty.

Just as Covid-19 underscored Africa’s urgent need for greater vaccine self-reliance, the war in Ukraine has exposed the vulnerability that comes with dependence on food imports. That vulnerability is the product of a failed development model. Successive generations of political leaders have paid lip service to food self-reliance, while opening the flood gates for imports of “cheap foods,” many of which are heavily subsidised and considered integral to industrialisation. The systematic neglect of smallholder agriculture has created a vicious cycle, weakening urban-rural linkages, trapping farmers in poverty, and leaving urban populations dependent on volatile world markets.

Building a self-reliant food system capable of providing healthy, affordable diets to all will take nothing less than a transformation of agriculture. Current yields are too low either to meet the region’s growing

demand for food or to support more resilient rural livelihoods.

In Bangladesh, a hectare of farmland produces an average of five tons of rice per harvest, which is more than double the level in Nigeria. Similarly, yields for maize – the main food staple in eastern and southern Africa – are less than half the average for Southeast Asia. Moreover, the yield gap between Africa and Asia has widened over the last 20 years.

Climate change is compounding the problem.

We are already witnessing more protracted and intense droughts, less predictable rainfall, floods, and the climate-related spread of pests, like the plague of desert locusts that devastated crops in eastern Africa in 2019. Dependence on rain-fed farming systems is a risk multiplier for Africa. Modelling reported by the International Panel on Climate Change points to potential yield losses in the range of 10-30 per

cent for food staples like maize, sorghum, and millet.

Many of the policies and technologies needed to close Africa’s yield gap and address climate threats are well-known.

CGIAR, the world’s largest global agricultural research organisation, has developed high-yield, climate-resilient, and pest-resistant seeds tailored for agro-ecological conditions across Africa.

More than two million smallholder farmers are already growing drought-resistant maize varieties, raising their yields by 20-30 per cent.

The African Rice Center has produced more than 80 new rice varieties.

These include early-maturing seeds which provide a source of food with higher protein content than standard varieties in the pre-harvest hunger period. Yields are comparable to those in Asia. Evaluations find that farmers – many of them women –

adopting these seeds are, in some cases, doubling their income. In Senegal, novel rice varieties are slowly clawing back market share from imported rice, creating new value-chains and rural jobs – and displacing imports used in jollof.

But new seed technologies can realise their full potential only if they are part of an integrated response. Farmers also need access to affordable capital, fertiliser, and productive infrastructure like irrigation, energy, and extension services. As matters stand, Africa’s farmers – notably women – are poorly served in all these areas. And while the African Union’s Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme, initiated in 2003, provides a plan of action, it has an abysmal delivery record.

Connecting the dots between food self-reliance and social protection can create win-win scenarios.

As the School Meals Coalition points out, millions of African schoolchildren are unable to learn because of hunger. Providing them with nutritious food from local producers would simultaneously combat malnutrition, improve learning, and create predictable markets for farmers, attracting the investment needed to raise productivity. The Kenyan government has already set a benchmark, pledging to provide universal school meals by 2030.



sport

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GRIEVING KOPECKY WINS FIRST STAGE OF WOMEN’S TOUR DE FRANCE



CLERMONT-FERRAND: Belgian Lotte Kopecky continued an impressive season overshadowed by the death of her brother by winning the first stage of the women’s Tour de France on Sunday in Clermont-Ferrand.

Hours before Denmark’s Jonas Vingegaard was due to be crowned men’s champion on the Champs-Élysées in Paris, SD Worx rider Kopecky crossed the line alone, 41 seconds ahead of her Dutch teammate Lorena Wiebes.

Race favourites Annemiek Van Vleuten and Demi Vollering, both also from the Netherlands, were among the leading group.

“My role doesn’t change. I’m here to help Demi win the Tour and if I have to sacrifice myself I will,” said Kopecky, 24, who claimed her 10th win of the season.

The Belgian rider has raced this season, mourning the death of her 29-year-old brother Seppe who passed away suddenly in March.

On Sunday, she attacked shortly before the summit of the Durtol, nine kilometres from the line to seal victory. As well as taking the leader’s yellow jersey, Kopecky gets the green points classification and polka dot jerseys for the best climber.

“I had been thinking about this success for a long time,” she said.

“Sport is above all emotion. And this one is a beautiful one.

“It’s a huge success, maybe not the most important because the Tour of Flanders and my track world titles also matter a lot. But this yellow jersey is really big.”

If Kopecky “hopes to keep the jersey for a few days”, she “does not forget” that she is on the Tour “with a single objective” to ensure that Vollering, second last year behind van Vleuten, wins the title.

“If I have to sacrifice my jersey in the coming days, I will do it,” she added.

France’s Juliette Labous, runner-up in this year’s Giro d’Italia, was the main loser of the day, left behind in the Durtol ascent.

Monday’s second stage takes the peloton from Clermont-Ferrand to Mauriac in Cantal, on a 151km route with six climbs, the last less than two kilometres from the line. — AFP

Netherlands stifle World Cup debutants Portugal in 1-0 win



Netherlands' defender #03 Stefanie van der Gragt (C) celebrates with her teammates after scoring her team's first goal during the Australia and New Zealand 2023 Women's World Cup Group E football match between the Netherlands and Portugal at Dunedin Stadium in Dunedin – AFP

DUNEDIN: The Netherlands kicked off their Group E campaign with a 1-0 win over Women's World Cup debutants Portugal at Dunedin Stadium on Sunday, thanks to a first-half goal from Stefanie Van der Gragt that was awarded on a VAR review.

The Dutch edged Portugal 3-2 a year ago in the European Championship group stage, but this time the Iberian side were no match for the team in their trademark orange and did not have a shot on target until the 82nd minute.

The Dutch scored in the 13th minute from a corner when Van der Gragt rose above the defence at the far post to head home, but the flag went up for offside

when the lineswoman deemed Jill Roord to be obstructing the goalkeeper.

However, the offside decision for interfering with play was overturned on a VAR review by the referee after she watched a replay on the monitor and the goal stood, sparking a second celebration from the Dutch team.

"We celebrated the goal and then we saw the assistant referee, so we had to wait for the final decision," Van der Gragt told reporters after she was named the player of the match.

"It's always difficult to celebrate a second time but it was good. I'm really happy that we won, that was the most important thing today."

Roord nearly made it 2-0 minutes later when she had a free header in the six-yard box, but the unmarked midfielder headed over the bar to hand Portugal a lifeline.

Portugal, however, failed to muster a shot on goal in the first half while at the other end they thwarted waves of attacks from the Dutch.

PEREIRA SAVES

The story was the same in the second half when Portuguese keeper Ines Pereira denied Danielle van De Donk with a fine reflex save after some clever passing to set up the midfielder.

"Portugal were really combative. There were moments

where we were great and moments where there is room for improvement," Dutch coach Andries Jonker said.

Portugal substitute Telma Encarnacao finally created their best opportunity in the 82nd minute when she charged down the right flank and cut in to shoot, but Dutch keeper Daphne van Domselaar was up to the task and parried her attempt.

"We should have had a reaction after the goal, we had a well-balanced game and structure. But compared to other matches with the Netherlands, they had a lot more possession... This is where we suffered," Portugal coach Francisco Neto said. — Reuters



England's Jonny Bairstow takes a catch to dismiss Australia's Marnus Labuschagne, off the bowling of Joe Root. – Reuters

Australia retain Ashes after final day of fourth test washed out

MANCHESTER, ENGLAND: Australia retained the Ashes after the fourth test at Old Trafford was drawn on Sunday with no play possible on day five due to rain, leaving England trailing 2-1 in the series with one match to play. England needed to take five more wickets in Manchester on the final day of a thrilling fourth test to level the series at 2-2 and ensure the final test at the Oval in London next week was a decider, but the wet weather broke home hearts.

The result meant England cannot win the series and therefore Australia, as holders, would retain the Ashes.

"Our preference is to come over here and win the Ashes but it is nice to retain," Australia captain Pat Cummins said. "It's not the best circumstances but the group should be proud of themselves.

"We wanted to win this time. Whatever happened here today it doesn't really change how we look at The Oval next week.

"It is only the last year or two I've dreamed of holding the Ashes aloft. We've turned up motivated and it will be a very special moment at the Oval and even more special if we get a win."

Having won the last test at Headingley, England did every-

thing within their power to storm back and restore parity in the series in Manchester.

They posted a colossal 592 in their first innings — their highest Ashes innings total on home soil since 1985 — in reply to Australia's 317 all out. Yet they were frustrated as the tourists battled well on a rain-hit day four to reach 214-5 in their second innings.

Australia still needed 61 to make England bat again, or stay at the crease through to stumps on day five to earn the draw that would ensure they remained holders of the Urn.

The Manchester weather, however, came to their aid, as not a single ball was possible in torrential rain, ensuring that England's eight-year wait for a series victory that would wrest the Ashes back from Australia would continue.

There is still plenty to play for next week at the Oval, especially for Australia, who can secure their first series win on English soil since 2001. "It is a tough one to take," England captain Ben Stokes said. "Playing the cricket we managed to play over the first three days and get on the wrong side of the weather it is tough to take but it is all part of the journey. — Reuters

Knight, Szokol hang on to win Great Lakes Bay LPGA team event

WASHINGTON: Cheyenne Knight and Elizabeth Szokol combined for a five-under par 65 in the four-ball final round on Saturday to edge Matilda Castren and Kelly Tan by one stroke in the Great Lakes Bay Invitational LPGA team event.

Knight and Szokol finished with a 23-under par total that included a 61 in four-balls on Thursday and a 62 in foursomes on Friday that had given them a three-shot lead going into the final round.

Finland's Castren and Malaysia's Tan closed with a 63 to finish second for the second year in a row.

After all four players in the final group reached the green at the par-three 18th and three had settled for par, Castren had a final chance to force a playoff but her birdie attempt from outside 20 feet brushed past on the right.

That signalled the celebrations for Knight and Szokol, teaming together for the third time in the event. Knight captured her second LPGA title while Szokol earned her first.

"There was a lot of pressure,"



Szokol said. "Starting the day with the three-shot lead was a great thing, but everyone was chasing us.

"In this format there are a lot of birdies, and Matilda and Kelly were playing great and started off really well. So it was definitely some pressure there.

"Cheyenne made some amazing putts coming in. I feel like we just were chatting down the fairways the whole day and trying to keep it light. It was great to have her by my side for the win."

Knight and Szokol were two shots up on Castren and Tan at the 13th hole when a weather delay halted play for almost two hours.

When they returned, Castren made a birdie putt at 13 and after Tan's birdie at 14 they were level.

Szokol birdied 15 to restore her team's lead and both teams birdied 17 as the Americans held on. Szokol said Knight's six-foot birdie putt at the 17th was the "shot of the day," keeping them in front after Castren had rolled in her own 15-foot birdie putt. — AFP



Argentina's Pedro Cachin kisses the trophy after winning against Spain's Albert Ramos-Vinolas their final match at the Swiss Open tennis tournament in Gstaad, southwestern Switzerland. – AFP

CACHIN WINS MAIDEN TITLE IN GSTAAD

GSTAAD, SWITZERLAND: Argentine Pedro Cachin held his nerve to win his first ATP title in Gstaad on Sunday, beating Spaniard Albert Ramos-Vinolas in three sets.

The 28-year-old won through 3-6, 6-0, 7-5 in a clay-court battle which lasted two hours 23 minutes in the Swiss resort. Cachin had not dropped a set in his run to the final, ousting top

seed Roberto Bautista Agut in the second round. On Sunday, Ramos-Vinolas struggled after the first set, calling for court-side treatment for blisters.

The 2019 Gstaad winner failed to win a game in the second set, but despite rallying in the third set missed a chance to lift a fifth career title at the age of 35 years. “In the beginning of the match

I was a little nervous and made a few mistakes,” said Cachin who climbs to a career-high 49 in the world rankings. “It was the first time I had played against a lefty in the tour-

namment but I stayed there. “I tried to be positive, more aggressive and go to the net. In a final it is difficult to play like this the whole match. I am very, very happy.” — AFP

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Rublev sweeps past Ruud to win Bastad title



Russia's Andrey Rublev celebrates with the trophy after winning the final at the Swedish Open ATP tennis tournament in Bastad, Sweden. – AFP

BASTAD, SWEDEN: Russian Andrey Rublev on Sunday won his second title of the season at Bastad with a straight sets win over top seed Casper Ruud. The second seed won through 7-6 (7/3), 6-0 against the Norwegian world

number four for his 14th career title and second this season after the Monte Carlo Masters in April. After a tight first set Rublev, 25, took control of the tie, winning 80 per cent of his first-serve points to seal victory

after one hour 33 minutes. Despite being a clay-court specialist with nine of his ten titles, including Bastad in 2021, on the surface, Ruud was unable to find a solution to the power of Rublev's game. — AFP



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Key forum showcases Dhofar’s mining investment potential

QASIM AL MAASHANI
SALALAH, JULY 23

The Ministry of Energy and Minerals hosted on Sunday an Energy and Minerals Forum in Dhofar Governorate showcasing an array of investment and commercial opportunities linked primarily to the governorate’s abundant mineral wealth.

The event, held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, brought together prominent figures, including Mohsin bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, as well as shaikhs and local dignitaries..

The forum began with a stimulating keynote address by Mohsin al Hadhrami, shedding light on Oman’s thriving minerals sector, with particular emphasis on the Dhofar Governorate. He also introduced the audience to the vast potential of hydrogen and essential projects under the



Ministry’s supervision.

Addressing the gathering, the Under-Secretary underscored the Ministry’s holistic approach towards the minerals sector, spanning exploration, local value addition, production, manufacturing, and exports.

This comprehensive strategy aimed at maximising the economic benefits from the country’s rich mineral resources, while also ensuring the sector’s dedication to

community development, environmental conservation, and supplying raw materials for the booming construction industry.

The forum served as a vital component of the Ministry’s broader initiatives to attract investment and foster growth in the sector.

The audience was apprised of the Ministry’s endeavours to streamline the investment system in mining, defining

value metallic minerals, the Under-Secretary expressed the importance of engaging international companies specialised in exploration and mining.

This partnership aimed at developing mining industries, generating secure job opportunities, and embracing cutting-edge technologies.

Furthermore, the Ministry has provided designated public sites for local companies to access industrial raw materials, such as gabbro ore, limestone, marble, and ornamental stones.

By strategically allocating these sites, the Ministry aims to curtail random quarrying and protect residential areas, thereby striking a balance between industrial growth and environmental preservation.

Al Hadhrami also outlined the Ministry’s groundbreaking strides in regulating the hydrogen sector. Robust legal frameworks and policies were established to foster its growth and attract investments.

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Drones, satellite imaging to help combat water loss in Oman



CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, JULY 23

Nama Water Services (NWS), the state-owned integrated water and wastewater utility of the Sultanate of Oman, is deploying drone and satellite imaging technologies to address prodigious losses occurring in water transmission networks accounting for around 40 per cent of total potable water production.

Of total water production of 444.44 million m3 in 2022, non-revenue water (NRW) – encompassing technical and commercial water losses – amounted to 180.7 million m3, representing a significant 40.7 per cent share.

This compares with a 41.82 per cent share in 2021, entailing an incremental improvement of 1.12 per cent that Nama Water Services seeks to build on through intensive loss detection and redressal strategies.

“The Company exerted significant efforts to reduce water loss in 2022,” said Eng Omar al Wahaibi, Chairman – Board of Directors.

“It took rigorous measures such as billing unbilled units, replacing faulty meters, regular preventive maintenance, quick response to reports involving visible leak repair, and introducing new technologies to locate network leaks.

The aforementioned technologies include unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) fitted with thermal imaging cameras and satellite applications. The Company was successful in rehabilitating crumbling network lines where leak and interruption reports were frequent,” he added in the company’s 2022 Annual Report.

Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO, added: “Water loss reduction is one of the Company’s strategic goals. The commercial loss associated with billing and meter faults dropped by 1.67 per cent compared to 2021. The total technical-related loss of water also dropped as a result of the network leak control during the year by 1.33 per cent compared to 2021.

This was made possible by the team’s continued effort, including the monitoring of central meters that are known to have repeated leaks and disruptions, rehabilitation of old networks, introduction of the latest technologies for water leak detection like drones, and the use of satellites.

On the other hand, the Company adopted several measures to minimise the issuance of estimated and zero-bills which helped to alleviate water loss by billing unbilled units and replacing faulty meters.”

While some water loss is inevitable during transportation through the company’s massive piped networks, dedicated teams have been established to detect and reduce those losses, says Nama Water Services (previously known as Oman Water & Wastewater Services Company).

TURN TO PAGE 15

جهاز الضرائب
TAX AUTHORITY

Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to draw the attention of taxpayers who are subject to Excise Tax to submit their returns for the second quarter of 2023, according to the forms prepared for this purpose through Tax Authority’s Portal: www.taxoman.gov.om not later than **July 30, 2023**

We hope everyone will abide and commit to the deadline of submitting.

جهاز الضرائب
TAX AUTHORITY

Announcement

The Tax Authority would like to draw the attention of taxpayers who are subject to VAT to submit their returns for the second quarter of 2023, according to the forms prepared for this purpose through Tax Authority’s Portal www.taxoman.gov.om not later than **July 30, 2023**

We hope everyone will abide and commit to the deadline of submitting.

OIH performs first corneal transplant for child in Oman

MUSCAT: Oman International Hospital (OIH) has achieved a groundbreaking medical milestone. For the first time in the country, OIH has successfully performed an Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT)-guided corneal endothelial transplant on a child suffering from a congenital corneal disease.

The pioneering procedure was performed by Dr Ahmed al Maskari (pictured), Senior Consultant Cornea, Cataract and Refractive Surgeon and Head of Oman Vision Centre at OIH.

The innovative approach utilises the latest advancements in Optical Coherence Tomography (OCT) technology to precisely guide the transplantation of corneal endothelial cells.

The corneal endothelium is a single layer of cells located at the inner surface of the cornea,



responsible for maintaining its clarity and proper function. By selectively replacing only the damaged endothelial cells, this procedure offers enhanced visual outcomes and faster recovery times compared to traditional techniques.

“We are proud to be the first hospital in Oman to conduct an OCT-guided corneal endothelial transplant, especially for a

paediatric case. This achievement is a testament to our continuous commitment to leveraging advanced technologies and treatments to provide the highest standard of care for our patients. Oman Vision Centre at Oman International Hospital has a state-of-the-art combination of cutting-edge technology, a comprehensive medical environment, and expertise to provide our patients with the great possible care.” said Dr Ahmed al Maskari.

This successful operation opens a new chapter in Oman’s healthcare landscape. It not only offers a new hope for children suffering from similar corneal conditions but also reinforces Oman’s capability to provide advanced medical procedures locally.

Marcelo Pereira, CEO of Oman International Hospital said, “We at Oman International

Hospital believe in providing the best available medical care to our patients using the advanced technology and employing the well experienced physicians.

With great pride and satisfaction, we announce the successful completion of this landmark medical procedure in Oman, which represents a significant step forward and has given hope to a young child and his family for a normal and happy future.”

Oman International Hospital is a state-of-the-art healthcare institution that strives to deliver advanced medical services to the Omani population. OIH is dedicated to integrating world-class healthcare facilities, the advanced medical technology, and highly qualified professionals to provide a patient-centric approach to healthcare.

OAB addresses industry challenges and opportunities in key roundtable talks



MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank (OAB) took part in roundtable talks on shaping the future of the financial and banking industry with representatives of the National Program for Financial Sustainability and Financial Sector Development (Etidamah), alongside other industry experts from Alizz Islamic Bank (AIB) and National Bank of Oman (NBO).

The discussions addressed the opportunities and challenges in the banking sector, and highlighted how Estidamah can play a role in catalysing alignment, and creating opportunities for growth and development.

Discussions covered supporting SMEs, innovation in the banking sector, growing the fintech ecosystem, financial literacy, talent management and green financing.

Sulaiman al Harthy, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said: “We are confident that our discussions with Estidamah will help provide a crucial blueprint for the development of the industry, and our counterparts in the banking sector.

OAB’s commitment to Oman’s socioeconomic growth agenda and Oman Vision 2040 remains steadfast as we continue harnessing innovation to enhance our product offerings and deliver an overall superior banking experience.

Understanding the key role, the SME sector is playing, we have also introduced many initiatives and solutions tailored for them, starting with workshops and training programmes to credit facilities and exclusive offers.

In addition, we financed several strategic green projects and continue to develop local talent through various programmes designed for the local market.”

Ali al Maani, General

Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank, said: “Considering the banking sector’s crucial role as a fundamental pillar of the Sultanate of Oman’s economic progress, these dialogues carry immense significance. They provide a platform for sharing valuable banking experiences from diverse sectors, foster a deeper understanding, and charter a path for the future.”

Abdullah al Hinai, CEO of National Bank of Oman said, “I am delighted to have participated in this roundtable discussion, and I thank Oman Arab Bank for the invitation.

One of the objectives of Estidamah is to enhance the readiness of the financial sector and transform it into a key enabler in achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

At the National Bank of Oman, we are committed to supporting Estidamah to promote the economy as a whole and the financial sector in particular.”

Mahmood al Aweini, Director of Estidamah stressed on the importance of the engagement and coordination between government units and private sector entities in the Sultanate of Oman to achieve the ambitious goals set for the financial sector.

Al Aweini further explained, “Estidamah will lead the creation of an advanced green financing framework as well as an attractive innovation hub for financial technology solutions. The ultimate goal is to nurture investment opportunities for international and local entrepreneurs”.

He further emphasized the importance of collaborating between the banking sector and Estidamah, to enhance the competitive advantages of the Sultanate of Oman and achieve the economic and social goals outlined in Oman Vision 2040.

MHD Leasing opens new branch at Muscat International Airport

MUSCAT: MHD Leasing, Oman’s leading vehicle rental company, has opened a new branch at Muscat airport. This expansion aims to provide people with a seamless and convenient car rental experience as soon as they arrive in Muscat.

With a diverse fleet ranging from affordable sedans to high-end luxury vehicles, MHD Leasing ensures customers can find the perfect car to match their preferences and travel requirements. The company also prioritizes the safety of its customers and has implemented rigorous cleaning and sanitization protocols to ensure the cleanliness of its vehicles.

The new airport branch of MHD Leasing provides customers with a convenient and quick pick-up and drop-off service. The rental counter is easily accessible upon arrival, and the vehicles are parked nearby. Customers can choose from a variety of flexible rental



options, including short-term and long-term rentals. The company’s friendly and knowledgeable staff are committed to providing excellent customer service throughout the rental process, from reservation to return, ensuring a seamless rental experience.

“Our expansion to the airport is a testament to our commitment to providing convenient, quality, and affordable vehicle rental services,” said Mohsin Hani al Bahrani, CEO of MHD ACERE.

“We look forward to being an easily accessible option for tourists and residents, and promoting tourism for Oman with our exceptional service and diverse fleet.”

ahlibank celebrates Etimad programme graduates



MUSCAT: In line with its continuous efforts to empower the youth through significant initiatives that add value, ahlibank proudly announces the graduation of a new batch of its employees who enrolled in the Etimad programme.

Through such programmes, the bank aims to develop leadership skills and support the careers of its employees, furthering its investment in the future of National talents. During the ceremony, five employees from ahlibank graduated from the Etimad Leadership Development programme.

These talented individuals were recognised for their exceptional zeal, enthusiasm, and commitment to reaching new heights. This falls in line with the country’s objectives to support

the youth as well as further the goals of the Omanisation strategy.

The employees were felicitated by the senior management of ahlibank. The Etimad programme serves as a platform to instill leadership competencies in young Omani professionals in middle and senior management positions within the private sector.

As a collaborative effort between the public and private sectors, ahlibank remains steadfast in its commitment to upskill young Omani nationals and equip them for future competitive roles. During the celebration, the graduates were honored with certificates and a range of valuable gifts, symbolising the joyous moment of acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

All-new Geely Emgrand sets trend in convenience features

MUSCAT: The fastest growing automotive brand in the world, Geely’s lineup of exceptional vehicles is designed to offer the ultimate driving experience, combining cutting-edge technology, advanced safety features, unparalleled comfort, bold styling, high quality, superior performance and smart interiors.

The latest addition to the Geely range is the visually attractive, 4th generation all-new Emgrand, a stylish sedan designed to impress.

Made in Geely’s advanced Changxing (an advanced 5G smart) factory using the B-segment Modular Architecture (BMA), it

has been designed to exceed the criteria for 5-star NCAP safety ratings.

The sedan is equipped with a lightweight 1.5-litre engine and 8CVT transmission that delivers excellent performance, fuel efficiency and features a sleek and aerodynamic design.

It offers the maximum power of 101 HP and high rotational torque of 142Nm, for smooth and responsive acceleration.

The elegant exterior design comes with Geely’s latest ‘Energy Pulse’ radiator grille flanked by projector LED headlamps, and LED daytime running lights.



The skyline rhythmic tail lights comprise 190 LEDs. The 17-inch alloy wheels ensure a comfortable ride while the sunroof adds style to make that strong impression.

The plush interiors of the all-new Geely Emgrand are second to none with nearly 1.5m transverse space.

The 6-way electric adjustment

ensures the driver feels comfortable in his seat. Another value addition is the Remote Key Start/Stop Engine. Added to this is the 8” central media screen and 12.3” HD Digital Instrument, the auto folding rear view mirror and the Cruise Control system.

The all-new Emgrand has advanced safety and technical features such as ABS with EBD, electronic stability program, traction control, hill hold control, electric parking brake with auto hold, six SRS airbags, intelligent seating monitoring system and the BOSCH 9.3 ESP System that enable a safe ride. It comes with Normal/

Sport/ECO driving modes.

In Oman, Geely vehicles are brought to you by Towell Auto Centre LLC.

To know more about the products, test drive booking, and get a quote, please log on to www.geelyoman.com.

With the introduction of this new model, Geely continues to lead the way in the automotive industry with its innovative designs, customer satisfaction, and commitment to quality.

Omani drivers can be confident that they will get the very best in performance, comfort, and safety when they choose a Geely vehicle.



New JV to drive growth of electric vehicle infrastructure in Oman

QASIM AL MAASHANI

MUSCAT, JULY 23

Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG, a subsidiary of OQ Group, has announced a collaboration with Synergy Investments LLC to support the growth of Electric Vehicle infrastructure in the Sultanate of Oman.

A binding Heads of Terms pact signed earlier this month aims to establish 'Electric Vehicles One' (EVO), a new entity focused on developing Oman's electric vehicle infrastructure.

The formal agreement, inked on July 3, 2023, marks a significant milestone in the advancement of electric mobility in Oman.

Notably, both parties will be contributing capital in the form of assets, valued as per a comprehensive asset valuation report.

EVO's core business activities will revolve around the trading,



installation, operation, and maintenance of cutting-edge electric vehicle charging stations.

In addition, EVO will offer a suite of ancillary services and products, designed to complement Oman's evolving electric vehicles

ecosystem.

The joint endeavour is propelled by a shared vision to expand the electric vehicle market in Oman and drive the adoption of sustainable, green energy solutions. By combining their

expertise and resources, Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG and Synergy Investments LLC aim to spearhead the sustainable transportation movement in the region.

At the energy forum in Salalah on Sunday, Oman Oil Marketing Company SAOG outlined its strategy to support Oman's Net Zero goal.

"We are excited about the potential impact of EVO in shaping a greener transportation landscape and reducing our carbon footprint," a company official stated.

"This collaboration represents a significant step towards a cleaner and more sustainable future for Oman. Vehicle charging solutions are compatible with Gulf specifications, which contributes to the facilitation of the process for the beneficiaries," he said, adding there will be subscription packages at prices that suit all categories.

MSX drops 4 points

MUSCAT: Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) general index 30 yesterday lost 4.8 points, comprising a drop by 0.10% to close at 4,805.07) points, compared to the last session, which stood at 4,809.85 points.

The trading value today stood at RO 4,658,835, comprising a surge by 230.2%, compared to the last session, which stood at RO 1,411,110). The report released by MSX pointed out that the market value went down by 0.066% to reach about RO 23.91 billion.

The report added that the



value of shares bought by non-Omani investors reached RO 118,000, comprising 2.53%.

The value of shares sold by non-Omani investors reached RO 178,000, comprising 3.81%.

The net non-Omani investment decreased by 1.28% to RO 60,000. — ONA

Drones, satellite imaging to help combat water loss in Oman

FROM PAGE 13

Part of this effort is being enabled by analysing the performance of District Meter Areas (DMA) levels and rehabilitating low-performing ones.

Further, to supplement this effort, the company has deployed drones equipped with multispectral and infrared cameras designed to pinpoint water leakages in large and inaccessible areas where current ground methods, like the acoustic survey, are not effective.

Additionally, satellite-based water leak detection technology is used to identify water leaks based on the analysis of radar satellite imagery to define leakages down to 3 metres below ground, it added.

Nama Water oversees dedicated networks for water distribution, wastewater collection, transportation, wastewater treatment, supply, and disposal of treated effluent, serving an estimated 4 million people.

It has a customer base of around 896,000 accounts for water and wastewater services.

Key forum showcases Dhofar's mining investment potential

FROM PAGE 13

The Ministry also earmarked suitable locations for hydrogen production, with a commitment to localise the technology.

Hydrogen was heralded as a key player in diversifying energy sources, reducing carbon emissions, and driving economic growth, in alignment with global movements towards sustainability and clean technologies, he said.

Reflecting on the significant progress made in the mineral sector, the production statistics for 2022 were unveiled. An impressive 63.6 million tonnes of mineral ores were produced, with total sales reaching 57.3 million tonnes, valued at RO 98.974 million.

The establishment of a well-defined regulatory environment would facilitate effective marketing, attract investors, and significantly reduce time and effort in the process, officials said.

Moreover, the Ministry's vision encompassed social responsibility, community development, and the empowerment of local capabilities, it was stressed.

OIA launches 'Mu'tamad' programme for finance, accounting graduates

MUSCAT: Oman Investment Authority (OIA) and its companies put in continuous efforts to develop Omani talents and close the gap between the labour market's needs and qualified Omani professionals.

In that vein, OIA, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and higher education institutions in Oman, launched a new employment and development programme under the name 'Mu'tamad'.

The programme focuses on recruiting and developing Omani graduates in finance and accounting disciplines to qualify them for the Chartered Certified Accountants Certificate (ACCA).

Mu'tamad seeks to onboard 20-25 graduates and offers them the opportunity to obtain the ACCA within three years from their recruitment. This career development journey includes tiered educational programmes, in addition to technical and behavioural training in line with international standards.

The programme will help create a pool of local professionals who can lead the financial and accounting sectors in the future.

To achieve this, the programme will



THE PROGRAMME WILL HELP CREATE A POOL OF LOCAL PROFESSIONALS WHO CAN LEAD THE FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING SECTORS IN THE FUTURE.

enhance their skills in various financial and administrative fields, build their capabilities, develop their knowledge, instil positive values, and increase their competitiveness locally and internationally.

Commenting on the launch, Ayad al Balushi, Assistant Deputy President for Finance and Assurance at OIA, said that the new Mu'tamad programme comes as part of a series of other training programmes initiated by OIA, such

as Nomou and Eadad programmes that have already trained many national talents most of whom were later employed at various government units and companies.

He further noted that such programmes reflect OIA's commitment to training national talents, qualifying them, developing their capabilities, and preparing them for the labour market.

He added that supporting national competencies and encouraging them to obtain professional certificates will also help fill the need for these specialised disciplines. It will also enhance the companies' overall finance and accounting performance, increase productivity, create job opportunities for job-seekers, and improve Omanisation.

Registration is already open, with certain criteria to be observed. Applicants must be of Omani nationality and hold a bachelor or master's degree in accounting or finance.

Qualified candidates will further be shortlisted through written tests and interviews. To apply for the programme, please follow this link: <https://www.linkedin.com/jobs/view/3672305955>. — ONA

Daleel Petroleum achieves zero routine flaring

MUSCAT: Daleel Petroleum has announced that it has achieved zero routine flaring, seven years ahead of the World Bank's target.

This remarkable achievement is a demonstration of the company's dedication to Oman's vision, the future of our planet, and our children's right for a brighter future, the oil and gas operator said in a statement.

Daleel was flaring all the produced associated gas until 2008 when the first gas processing train was commissioned to extract valuable liquids such as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and natural gas liquids (NGL) that resulted in 28% total flare reduction.

In 2012, Daleel commissioned the power plant to generate the required field power demand, utilising gas as fuel and significantly reducing diesel

DALEEL WAS FLARING ALL THE PRODUCED ASSOCIATED GAS UNTIL 2008 WHEN THE FIRST GAS PROCESSING TRAIN WAS COMMISSIONED TO EXTRACT VALUABLE LIQUIDS SUCH AS LPG AND NGL THAT RESULTED IN 28% TOTAL FLARE REDUCTION.

consumption.

The second gas processing train was commissioned in 2018 to maximise the extraction of LPG and NGL and export the surplus gas, which resulted in 80% reduction in total flared gas.

In early 2023, Zero Routine Flaring was successfully achieved by further eliminating all atmospheric pressure flaring.

Marash al Kalbani, Operation Director at Daleel Petroleum



stated: "The Company dedicates its efforts to reducing emissions at both local and global levels,

working towards a healthier and cleaner environment for the community.

To date, Daleel has recovered 440,000 tonnes of LPG, 2.8 million barrels of NGL, and exported 28

billion standard cubic feet of lean gas.

These numbers speak volumes about our dedication and the environment positive impact we have made based on operational excellence as a core value. As we celebrate this milestone, we still have eco-friendly plans and projects for the future."

Daleel Petroleum aims to further reduce non-routine flaring, minimise fuel-gas consumption, enhance safety-flaring requirements, improve energy efficiency, and increase utilisation of renewable energy sources.

These goals will pave the way towards eco-friendly achievements, reinforcing Daleel Petroleum positioning as industry leaders and pioneers of sustainability.

Exploring the Lean startup methodology



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The author is a renowned coach, trainer and consultant.

As-Salaam-Alaikum, Do you ever ponder how certain startups manage to navigate the unpredictable currents of the business landscape, blooming amidst the chaos, while others wither?

The secret sauce may well lie in the methodology they adopt. Today, we explore one such powerful strategy known as the Lean startup methodology.

The Lean startup methodology, a revolutionary business approach conceived by Eric Ries, has altered the traditional view of managing startups.

It champions an iterative, flexible approach to development, allowing startups to adjust their course promptly, thereby shrinking product development

cycles. But what lies at the core of this methodology?

At the heart of the Lean startup methodology are three interlinked principles: Build-Measure-Learn. Picture them as a cyclical process, a loop where one stage fuels the next. Entrepreneurs start this process by building a Minimum Viable Product (MVP) — the most simplified version of the product that still carries the potential value proposition.

This MVP is not the end, but the beginning of a discovery journey.

After introducing the MVP to the market, the next step is measurement. Here, entrepreneurs analyse how the MVP is received, who uses it, why they use it, and what potential changes could enhance its value.

Metrics come into play at this

stage, providing a quantifiable measure of what's working and what's not. However, it's crucial to distinguish 'vanity metrics' that may look good on paper from the 'actionable metrics' that provide insights into cause-and-effect relationships.

Learning is the final stage of the loop, but it fuels the subsequent cycles. Startups take the insights gleaned from the measure stage, comprehend what these learnings mean for their product, and determine the next steps.

Should they persevere along the current path or pivot to explore a new direction? As startups continuously iterate through this loop, they inch closer to a product-market fit, optimising their product in line with market demands and customer feedback.

However, embracing the

Lean startup methodology isn't merely about understanding its principles; it's about building a culture where these principles are integral.

It's a culture of continuous learning, an environment that sees failures not as dead-ends but as stepping stones to eventual success. It involves creating a mindset that's open to change and pivoting when the situation calls for it.

As the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "A believer is not stung twice from the same hole". This wisdom encapsulates the essence of the lean startup — to extract lessons from our past mistakes and experiences, ensuring they aren't repeated.

While the Lean Startup Methodology equips businesses

with the tools to navigate uncertain waters, we must remember that the sea we sail is constantly changing. Disruptive technologies are redefining traditional industry landscapes and birthing new opportunities.

The question we must contemplate is: How can startups effectively harness these disruptive technologies, and what influence do they wield on businesses?

As we gear up for our next discussion on 'Disruptive Technologies and their Impact on Startups', we invite you to ponder these questions. Will these ground-breaking technologies act as the winds propelling your venture forward, or will they stir a storm that capsizes your vessel? Join us as we set sail on these exciting seas in our subsequent conversation. *Maas salama*

Beset by drought, China turned to coal to keep lights on

JOHN KEMP

China's reliance on coal-fired power generation increased during the first half of 2023 as continued drought severely reduced hydroelectric power in the southern provinces.

Total generation from all sources increased by 205 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) in the first six months of 2023 compared with the same period in 2022.

The increase was 5.2%, which implies the government is probably on track to meet its declared target of around 5% for growth in gross domestic product this year.

But hydro generation slumped by 132 billion kWh to its lowest level for eight years as the protracted drought hit reservoir levels.

The two southwestern provinces of Sichuan and Yunnan accounted for almost half (48%) of the country's hydropower in 2020; adding the neighbouring areas of Guizhou and Guangxi takes the share to almost three-fifths (58%).

But the region experienced much lower than average precipitation over the last 12 months, forcing sharp reductions in power production.

Precipitation at the city of Yibin on the border between Sichuan and Yunnan totalled 626 millimetres in the 12 months ending in June 2023.

Rainfall was just half the average over the previous eight years and down by almost 60% compared with the previous 12-month period.

Some of the deficit caused by hydro generation was covered by increased generation from wind farms and solar power.

But the rest of the deficit and all the consumption growth was covered by a massive increase in thermal

CHINA'S ENERGY TRANSITION IS REAL AND IS PROCEEDING RAPIDLY. BUT COAL-FIRED GENERATION AND PRODUCTION IS STILL LIKELY TO INCREASE FOR AT LEAST THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS BECAUSE OF THE COUNTRY'S INHERITED RELIANCE ON COAL-FIRED UNITS AND THE NEED TO MEET RAPID LOAD GROWTH

generation mostly from coal-fired units.

Thermal generation increased by 8% compared with the same period in 2022 and accounted for 71% of all electrical output, up from 69% in the previous year.

China's coal fleet kept the lights on, air conditioning working and industry operating in the drought-stricken south and more recently in the north in an unprecedented heat wave.

In response to government directives to ensure sufficient fuel stocks for generators, the country's coal mines produced a record volume in the first six months.

Domestic coal production climbed by 107 million tonnes between January and June compared with the same period in 2022.

At the same time, coal imports also surged by 107 million tonnes as power generators and steelmakers built up inventories.

In the first half of the year, wind and solar farms produced more electricity (560 billion kWh) combined than the country's hydroelectric dams for the first time.

China's energy transition is real and is proceeding rapidly. But coal-fired generation and production is still likely to increase for at least the next several years because of the country's inherited reliance on coal-fired units and the need to meet rapid load growth. — Reuters



YANIS VAROUFAKIS

The author, a former finance minister of Greece, is leader of the MeRA25 party and Professor of Economics at the University of Athens.

In 2008, Europeans earned, in aggregate, 10 per cent more than Americans. By 2022, Americans were earning 26 per cent more than Europeans.

This week, the *Wall Street Journal* confirmed that Europeans are becoming poorer not just collectively but also privately. This shocking reversal of fortune was caused by the unprecedented level of austerity European governments inflicted upon their economies following the 2008 global financial crisis.

Austerity is not only bad for vulnerable people in need of state support during tough times; it also stifles investment. In any economy, collective expenditure equals collective income. By substantially reducing public expenditure at a time when private expenditure was falling, European governments hastened the rate at which total income diminished.

Is it any wonder that Europe's businesses refused to invest in the capacity to produce stuff that consumers would not have the money to buy? That's how post-2008 austerity slayed continent-wide investment and put Europe on a path of secular decline.

Every austerity drive hits one area of fiscal expenditure first and hard: public investment, which, compared to other relatively inelastic government outlays, like pensions and public-sector salaries, is the softest target of budget cutters. So, it was the long-term dampening effect of austerity on public investment, not just the effect on aggregate demand and private investment, that left Europe permanently



Technicians work at the production line for electric car models of the Volkswagen Group, in Zwickau, Germany. — Reuters

scarred.

Today, more than a decade later, the eurozone features lower levels of public investment (as a percentage of aggregate income) than any other advanced economy or economic bloc. And if we exclude Ireland, as we must (given its GDP contains multinationals' income that the Irish never see), Europe's economic powerhouse, Germany, comes last within Europe in terms of its rate of overall investment.

Apart from luxury goods (where companies like LVMH, Hermès, Porsche, and Ferrari lead the way) and soccer, Europe is becoming an economic minnow. The mighty German car industry may have retained its output but its value-added is in long-term decline.

Across Europe, investment in manufacturing green tech is woeful. Batteries, artificial intelligence, and all the digital technologies that are driving global growth have left Europe in their wake.

Back in 1990, Europe was manufacturing 44 per cent of the world's semiconductors; now it only makes 9 per cent (the US produces 12 per cent). Big Tech is almost exclusively American and Chinese. Of the top 20 tech companies worldwide, only two, ASML and SAP, are European.

The pandemic put Europe's austerity drive on hold for a few years as the EU's fiscal rules were suspended and governments went on a spending spree to support businesses' bottom line.

A Recovery Fund was announced, which many rushed to herald as Europe's Hamiltonian moment. It was, of course, no such thing (as I warned at the time).

The pandemic was yet another global crisis that put Europe at a disadvantage relative to America. Europe's stimulus was not only smaller than the US package; it also packed a smaller punch for every euro spent because, unlike in the United States, where a larger share of public money was sent as grants directly to citizens, European governments favoured firms.

And since firms in bad times are substantially less likely to spend money (except on their own shares) than citizens are, Europe's stimulus was even smaller than the headline numbers suggest.

Economic historians will look back to the 2008 financial crash, the post-2009 public debt crisis that ensued, and the pandemic as a sequence of opportunities Europe's elites chose to miss, instead defaulting to austerity as soon as circumstances permitted.

Most commentators blame this on irrational fear of inflation (owing to, say, Germans' collective memory of the Weimar Republic), macroeconomic illiteracy, or other factors. I have argued that it is primarily motivated by an enduring class enmity towards Europe's working people.

Regardless of the reason, the fact is that Europe is about to make the same mistake at the worst possible moment.

While our industry and infrastructure are wilting after years of underinvestment, the US is experiencing an investment boom, owing to President Joe Biden's policy agenda, which grants enormous subsidies to companies (including European firms) that invest in America, largely in green tech.

The EU, meanwhile, is responding the only way it seems to know: with moves to restore the fiscal rules that will revive the austerity policies that caused Europe's relative immiseration in the first place.

The writing is on the wall. Europe will make noises about setting up its own investment fund to counter America's new industrial policies, but the result will be underwhelming and as divisive as the Recovery Fund was. © Project Syndicate, 2023

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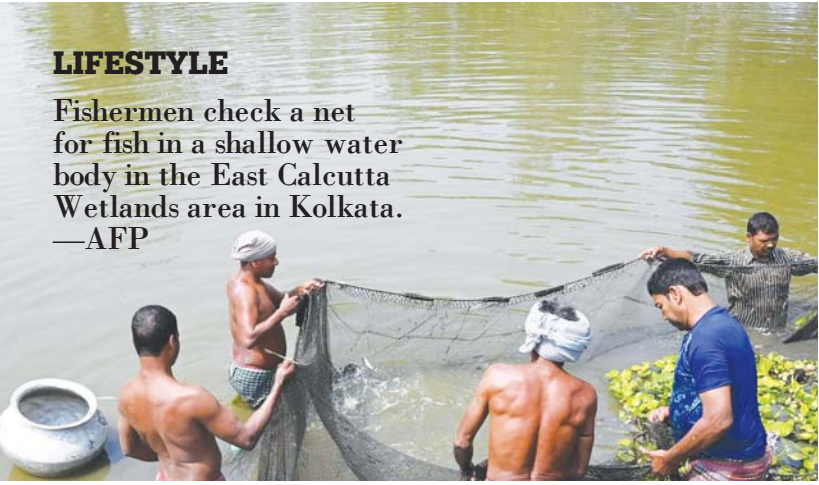
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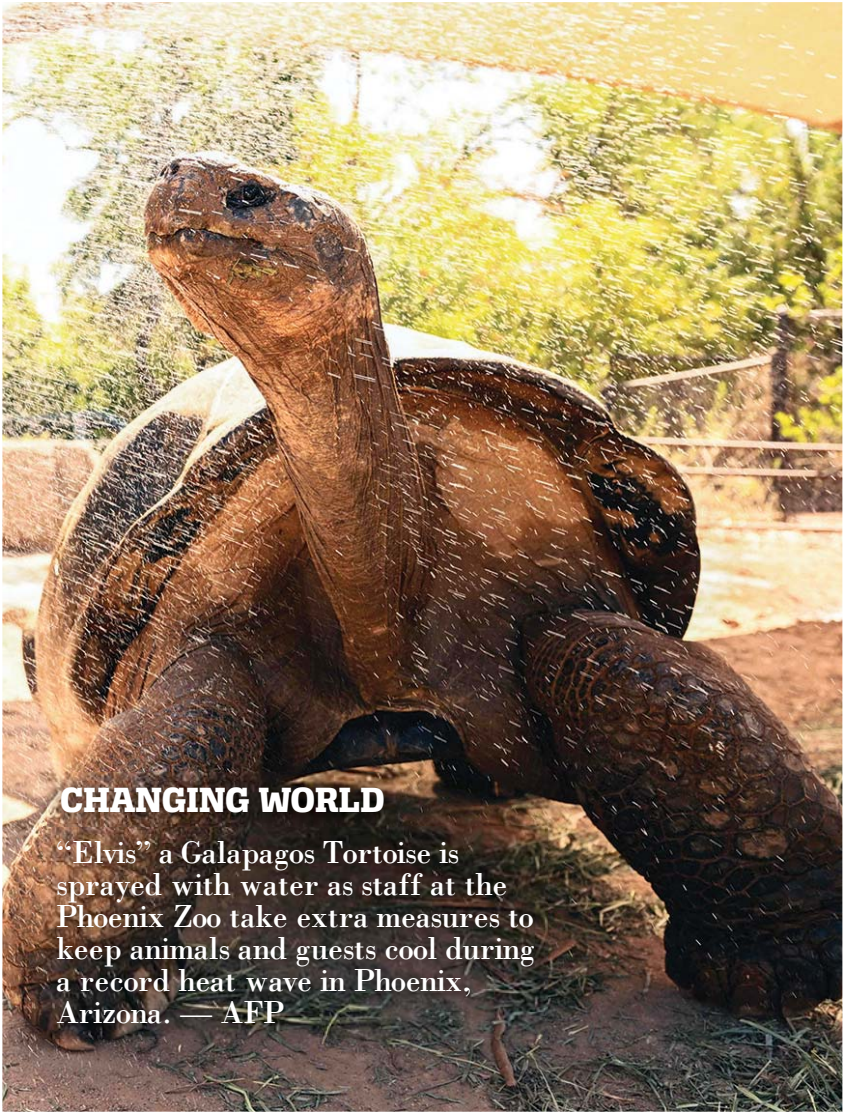
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LIFESTYLE
Fishermen check a net for fish in a shallow water body in the East Calcutta Wetlands area in Kolkata. —AFP



FASHION
A model presents a creation by label The Code at the Dark Matter venue during the Fashion Week in Berlin. — AFP



CHANGING WORLD
“Elvis” a Galapagos Tortoise is sprayed with water as staff at the Phoenix Zoo take extra measures to keep animals and guests cool during a record heat wave in Phoenix, Arizona. — AFP



ENTERTAINMENT
Norwegian DJ Kyrre Gorvell-Dahl aka Kygo performs on stage during the Lollapalooza festival at the Hippodrome de Longchamp in Paris. — AFP



COMMUNITY TALES
Flood-affected Afghan women wait to receive food aid distributed by the Afghanistan Disaster Management, in Herat. — AFP

art & life

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Unravelling the cultural impact of historical influencer Ziriyab

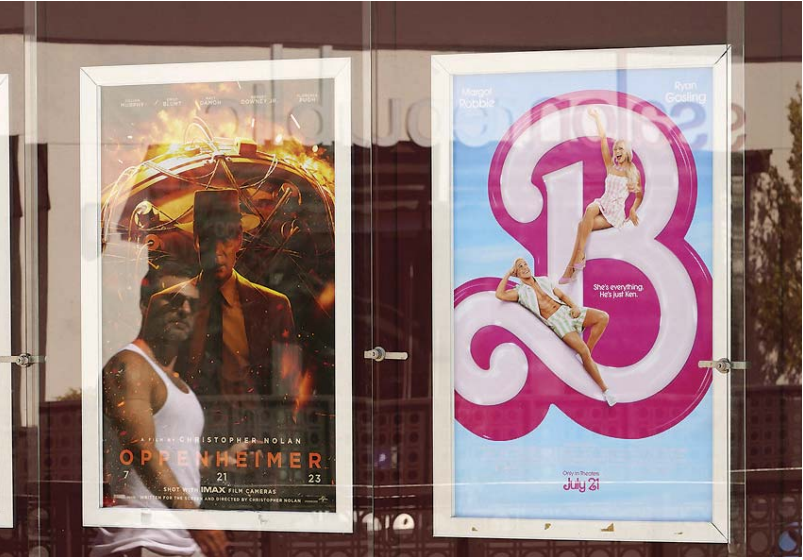
Efforts to enliven the eventful yet obscure life of Ziriyab is currently one of the passion projects of Spanish director and screenwriter, Alan Cantos, and Oman may play a crucial role in this effort

ENTERTAINMENT

‘Barbenheimer’ frenzy hits North American cinemas

DOLLS IN NEON PINK dreamhouses, scientists at Los Alamos, or both?
“Barbie” and “Oppenheimer” hit North American movie theatres on Friday, in what is expected to be among Hollywood’s biggest week-ends of the year — inspiring a frenzy for the diametrically opposed films. But as fans of the iconic toy and history buffs interested in the father of the atomic bomb flocked to cinemas, actors and writers

remained on strike, casting a pall over the outlook for the film industry.
For now, both movies are off to strong starts with the cotton candy-hued “Barbie” bringing in \$22.3 million from previews and “Oppenheimer” \$10.5 million, said Daniel Loria, editorial director at Boxoffice Pro.
For the weekend, “Barbie” could take in \$150 million, according to estimates, exceeding December’s



opening of “Avatar: The Way of Water.”
“The expectations are just so big that we’re trying to figure out not if it’s going to be a success, but how big of a success it’s going to be,” Loria said.
Millions of moviegoers are set to see both films through Sunday, with more than 200,000 planning to catch both in the same day, according to the National Association of Theatre Owners.
Excitement over the parallel opening — a phenomenon dubbed “Barbenheimer” — has sparked memes featuring frantic transitions between viewing both movies and moviegoers showing up at theaters in outrageous outfits.
FUNNY JUXTAPOSITION
The online buzz surrounding same-day viewings drew salesman

Eric Adams, 27, to the cinema in New York on Friday.
“I just wanted to be in on it and the theatre was full at 10:30 in the morning, so that was pretty crazy,” he said.
He added that he had trouble finding tickets to “Barbie” and settled for a late screening.
Another moviegoer, 23-year-old actor Dara Weinstein, added: “Because it’s such a funny juxtaposition that those two movies are coming out on the same day, it definitely created a lot of buzz around them.”
Viewers finally have “a weekend of choice,” said Loria of the parallel opening, which adds to hits like the latest instalment of the “Mission Impossible” franchise and “Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny.”
For a multiplex model to work for theatre owners, such diversity in films is needed, he said.
Colorado-based Emma McNealy, 35, said she would typically have waited to stream “Oppenheimer” at home, given its three-hour runtime and serious subject matter. But chatter online about people planning to see both on the same day intrigued the account manager.
On “Barbie,” she said: “I think a lot of women like that a Barbie is get-
ting more layers in this telling; it’s not just candy-coated fluff.”
CROSS-PROMOTION
The excitement around recent movie releases has also seen celebrities promote each others’ films.
Although director Christopher McQuarrie’s “Mission: Impossible — Dead Reckoning Part One” opened around a week before “Barbie” and “Oppenheimer,” actor Tom Cruise earlier tweeted about looking forward to both films.
In turn, “Barbie” director Greta Gerwig and star Margot Robbie showed photos of themselves posing with tickets for the “Mission Impossible” movie.
“The movie industry has a very healthy record of accommodating two big pictures,” said David Gross of Franchise Entertainment Research.
“The studios are very experienced and they don’t step on each other,” he added, noting that both movies generally attract different audiences.
“Oppenheimer would be more male-oriented and older, and Barbie will be more female-oriented and younger,” Gross said. “But I think everybody is going to both, and it’s a fit.” — AFP



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INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



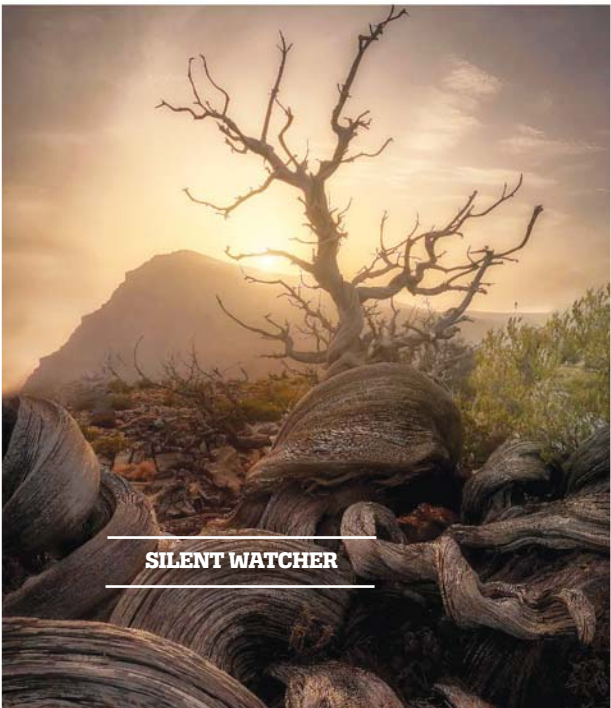
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A passion project of Spanish director and screenwriter Alan Cantos

By Kabeer Yousef
@kabeeryousef

He is definitely an influencer of his time, and his significance to the Arab world lies in his contributions to various fields, particularly in the cultural and artistic domains.

Efforts to enliven the eventful yet obscure life of Ziryab is currently one of the passion projects of Spanish director and screenwriter, Alan Cantos, and Oman may play a crucial role in this effort as discussions for a possible collaboration is taking place with the National Museum of Oman as well as the Royal Opera House Oman (ROHM).

Cantos is planning a documentary on the life of the man who revolutionised the life of the eighth century, the impact of which is still felt even today.

Ziryab or Abu al-Hasan Ali Ibn Nafi was a courtesan to Spain's Moorish rulers of the time and his influence is nothing short of jaw-dropping. The musician, singer, courtesan, polymath and astronomer is credited with introducing asparagus, at the time considered a weed that should be eaten by horses, to European palates; he brought the table cloth and the starter/main/dessert meal orthodoxy, then considered standard in Iraq but alien to ninth century European tables, to Spanish diners; he introduced glassware to the Western drinker in preference to the metal goblets of the time, and as a fashion influencer of his day is noted for bringing the fringe to the hair of Spanish women. He also invented or popularised forms of deodorant, toothpaste, and shampoo that at the time were unheard of in the barbaric European territories. And of course, with his revolutionary five-string oud, he fused Western and Arabic musical traditions and is widely cited as a fundamental influence in the creation of flamenco music.

Ziryab fled Baghdad around 809 AD, having fallen foul of his jealous master who threatened him as he was becoming the favourite of the Abbasid Khalifa of Baghdad, Harun al Rashid. After a long journey South and West, he found himself settling in the then-emirate of Cordoba in Al Andalus, on the very far edges of the Islamic empire and now modern-day



Andalucia in Spain.

Cantos met with the Director of the Museum Learning and Community Outreach Department and the Head of Learning Centre Unit of the Oman National Museum and talked about the film project and the concept of bringing some Spanish artists to perform either solo or with local musicians from Oman. He also contacted the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) for the same purpose.

Cantos was previously involved in known documentaries and fiction films such as Caravan, The Great Match and 14 Kilometres and is hoping to bring Ziryab's life and the talent and influence of so many modern Ziryabs, with a documentary to the fore while underlining how the links between East and West have historically been a force for cultural and political good, despite the many tensions of the age.

During his visit, Alan met with representatives of Omani culture and media including the presenter of Purple Travels, Sheikhha al Mahrouqi from Oman TV. He also connected with the Royal Calvary and the Royal Oman

Police Mounted Division to further explore the concept of the Arab horse as a vector of culture.

According to him, there were exploratory contacts and meetings to discuss future collaboration with the National Museum and the Royal Opera House Muscat (ROHM) and he participated and captured on camera local Eid celebrations.

"I also had many interesting meetings, interviews and some filming, thanks to Maggie Jeans, who supported me in bringing the concept to Oman, with cultural and media people that have enriched the possibilities of cooperation with Oman. Apart from artistic collaborations, I am seeking co-producers and sponsors to help the project along," Alan told the Observer.

The nickname 'Ziryab', comes from the Persian word for jaybird, pronounced 'Zaryab' and was known as Mirlo which is translated to 'blackbird' in Spanish.



Ziryab was one of the greatest cultural icons of the Middle Ages and the impact he had is still felt in the world today. He was active at the Umayyad court of Córdoba in Islamic Iberia and he is the one who revolutionised the pragmatic society. The winds of change touched upon literally everything from fashion to dining and music, and from hairstyles to hygiene. In music, Ziryab was the first to introduce the lute (Al-U'd) to Spain and Europe in general. Ibn Nafi was a ninth-century Baghdad native, believed to be of Persian or Kurdish descent, who usually went by the more manageable moniker of Ziryab, or Blackbird.

Cantos first came across the name 'Ziryab' while he was participating in the documentary Caravan (by Gerardo Olivares) in 2004. He

participated in the filming of one of the salt caravans that traversing the Tenere desert (Southern Sahara desert) in Niger, and was pointed by a friend in the direction of a magazine article about the millennium-old genius.

"I want my film to send a message of tolerance. Those cultures don't have to destroy each other; they can actually live together. Through the language of music, food, dance and architecture, I want to explore and celebrate the mixture of our cultures; the talent of migrants and innovators across the ages. I want my efforts to dispel some of the ignorance about our origins and the way talent, art and migration work in blowing the winds of culture and bring unity and harmony to societies," Alan said.

ENTERTAINMENT

Hollywood strike forces Venice fest to switch opening film

THE VENICE FILM Festival has switched its opening selection, after the movie that had been slated to open pulled out because of the ongoing Hollywood strike, organisers said. Edoardo De Angelis' "Comandante" will now open the 80th Venice International Film Festival, in place of Luca Guadagnino's "Challengers", the festival said in a statement late on Friday.

"Challengers" featuring US star Zendaya, "will not participate at the Festival following a decision made by the production," owing to ongoing industrial action in Hollywood, it said.

"Comandante" will have its world premiere on Wednesday, August 30 in the Sala Grande of the Palazzo del Cinema on the island of Lido di



Venezia during the opening ceremony. The change comes two weeks after actors joined a writers' strike, triggering the first industry-wide walkout for 63 years, effectively shutting down Hollywood.

The SAG-AFTRA (the Screen Actors Guild) went on strike after negotiations to reach a new deal with production studios ended without an agreement.

The union's demands have focused on dwindling pay in the streaming era, as well as the threat to the industry posed by artificial

intelligence.

Based on a true story, "Comandante" depicts the rescue of 26 shipwrecked Belgians during World War II by a submarine skipper played by Pierfrancesco Favino.

De Angelis, 44, was behind 2016 film "Invisibili" and the TV drama series The Lying Life of Adults.

The Venice festival will end on September 9 with the screening of "La sociedad de la nieve" ("Society of the Snow") by Spanish director Juan Antonio Bayona, the organisers said. — AFP

FASHION

In upcycling drive, South African designers give new life to Western fashion waste

TWO SOUTH AFRICAN aspiring designers, Khumo Morojele and Klein Muis, spend hours at a second-hand street market in Johannesburg looking for fashion items.

The duo then upcycles what they find into clothing or accessories they say express uniquely African style.

Upcycling refers to reusing an object in a new way without degrading the material it is made from, as opposed to recycling, which generally involves breaking down the original material and making it into something else.

The duo's current project, "Dunusa: Life of a Garment", sees them sourcing



second-hand clothing often sent to Africa from European countries, which are then deconstructed and reworked into avant-garde and abstract fashion.

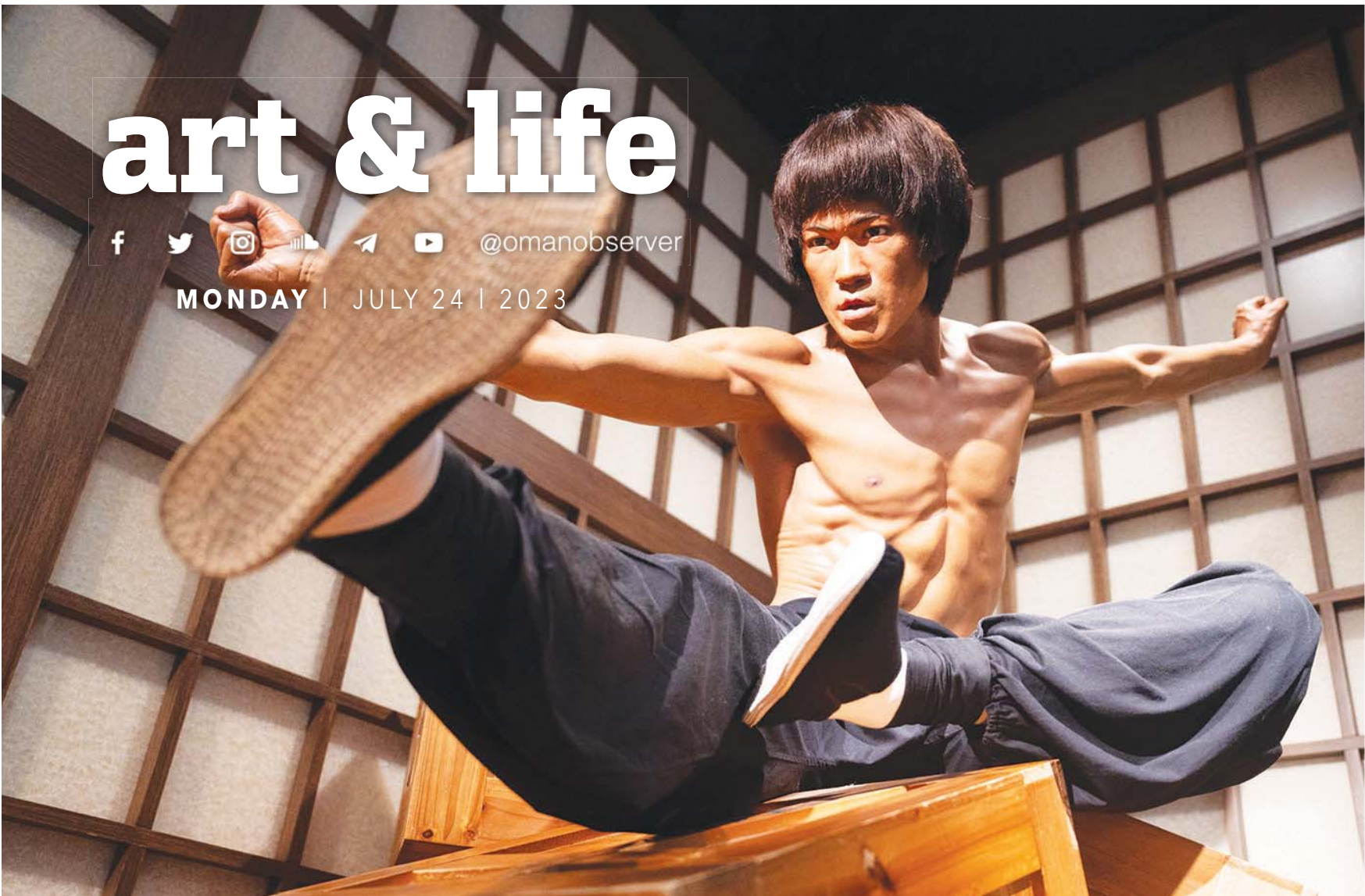
Their collection will be exhibited at an international arts programme in Berlin on July 14-16, "Forecast Forum," where young artists can receive mentorship.

"The question that we are trying to answer with the project is really the disparity between the north and the south ... how certain parts of Africa become dumping grounds for

European countries," said the 22-year-old Muis.

The two also collaborate with other African creatives. They are working with a Ghanaian shoemaker on a project to turn old soccer boots into sandals that reflect both African and European love for the sport.

"Within our culture, its always emphasised (that) we don't waste, because we cherish and we actually connect to the things that we own ... we kind of want to reflect that and transcend that in our garments," said 20-year-old Morojele. — Reuters



CULTURE

Martial arts superstar Bruce Lee's legacy endures 50 years on

HONG KONG BUSINESSMAN W. Wong still remembers the day in 1972 when he first heard neighbourhood kids rave about a figure who seemed larger than life: Bruce Lee.

Lee, a consummate martial artist whose films spawned a kung fu craze around the world, was one of the first Asian men to achieve Hollywood superstardom before his death at 32.

His influence can still be felt in Hong Kong, where he spent his childhood and final years, as fans this week hold exhibitions and martial arts workshops to mark the 50th anniversary of Lee's death.

"Every child needs some kind of role model, and I chose Bruce Lee," said Wong, 54, who has led the city's largest fan club devoted to the star for nearly three decades.

"I had hoped my life would resemble the Bruce Lee I saw: handsome, strong, with great martial arts skills and a heroic image."

At a studio for Wing Chun — a style of martial arts Lee practised before inventing his own Jeet Kune Do method — the martial arts master is revered as something akin to a patron saint.

Studio owner Cheng Chi-ping, 69, said his cohort began their training under the shadow of Lee's cultural influence but "we could never match his speed, strength or physique".

Lee's appeal had not diminished for the next generation, said Mic Leung, 45, who trained at the same studio and, as a teenager, sought out Lee's movies on old videotapes.

"When we talk about the 'god of martial arts', we could only be talking about Bruce Lee. There is no one else," he said.

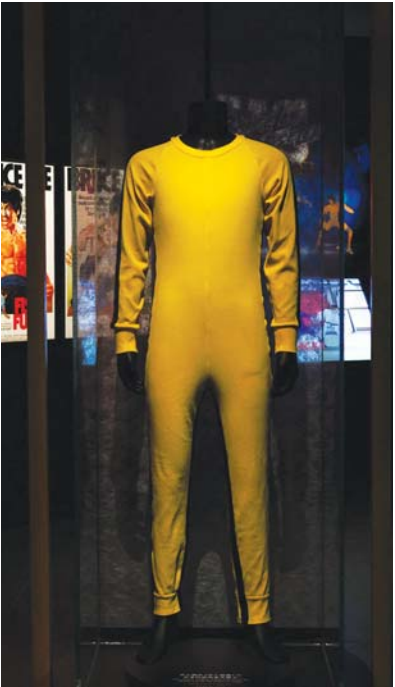
SMASHING BARRIERS

Born in San Francisco in 1940, Lee was raised in Hong Kong and had an early brush with fame as a child actor, supported by his father, who was a famous Cantonese opera singer.

At 18, he continued his studies in the United States and over the next decade taught martial arts and scored minor parts in Hollywood, before landing the role of Kato in the television series "The Green Hornet".

But it was not until Lee returned to Hong Kong that he landed his first lead role in the martial arts film "The Big Boss", which made him a household name in Asia after its 1971 release. The next year saw two more box office hits — "Fist of Fury" and "The Way of the Dragon" — cementing Lee's persona as a relentless, lightning-fast fighter.

Lee had completed filming his fourth star vehicle, "Enter the Dragon", and was halfway through his fifth when he died on July 20, 1973 from swelling of the brain, attributed



to an adverse reaction to painkillers. Film scholar Aaron Han Joon Magnan-Park, who taught Lee's movies at the University of Hong Kong, said Lee expressed a kind of Chinese identity that transcended national borders.

"I would call Bruce Lee a paragon of Sinophone soft power success with Hong Kong characteristics," he said.

In Hollywood, Lee represented a rebuke to racist stereotypes, showing that Asian men were more than just servants and villains.

The scenes where he bares his

torso and flexes his muscles — what Magnan-Park called the "kung fu striptease" — were essential because they show how ripped bodies can belong to Asian heroes as well.

"He made Asian men sexy, and that is something I don't think we talk about enough," he said.

PRESERVING LEGACY

Despite Lee's enduring fame, preserving his legacy in Hong Kong was no easy task, fan club chairman Wong said. Government support was intermittent at best, he said.

Fans in 2004 successfully petitioned to set up a bronze statue of Lee on Hong Kong's famed waterfront, but a campaign to revitalise his former mansion could not save it from demolition in 2019.

At a government-run museum exhibit commemorating Lee's life, a woman surnamed Yip said she wanted to share "a symbol of the old Hong Kong" with her two children.

Wong, who had organised a smaller exhibit in Sham Shui Po district, acknowledged a decline of interest among young people but said Lee's



philosophy always has the potential to become relevant again.

He pointed to how protesters in Hong Kong's 2019 democracy movement cited the martial artist's mantra — "Be water, my friend" — as a reminder to adopt flexible tactics of resistance.

That discussion has largely tapered off after authorities cracked down on dissent, but Wong remembers the public at the time wondering why young protesters were so taken by Lee.

"As long as everyone still remembers (Lee), once your interest is piqued, you will have a chance to rediscover him," he said. — **AFP**

LIFESTYLE



Rapper's Delight as New York celebrates 50 years of hip-hop

FROM A DISPLAY of Jay-Z lyrics on the facade of the Brooklyn Library to a concert of rap pioneers at Yankee Stadium, New York is celebrating 50 years of hip-hop, a genre born in its ghettos and now dominant around the world.

Inside the library, a vast exhibition retraces the career of one of Brooklyn's most famous sons, charting his rise from "a street-smart hustler to a global revered music mogul."

The artist born Shawn Carter has written about dealing drugs in the Marcy Houses housing project where he grew up, before becoming a billionaire rapper whose marriage to Beyonce created one of the most glamorous couples in pop culture.

"I've never really been to a lot of exhibitions," said 31-year-old warehouse worker Jamarly Thomas, joking that he goes by "Jay-T."

"So to witness something like this from my favourite rapper is pretty mind-blowing. For a lot of African American kids coming up here, he can set an example for them that they can be bigger," Thomas added.

The free exhibition, which opened on Friday and was conceived by Jay-Z's entertainment empire Roc Nation, is entitled "The Book of HOV," a reference to one of the 53-year-old's nicknames.

Jay-Z's string of hits include 1998's "Hard Knock Life (Ghetto Anthem)" and "Izzo (H.O.V.A.)" from 2001.

He also crossed rap's boundaries, including with his megahit "Empire State of Mind," and holds the record for the most number-one albums of any solo artist on the Billboard 200 with 14. Only the Beatles have more, with 19.

Long queues formed over the weekend as fans rushed to visit the exhibition or register for one of thirteen Brooklyn Library cards stamped with the artist's album covers.

The tribute precedes the opening of another immersive retrospective about the history of hip-



hop at the Hall des Lumieres on August 2 as the Big Apple marks half a century of the genre with a slew of events.

AMAZING

Although early forms of hip-hop expression were bubbling years earlier, musicologists cite August 11, 1973 as the date of its birth.

On that day, on the ground floor of a low-income building at 1520 Sedgwick Avenue in the Bronx, Jamaican-born DJ Clive Campbell, aka DJ Kool Herc, broke new ground.

He spun the same record on two turntables, isolating the sequences of rhythms and percussion to extend the beat, an essential component of hip-hop music.

Fifty years later, on August 11, 2023, DJ Kool Herc will perform at Yankee Stadium in the Bronx alongside other hip-hop veterans including Grandmaster Caz, Kurtis Blow and Roxanne Shante.

Lil Kim, Ice Cube, Snoop Dogg, Run DMC and The Sugarhill Gang, whose song "Rapper's Delight" is known as the first commercially successful hip-hop single, are also due to take the stage.

"When we first started, nobody was interested in hiring a hip-hop DJ, or getting an emcee or getting some breakdancers," said Ralph McDaniels, hip-hop coordinator for the Queens Public Library.

"To be celebrating 50 years is amazing because there was no value on this," he said.

Other concerts, block parties and graffiti and breakdance sessions are scheduled to take place across the Big Apple.

Recognition The hip-hop movement was born as a way for African Americans and Hispanics to escape poverty and discrimination.

Then, few people would have predicted it would become a billion-dollar phenomenon that inspires not only music, but also sports and fashion.

Another sign of how far it has come: this week, Sotheby's offered a ruby and diamond ring worn by rapper Tupac Shakur, the Harlem-born icon of California's West Coast who was murdered in 1996. It is estimated to sell for up to \$300,000.

Back at the Jay-Z exhibit, Brooklyn-born Amanda Brown said she was happy the rapper was being honoured with the retrospective while he is still alive.

"Singers that did a lot don't get the recognition until they are gone so this is nice," the 28-year-old said. — **AFP**