

P10

OMAN QUALIFY FOR TENT PEGGING WORLD CUP



P13

DUQM REFINERY TO OPERATE AT FULL CAPACITY BY END-2023



P20

OMAN REMAINS TO BE A GREAT DESTINATION FOR SEATURTLES EXPERIENCE



MUSCAT

HM THANKED BY ITPF PARTICIPANTS

The participants at the General Assembly of the International Tent Pegging Federation have sent a cable of thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The general assembly was held in Muscat during the period from March 6 to 8. In the cable, the participants expressed their appreciation to His Majesty the Sultan for Oman's hosting of the general assembly. They also lauded the great role of the Sultanate of Oman in supporting the International Tent Pegging Federation, which contributed to propagating this sport locally, regionally and internationally. The participants prayed to Allah the Almighty to protect His Majesty the Sultan and to grant him good health, wellbeing and a long life. They also wished the Omani people further progress and prosperity. — ONA

EARLY WARNING ALERT SYSTEM

With Oman frequently exposed to various climatic conditions such as flash floods and tropical weather systems, including cyclones, the authorities concerned have launched an alert notification system, which will help minimise damages, including loss of human lives. The Sultanate of Oman will be subject to risks from natural disasters and extreme weather events, according to the recent Global Risks Report 2023 of the World Economic Forum. On Wednesday, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority started an awareness campaign about the early warning broadcast service via mobiles. **DETAILS ON P3**

INSIDE



CHINA TO REVAMP SCIENCE AND TECH

P6



BIKES BRING INDEPENDENCE FOR WOMEN

P9

Government units told to adhere to approved budgets

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Finance elucidated the procedures of the Financial Performance Control Initiative designed to ensure that all government units and departments adhere to their approved budgets in a manner that achieves efficient implementation of the 2023 State Budget and its economic and social objectives, notably by means of electronic tracking.

This was revealed during an introductory meeting on streamlining the fiscal performance of the State's 2023 general budget. The meeting was chaired by Abdullah bin Salim al Harthy, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, and attended by representatives of various government units.

The meeting also reviewed the procedures of controlling financial performance and addressing challenges posed to government units during the implementation of the State Budget. It explored ways to improve and develop mechanisms of regularising the fiscal performance of State Budget 2023.

The Ministry of Finance furthermore urged all government institutions to stick to submitting budget distribution statements on a monthly basis. Thus, government units are required to review and analyse their respective fiscal performance, while at the same time submitting feedback/comments to ensure the realisation of key targets of the budget in accordance with the determinants and principles upon which this year's budget was initiated. — ONA



THRILL VIA FERRATA ROUTE

Via ferrata, which in Italian means iron path, is somewhere between hiking and rock climbing. A via ferrata route is a metal rail bolted into the mountain, that you clip into and use as a safety line for the duration of the route. This popular adventure activity is now available and popular in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. Top Adventure is one of the local companies organising it in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. Hiking enthusiasts find via ferrata an opportunity for challenge and adventure as Oman is home to various mountain ranges with Al Hajar Mountains extending to approximately 500 km and rising above sea level by about 3,000 metres. **DETAILS ON P4**

School students represent 20% of total population

MAI AL ABRI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

The education sector in the Sultanate of Oman has grown dramatically during the last 50 years due to significant government investment.

According to the latest report published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the number of schools increased from 16 in 1970, with just 196 teachers and 7,000 students, to 67,263 schools and 710,000 students during the academic year 2021/2022. The overall number of pupils enrolled in government, private, special education, and international schools reached 898,000, a 12 per cent rise from 2020/21. It is worth mentioning that school students account for 20 per cent of the Sultanate of Oman's overall population.

Higher education has undergone major transformation in the last two years to achieve sustainability and the development of the educational system, the most significant of which was the establishment of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences, which included all technical colleges and colleges of applied sciences under its umbrella.

In the academic year 2020/2021, there were 66 public and private institutions, including 38 government institutions classed as universities, university colleges, and specialised institutes, and 28 private institutions, nine of which are private universities and the rest are university colleges. These institutions educate approximately 121,000 students, accounting for approximately 3 per cent of the overall population, in addition to approximately 7,000 students studying abroad.

The data demonstrates the Sultanate of Oman's commitment to attaining the goals of education for everyone, the most significant of which are: Enabling children to complete elementary school, as Oman attained a total...

On a mission to explore world, cyclist lands in Oman

SHADDAD AL MUSALMY
[@shadadm](#)

On a mission to explore the world on a bicycle, 30-year-old Austrian cyclist Jürgen Weiss started a journey from his home country eight months ago. On Wednesday, he landed in Muscat, the Sultanate of Oman.

"I have done more than 17,000 km by the time I reached Muscat after cycling through more than 20 countries," Jürgen told the Observer.

"I started around eight months

ago from my home country, and first cycled to the North Cape in Norway, and then back to Austria on the other side of the Baltic Sea (up across Sweden, down across Finland)," Jürgen added.

"From Yerevan in Armenia, I took a flight to Amman in Jordan. I continued my trip across the Dead Sea, Petra and Aqaba. Then to Saudi Arabia: Tabuk, Madina, Jeddah and Riyadh," he added.

From Riyadh, Jürgen cycled to Kuwait, Dammam, Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE before reaching the



Sultanate of Oman. "I carry around 50-60 kg of weight, including my

bike and the entire luggage," he said. On what he does while on the

road, Jürgen said: "On my travels, I mostly sleep in my tent and cook with my gas cooker. I have also been often invited for food and a sleeping opportunity."

After Oman, invited said he would go to India. "I want to go to India and then South East Asia, for example, to Thailand," he said.

While in Muscat, Jürgen is staying with Nawaf al Sulaimani, who is an avid walker. "I am happy to host Jürgen at home. He will be in Muscat for a week before he travels to India," Sulaimani said.



Oman, Russia review cooperation



Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, with a delegation of Russian Federation Council headed by Mohmad Isaevich Akhmadov in Muscat on Wednesday.

MUSCAT: Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council, received a delegation of Russian Federation Council headed by Mohmad Isaevich Akhmadov in Muscat on Wednesday. The delegation is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

At the beginning of the meeting, the chairman of the State Council welcomed the members of the delegation wishing them a pleasant stay in the Sultanate of Oman, noting the distinctive Omani-Russian relations and the keenness of the two countries

to develop them in the political, economic and commercial fields to serve the common interests.

The chairman of the State Council said the prepared programme of meetings will certainly contribute to enhancing cooperation between the two sides. The programme, he said, includes meeting with the chairman of the Investment Authority, the minister of higher education, research and innovation, as well as a number of government officials. The meetings aim at achieving the development goals witnessed by the Sultanate of Oman in all fields. The chairman

of the State Council expressed his hope for more cooperation between the two countries under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The head of the Parliamentary Friendship Group at the Council of the Russian Federation expressed his happiness to visit the Sultanate of Oman and his aspiration for further development, prosperity and growth for the relations between the two friendly countries. He stressed the common denominators between the two countries particularly with regard to the development of

parliamentary cooperation, trade exchange and the distinguished relations between the two sides. He praised the wise foreign policy adopted by the Sultanate of Oman.

Meanwhile, the Parliamentary Friendship Group between the State Council and the Russian Federation Council held a session of talks during which the relations between the two countries were reviewed. During the session, they discussed aspects of cooperation between the two countries in all fields to serve their common interests.

School students represent 20% of total population

FROM PAGE 1

enrolment rate in the primary stage of (100 per cent). As for the expansion of early childhood care and education programmes, the enrolment rate of children has fallen. The total preschool education in kindergartens reached

about 25 per cent of the total population at the age of 4-5 years in the academic year (2020/2021 compared to 52 per cent in the academic year 2019/2020), and this fall is due to decrease in the number of private schools which provides education service for this stage

due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The population's illiteracy rate fell to around 0.5 per cent for the age range of 15-44.

The report also stated that there were approximately 320 children's nurseries in 2021, up from only 16 in 1989, with Muscat topping

the list with approximately 179 facilities, while the Governorate of Al Wusta has no nurseries registered. The number of children under the age of three who are registered in nurseries is 6,073, a 6 per cent rise over the previous year.

Salalah, Muscat airports are among best in Middle East

VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

Two international airports of the Sultanate of Oman have fared in their respective categories at the ASQ Awards, with Salalah Airport walking away with three key awards.

Airports Council International (ACI) has recognised big and small airports across the world for their customer service excellence in 2022 during ACI's annual Airport Service Quality (ASQ) awards.

Winners ranged from the hubs of Istanbul and Rome-Fiumicino in Europe; Dallas/Fort Worth and San Francisco in the US; and Singapore Changi and Shenzhen Bao'an in Asia-Pacific to some of the smaller gateways, such as Salalah and Moi International Airport in Mombasa, Kenya.

In the category for best airports by size and region that recognises airports with the top 20 per cent overall satisfaction score by size and region at departure, Salalah Airport (under two million passengers per year) and Muscat International Airport (15 to 25 million passengers per year) were best in the Middle East.

The airport with the most dedicated staff, the category that recognises the top 5 per cent of airports for the efforts of key stakeholders and staff across different checkpoints, Salalah Airport was the best in the Middle East.

Among others, Salalah was named for the easiest airport journey in the Middle East, this award recognises the top 5 per cent of airports for their performance on the travellers' ease of going through the airport.

Salalah was also the cleanest in the Middle East.

ASQ awards are based on live research via surveys gathered at the airport — direct from the traveller — rating their satisfaction on the day of travel.

The survey covers over 30 performance indicators across key elements of the passenger's airport experience, such as ease of finding your way, check-in, and shopping and dining offers.

ACI World Director-General, Luis Felipe de Oliveira, said: "The passenger is the centre of everything, and this is reflected in every aspect of the Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme."

"Travellers have spoken and recognised the successful efforts of these airport communities in providing an outstanding customer experience. Congratulations to the best airports for customer experience worldwide."

He noted, "The ASQ programme not only measures and benchmarks, but also provides airports of all sizes with an opportunity for continual learning and improvement to reach new heights in customer experience excellence."

Expo discusses, displays best practices in civil defence, first aid

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

Civil defence and first aid conference and exhibition kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Wednesday under the auspices of Dr Khamis bin Saif al Jabri, Chairman of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit.

More than 300 participants from Oman and abroad take part in the event, which is organised by the Authority for Civil Defence and Ambulance (ACDA).

The two-day event highlights the relentless efforts undertaken by Oman in achieving the highest levels of security and safety.

Col Abdullah bin Saleh al Najashi, Director-General of the ACDA, said that the event coincides with the International Civil Defence Day, which reflects the appreciation of civil defence authorities' efforts to protect lives and property. It values the authorities' contribution to development plans as they address accidents and crises that threaten human life, wealth and the environment.

Col Al Najashi pointed out that the slogan of International Civil Defence Day 2023, "Role of Technical Systems in Risk Assessment", highlights the importance of information technology and its applications in risk management, preparedness



and minimisation of pertinent loss, as well as evaluation of monitoring systems' capacity to tackle risks.

The conference's sessions deal with risk legislations and regulations, risk reduction, the lessons learned from major accidents and best practices and technical applications in the field.

The first day of the event

covered seven working papers on various aspects of safety — notably the role of legislation and technical regulations in reducing risks, the integration of risk assessment and emergency operations through technology, harnessing and using artificial intelligence techniques in risk management, and the role of modern technologies in risk

management and minimisation of impacts of earthquakes.

Meanwhile, the chief guest toured the accompanying exhibition, which showcases security and safety apparatus, civil defence and ambulance equipment, as well as a children's corner comprising fire extinguishers, fire blankets and first aid and other

training equipment.

Captain Hussein bin Ali al Rumhi of ACDA shared his insights on the importance of technical systems in reducing effort, predicting risks and raising the efficiency of response to all types of accidents. "Technical systems have a great and effective role in reducing effort, knowing

prior events and avoiding costs through prior prediction of risks," said Captain Al Rumhi. He also emphasised the importance of adopting and attracting all new technologies to protect lives and property.

Among the examples provided by Captain Al Rumhi is the presence of modern devices to detect dangerous areas, which enables the civil defence to respond in advance to accidents that may occur. However, he also noted that there is no permanent calibration of these devices to ensure their proper performance. He stressed that there are attempts to find alternatives in order to reduce the number of people who are exposed to danger. An example of this is the presence of robots tied to the fire hose and controlled from a safe area so that the person is not exposed to fire and is able to work for a longer period and with less effort.

In addition to the conference, the exhibition features institutions and companies supporting the conference that specialise in the field of security and safety equipment and related student teams. Sponsoring companies and a number of small and medium enterprises are also participating in the expo which is open to the public till Thursday from 9 am to 7 pm. The students of Sultan Qaboos University are presenting their projects related to civil defence and ambulance work.



Follow us on **Twitter**
@omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | MARCH 9 | 2023

3

ELT conference focuses on community service



MUSCAT: Oman 22nd International English Language Teaching (ELT) Hybrid Conference kicked off on Wednesday at Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) under the theme “The 21st Century Language Classroom: Challenges and Opportunities.”

Many academics and teachers specialised in the field of ELT from Oman and other countries took part in the conference.

The opening ceremony of the two-day event was held under the auspices of Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed al Nadabi,

Secretary-General of Majlis Ashshura.

This year’s conference focuses on the topic of community service, in line with the goals of SQU and Oman Vision 2040.

The event also aims to create a platform that enables English language teachers to meet with each other virtually to discuss ways to improve their teaching at different stages in their careers by learning new and creative teaching methods.

Several lectures and workshops are held on the sidelines of the conference. — ONA

Muscat Municipality conducts training to improve communication



KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

The contact centre of Muscat Municipality conducted a training and workshop session recently for its liaison officers with new techniques improving the communications with the public as also to improve its services to the public.

“This communication training session is part of our endeavour to speed up communication with the general public who contact us for various issues and resolve concerns received by the service directorates in Muscat,” a spokesperson from the Communication Centre told the Observer.

The workshop aimed to provide participants key skills and best practices to increase the satisfaction rate of beneficiaries of the services provided by various entities, and to build bridges of cooperation between the centre and the directorates

of Muscat Municipality. The training assumes importance to complete the dealings accurately and promptly.

“The goal is to achieve good performance level as the basis for achieving the satisfaction of the services beneficiaries,” he added.

The workshop targeted the municipality employees in various departments. Present in the training were general managers of the relevant directorates from Muscat, besides the liaison officers in the Communication Centre.

During the workshop, several topics were reviewed, including the mechanism for managing complaints and communications, starting from the beneficiary to the third support line, and the mechanism for escalating complaints.

A brainstorming session was held and ideas were presented from participants in finding best practices to escalate outstanding communications.

TRA’s mobile alert to give early warning on natural disasters

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

With Oman frequently exposed to various natural disasters such as flash floods and tropical weather systems, including cyclones, the authorities have launched an alert notification system, which will help minimise damages, including loss of lives.

The Sultanate of Oman will be subject to risks from natural disasters and extreme weather events, according to the recent Global Risks Report 2023 of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

On Wednesday, the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) started an awareness campaign about the early warning broadcast service via mobile phones, in cooperation with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and telecommunications service providers.

The early warning broadcast service via mobile phones sends warning messages in record time to thousands of devices in any targeted area.

All mobile users have been urged to activate the early warning broadcast service.

The campaign included the implementation of a number of radio and press interviews,



in addition to publishing an educational video to inform the community on tips to activate the early warning broadcast service on mobile devices in the Sultanate of Oman.

CAA will test the service in some areas to ensure that the service is activated on subscribers’ devices in the coming days.

It may be noted that sending a warning message to subscribers’ phones in a particular area using mobile communications networks to warn about a specific emergency is in line with international standards.

These customised messages will

The early warning broadcast service via mobile phones sends warning messages in record time to thousands of devices in any targeted area

appear in distinctive tones on the phone automatically.

TRA has also set special specifications to activate the feature in mobile phones in the Sultanate of Oman, based on international standards.

The most prominent of

these specifications is that the messages are automatic without the intervention of the subscriber and that the feature supports all generations of devices, including the FG and the feature must also support several languages, including Arabic, English, Hindi and Urdu, and long warning messages.

All mobile phones in the Sultanate must be able to receive warning messages in all circumstances, including if in silent mode, in addition to the ability to receive several consecutive warning messages.

Restoration begins at Omani-French Museum

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has started the first phase of the restoration and maintenance work of the Omani-French Museum building as per the best international practices that are followed while restoring historical buildings.

In a statement, the ministry said laboratory examinations of the building were conducted to determine its load capacity and structural condition.

Accordingly, the work on the project started in line with the nature of the building to ensure its sustainability.

The ministry is also working to ensure the reuse of traditional and approved construction and restoration materials and methods in ancient buildings, which will help preserve the original structure.

This project comes as part of the ministry’s efforts to develop and rehabilitate existing museums as per Vision 2040 and its strategic objectives.

The museum, which was opened to visitors in 1992, is located in the Wilayat of Muttrah, Muscat Governorate.



It is located in an ancient house, which is about 170 years old.

It consists of 8 halls and a collection of documents and collectibles that chronicle Omani-French relations dating back to the 18th century.

With galleries detailing

relations between the two countries, this museum provides an interesting snapshot of mostly 19th-century colonial life in Muscat. Of particular interest are a series of old photographs and maps documenting the capital in the last century.

In addition to the Hall of Maritime Navigation, the museum rooms include models of Omani and French ships, a traditional costume hall, and many other artifacts and pictures that reflect the cultural connection between the two countries.

Dead whale with fishing net washed ashore in Al Wusta



VINOD NAIR
@vinot_nair

The Environment Authority (EA) has reported the death of an Arabian humpback whale in the Al Wusta Governorate.

According to a statement from EA, the dead whale washed up on Kanasa beach in the Wilayat of Mahout in Al Wusta Governorate, and the causes of death have been attributed to abandoned fishing nets.

Since Tuesday, experts have

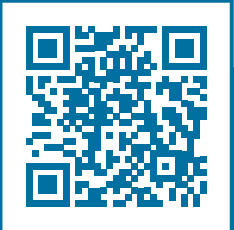
been working on the incident in cooperation with the relevant authorities, which includes taking samples from the whale.

The Directorate-General of Environment Authority (EA) in Dhofar Governorate recently conducted operations to rescue dolphins that took around four hours.

Eight stranded Risso’s dolphins washed off on the coast of Hasik; of these, seven were rescued, while one of them died.

A specialist at EA said that these dolphins did not have any wounds from nets on them.

“The local citizens and fishermen made unsuccessful attempts to return the dolphins to the waters. Subsequently, specialists who went to the site succeeded in rescuing seven dolphins but could not save the eighth dolphin because of the wounds due to friction with the rocks. It took about four hours to work to return the dolphins to the sea.”



A thrilling way to explore Jabal Akhdhar mountains

AMAL AL RIYAMI
AL JABAL AL AKHDHAR, MARCH 8

Via ferrata, which in Italian means iron path, is somewhere between hiking and rock climbing. A via ferrata route is a metal rail bolted into the mountain, that you clip into and use as a safety line for the duration of the route.

It allows one to climb vertical and move horizontal with steel cable attached at the waist or chest, with feet and/or hands using steel rungs to move just as one would navigate a ladder.

One can dangle off an exposed cliff face and above a valley or a canyon to feel the thrill.

This popular adventure activity is now available and popular in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar. Top Adventure is one of the local companies organising it in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar.

Hiking enthusiasts find via ferrata an opportunity for challenge and adventure as Oman is home to various mountain ranges with Al Hajar Mountains extending to approximately 500 kilometres and rising above sea level by about 3,000 metres.

In Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, one of Oman's most important tourist areas, Top Adventure has been licensed by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to set up the track.

Maddad bin Hareb al Riyami, owner of Top Adventure, said: "These adventures have their lovers, and there is a large segment currently practicing this activity. There is an increase in fans of adventure sports in general. The Sultanate of Oman is rich in mountain ranges and valleys, so it receives many tourists from outside because of these adventures."



A VIA FERRATA ROUTE IS A METAL RAIL BOLTED INTO THE MOUNTAIN, THAT YOU CLIP INTO AND USE AS A SAFETY LINE FOR THE DURATION OF THE ROUTE.

The team also provides other services, zipline, hiking, caving, canyoning, camping, and much more.

Top Adventure's zipline, the longest in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar, has a length of 116 metres.

Ahmed al Hosani, a mountaineering fan, said: "It was a unique experience. This is the first time I have tried this type of adventure. I was apprehensive at the beginning, but then I enjoyed it a lot. It was speedy. I wish I could do it again and advise everyone to try it."

Sami al Hinai, a participant in mountain climbing, said: "What made the experience more beautiful is the cool atmosphere in Al Jabal Al Akhdhar and the picturesque places that can be seen when climbing the mountain. It was an adventure worth experiencing."

The Via Ferrata Al Jabal Al Akhdhar was opened under the auspices of Hamdan bin Nasser al Rumaidhi, member of the Majlis Ashshura and representative of the Wilayat of Nizwa, in June 2021.

Students gear up for Gulf Olympiads in Bahrain



STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

The Ministry of Education wrapped up final training camp on Monday for students participating in the ninth Gulf Mathematical Olympiad and the first Gulf Chemistry Olympiad, which are organised by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, in Bahrain on March 10.

The training camp, organised by the Department of Innovation and Scientific Olympiad, targeted 10 students from different schools in the educational governorates, 6 of them in mathematics and 4 in chemistry. The camp lasted for a whole week at the Best Western Premier Hotel in Al Khuwair, Muscat.

The Gulf Olympiad in mathematics and chemistry is organised and supervised by the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States and hosted in one of the member states. The importance of the competition lies in creating the appropriate environment to raise scientific awareness among students of GCC students and prepare them for International Olympiads in mathematics and chemistry.

The competition aims to raise the scientific level of students in the two subjects, through the intellectual challenge in dealing with chemical problems and

mathematical issues to enhance the learning and teaching of mathematics and chemistry in general and prepares talented students in particular for regional and international Olympiads.

On the importance of the Sultanate's students' participating in these Olympiads, Maan al Hinai, Senior Scientific Olympiad Specialist, said: "The participation of our students in these scientific forums and various Olympiads at the Gulf, Arab, regional and international levels aims to develop higher thinking skills, instil a spirit of competition and cooperation among them, and encourage them to get involved in international forums. These specific training programmes, which are presented to outstanding students, are an integrated system that the ministry sought to achieve its desired goals in education within Oman Vision 2040, starting with the selection of students in their educational governorates, and selecting the participating teams, and then subjecting them to foundational training programmes. This is followed by intensive and codified programmes lasting for years, with the aim of bringing them to the podiums, obtaining advanced positions, and raising the name of the Sultanate of Oman high in these international forums."

Yenkit archaeological remains hold evidences of Oman's past

YAHYA AL SALMANI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

Along the road leading to the village of Yenkit, 40 km south of Muscat, a large sign indicating the presence of an important archaeological site attracts visitors. The remains here are valuable and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism stresses the need not to touch or tamper with this archaeological site.

On this site, there are many ancient graves, most of which are oval. All these graves are on the southern side, very close to one of the mountainous plateaus that surround the village. Although only ruins of the graves remain due to exposure to elements their shapes have a distinguished presence.

"The site has several ancient graves, and there is no academic study on this archaeological site. Thus, it is not possible to guess about the real or approximate age of these graves. Study is required to obtain data and new information to enrich the country's geological library," said a citizen who keeps interest in heritage.

"The ministry has been keen to fence off this important archaeological site, but part of this wall has collapsed due to the



lack of adherence by tourists to the requirements of preserving it, so it is now easy to access this site without obtaining a prior official permit. We hope that these

sites will receive more attention from the authorities in the future. By this, we could preserve and promote our ancient heritage in a proper way," he added.

The location of these graves on the main road leading to this village contributes to daily visits by tourists. Tourists go to the Yenkit to practice water sports and

relax on its attractive beaches.

Studies indicate that the first archaeological surveys in the Sultanate of Oman began in the early fifties of the last century.

The scientific missions excavated various sites in search of evidence from the third millennium BC. The country got several archaeological evidences based on chronicles and books of travellers such as Ibn Battuta, Bertram Thomas, Marco Polo and others.

Archaeological discoveries reached climax after the establishment of the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture (previously) in 1976, when research, excavation and study operations were organised in coordination with specialised universities and scientific institutions in many countries of the world.

All studies and research surveys resulted in finding archaeological sites in the Governorate of Muscat, including Al Madam in the Wilayat of Al Amerat. It was discovered in 2021, and it is likely that the establishment of this site dates back to the late Islamic period of the sixteenth century AD. There are also a number of sites in the Wilayat of Qurayat (80 km from Muscat) that contain rock inscriptions, indicating that the site was a crossing point for commercial caravans. This is in addition to the presence of archaeological sites in 'Al Qurum' area dating back to 4000 BC.



Follow us on **instagram**:
omanobserver

oman

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | MARCH 9 | 2023

5

Sustainable soil management crucial for food security

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

At the two-day regional event on sustainable soil management in the Near East and North Africa region, the focus is on soil health.

On the first day, on Tuesday, a declaration reaffirming the importance of sustainable soil management and soil health for the NENA region was presented for endorsement.

There is an urgency to the matter because soil health can impact food security which already faces a challenge from climate change. The farmers also have been facing fertiliser crisis due to geopolitical situation and oil price in addition to Covid- 19 impact, which made the price of fertiliser go up three folds.

Many international participants have been invited to review the progress made towards sustainable soil management in the region and to propose their action plans for 2030. The meeting has been organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in association with Global Soil Partnership.

Ronald Vargas Rojas, Land and Water Officer, Secretary of the Global Soil Partnership, FAO said, "The challenge we are addressing is soil degradation in this region. We are pursuing soil health, but this is not easy because there are so many related issues." He said that in the NENA region, one particular challenge is water scarcity, however, "If we do not have healthy soil, even with a lot of water, we will not be able to



produce the food we need, as well as some of the ecosystem services the soil provide for us." What the regional soil experts are trying to achieve in Muscat is first to understand the types of soil the region has and the status of the soil.

Currently, soil mapping and soil assessment are being done to understand the specific problems.

"Based on these findings, we will work together to develop the capacity in every country so they can implement sustainable management practices that would support our farmers because they are the ones dealing with these challenges everyday. So we need to encourage them to practice good management, but they also need the means to make it happen," he explained.

According to him, solutions could be,

for example, understanding how to stop soil erosion or, as in the case of soil salinity implementing methods to see how to reduce it.

Yet another method is reducing the soil compaction so they can store water.

"We are looking forward to some practical solutions. There are many successful examples regionally as well as globally. We are trying to bring these concepts and upscale them," he noted.

The timely Muscat Declaration on Sustainable Soil Management in the MENA region is meant to foster the establishment of a common ground for the NENA region to translate political will into coordinated and concrete actions aimed at scaling up sustainable soil management and improving soil health within the region.

ahliGlobal
equityfund

Notice of the Annual Ordinary General Meeting of Ahli Global Equity Fund

We, the Management of **Ahli Global Equity Fund** (the "Fund") hereby invite the unit holders to attend the Annual Ordinary General Meeting to be held at 3:30 pm, on Thursday, 23 March 2023, at Ahli Bank HQ. In the event that the quorum to convene the Annual Ordinary General Meeting is not complete, the second general meeting will be convened at 3:30 pm, on Sunday, 26 March 2023, at Ahli Bank's HQ to discuss and consider the following agenda:

- 1) To consider and approve the Fund Management Report for financial year ended on 31 December 2022.
- 2) To consider and approve the Auditors' Report on the balance sheet and profit and loss account for the financial year ended 31 December 2022.
- 3) To ratify the sitting fees for the Fund's Management Meetings for the financial year ended on 31 December 2022 and determine the sitting fees for the financial year ending on 31 December 2023.
- 4) To inform the general assembly of the related party transactions which took place during the financial year ended on 31 December 2022.
- 5) To appoint an auditor for the financial year ending on 31 December 2023 and determine their fees.
- 6) To elect a new Fund Management Board (either from amongst the unitholders or non – unitholders). Anyone who wish to stand as a candidate for the Fund's Management must complete the nomination form prepared for this purpose and submit it to the Fund at least (5) five days prior to the date of the Annual Ordinary General Meeting and no later than Friday, 17 March 2023. Any form submitted after this date will not be accepted. the candidate must consider fulfilling the conditions prescribed for membership of Fund Management Board.

According to the Articles of Association of the Fund, any unit holder shall have the right to authorize in writing any other person to attend the meeting and vote on the resolutions taken thereat on his/her behalf. The authorization must be on the proxy forms, which is enclosed with the invitation. Natural persons must enclose copies of their IDs. Minor unitholders and unitholders who do not have IDs shall enclose copies of their passports. Non-Omani unitholders shall enclose along with their completed proxy forms copies of their passports or their resident card. Proxy forms for corporate persons shall be signed by their authorized signatories. Copies of commercial registration documents as well as ID/ passport copies of their authorized signatories' must be enclosed with their completed and stamped proxy forms.

To prevent delay in starting the meeting, unitholders are requested to arrive about half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

In case of any enquiries, please contact **Mrs. Duaa Al Zaabi** Phone No **24577922**.

الأهلي الإسلامي
ahli islami

البنك الأهلي
ahlibank

Citizen arrested for assaulting a person

MUSCAT: The Royal Oman Police (ROP) on Wednesday arrested a citizen on charges of assaulting a person.

In a statement, ROP said, "The Royal Oman Police arrested a citizen after a video clip was circulated on social media showing the assault. Legal measures have been taken against him." Meanwhile, ROP arrested four people of Arab nationality while trying to smuggle more than 17,000 packages of khat.

In a statement, ROP said, "The Coast Guard Police in Dhofar Governorate managed to seize four people of Arab nationality while trying to smuggle more than 1,700 packages of khat." It added that legal procedures are being completed against them.



دعوة لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة غير العادية والجمعية السنوية عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٢/١٢/٣١ لشركة الخزائن للخدمات النفطية

يسر مجلس إدارة شركة الخزائن للخدمات النفطية (ش.م.ع.م) دعوة المساهمين الكرام لحضور اجتماعي الجمعية العامة غير العادية والجمعية العامة العادية السنوية عن السنة المالية المنتهية في ٢٠٢٢/١٢/٣١ للشركة، والمقرر عقدها في تمام الساعة الثانية ظهراً من يوم الأحد الموافق ٢٠٢٣/٣/٢٦ عبر المنصة الالكترونية لعقد الجمعيات العامة والتي يمكن الدخول إليها عبر موقع شركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع (www.mcd.gov.om)، وفي حال عدم اكتمال النصاب القانوني لانعقاد الجمعيتين سيتم إعادة عقد اجتماع الجمعيتين أو إحداهما في تمام الساعة الثانية ظهراً من يوم الثلاثاء الموافق ٢٠٢٣/٣/٢٨ عبر المنصة الالكترونية المذكورة أعلاه لمناقشة جدول الأعمال التالي:-

أولاً: الجمعية العمومية غير العادية

١- تعديل بنود النظام الأساسي لشركة وعقد التأسيس والموافقة عليه (حسب المرفق)
ثانياً: الجمعية العمومية العادية.

١- دراسة تقرير مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في ٢٠٢٢/١٢/٣١، والموافقة عليه. (وفق المرفق)

٢- دراسة تقرير مراقبي الحسابات والموافقة على الميزانية العمومية وحساب الأرباح والخسائر عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٢/١٢/٣١، والموافقة عليه (وفق المرفق).

٣- دراسة مقترح توزيع أرباح نقدية على المساهمين بنسبة (٢٤٪) من رأس المال بما يعادل (٢٤٠) بيسة لكل سهم، والموافقة عليه.

٤- التصديق على بديل حضور جلسات مجلس الإدارة الذي تقاضاه أعضاء مجلس الإدارة عن السنة المالية المنتهية في: ٢٠٢٢/١٢/٣١، وتحديد مقدار البديل للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في: ٢٠٢٣/١٢/٣١، (وفق المرفق)

٥- تعيين مراقبي حسابات للسنة المالية التي ستنتهي في: ٢٠٢٣/١٢/٣١، والموافقة على تحديد أتعابهم.

ووفقاً للنظام الأساسي للشركة وضوابط انعقاد الجمعيات العامة باستخدام وسائل التقنية الحديثة الصادرة من وزارة التجارة والصناعة وترويج الاستثمار نود أن نلفت عنايتكم إلى الآتي:

أ- يحق للشخص الاعتباري دون غيره تفويض شخص طبيعي لحضور اجتماع الجمعية العامة والتصويت نيابة عنه من خلال

وسائل التقنية على أن يكون لهذا الشخص الطبيعي رقم مستثمر بشركة مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع.

ب- يبدأ التصويت على أي من البنود المطروحة على جدول الأعمال قبل تاريخ انعقاد الجمعية لمدة لا تزيد على ثلاث أيام حتى انتهاء عملية التصويت في يوم الاجتماع، وفي حال تغيير رصيد المساهم بالزيادة أو النقصان سيتم إلغاء عملية التصويت ويتعين عليه إعادة التصويت مرة أخرى في يوم اجتماع الجمعية.

في حال وجود أي استفسار حول جدول أعمال الجمعية الرجاء التواصل على أحد الأرقام ٩٨٩٩٣٤٤ أو ٣٨٩٦٠١١

المستشار القانوني

مكتب صلاح البلوشي للمحاماة

رئيس مجلس الإدارة

العبد بن الشرفي بن عكس الحرسوسي

مراقبي الحسابات

كرومات والفزالي



MUSCAT MUNICIPALITY

Advertisement No. (11/2023)

Companies specialized in the field and registered with **Tender Board**, may obtain Prequalification documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Reference No.	Description	Deadline for Document Submission
2023/MM/ HQ -4 (PRE-23-051)	Request for Prequalification for Supply and Laying of Asphalt in Muscat Governorate 2023	23/03/2023

1. Participated companies shall submit their Documents electronically in the above mentioned website.
2. Clarification and Support:
 - For any inquiries regarding Prequalification, please send it through e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>).
 - For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+968 24402200).

Looking for job, car, flat and furniture? Check out the Observer classified page. It's where buyers meet sellers.



شركة المغليفات الصناعية المرنة (ش.م.ع.م)
Flexible Industrial Packages Co. (SAOC)

Annual Ordinary General Meeting Agenda

The Board of Directors of **Flexible Industrial Packaging Company SAOC** is pleased to invite all Shareholders to attend the company's Annual Ordinary General Meeting, which will be held on Monday 27/03/2023 at 10:00am, in the head quarter of Mohammed Al Barwani Company in Al Azaiba. If the quorum not satisfied a second Annual Ordinary General Meeting will be held on Thursday 30/03/2023, in the same place and at the same time to discuss the following Agenda:

1. To consider and approve the Board of Directors' report for the financial year ended December 31, 2022.
2. To consider the Auditors' Report and to approve the Financial Statements Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Account, for the financial year ended on December 31, 2022.
3. To approve the sitting fees of the Board meetings paid to the Board members for previous financial year ending on 31/12/2022, and to determine the sitting fees for the next fiscal year ending on 31/12/2023 (As per Attachment).
4. The appointment of the Auditors for the Company for the financial year ending December 31, 2023, and determine their fee.

Shareholder would have access to reports, documents and statements relating to the agenda items of the Annual General Meeting during the official business hours at the Company's head office, according to the Company's Articles of Association, each shareholder is entitled to authorize in writing any other person to attend the meeting and to vote on his/her behalf on the decisions of the general meeting

The shareholders are requested to arrive a half an hour before the scheduled meeting time.

For further information please contact
Mr. Ahmed Sulaiman Al Amri on Telephone No. 24464121

Chairman

Auditor

Legal Adviser



Delegates attend the second plenary session of the National People's Congress (NPC) at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Tuesday. — AFP

China to revamp science and tech capabilities

BEIJING: China will conduct a sweeping revamp of its science ministry and tech capabilities, pouring more resources into manufacturing and research as Beijing pushes for self-reliance in the face of foreign attempts at “containment and suppression”.

A broad restructuring document announced by China’s cabinet and set to be approved by the country’s parliament this week will refocus the Ministry of Science and Technology’s resources on coordinating scientific and technological breakthroughs.

Beijing will “optimise its management of the whole chain of science and technology innovation”, the document said, as well as set up a national data administration responsible for overseeing the digital economy.

China faced “a severe situation of international scientific and technological competition alongside external containment”, said Xiao Jie, a member of

China’s State Council, as he introduced the plan at a meeting of the national parliament.

Beijing must “better coordinate scientific and technological capabilities to overcome difficulties in key core technologies”, while also accelerating “high-level scientific and technological self-reliance”, Xiao said, according to an official readout.

PLAN APPROVAL

The parliament is expected to approve the plan at its annual national meeting.

The plan will slash staffing at the country’s central state institutions by five per cent, with the freed-up headcount reallocated towards “key areas and important work”.

It will also replace China’s existing banking and insurance regulator with a new body incorporating some functions from its central bank and securities watchdog, strengthening oversight over the

financial sector, already subject to a sweeping crackdown.

President Xi Jinping vowed earlier this month to boost the country’s manufacturing capacity, telling Two Sessions delegates “we must rely on ourselves”.

Faced with an increasingly hostile international environment and lagging growth at home, Beijing is also grappling with a shift by global corporations away from Chinese factories to manufacturers in countries such as India and Vietnam.

Xi told Two Sessions delegates on Sunday that China must develop high-quality manufacturing that is “innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared”.

This year’s parliamentary meeting follows a key Communist Party conclave last year that secured Xi another five years as head of the party and the military. — **AFP**

Dozens sick in Philippine villages hit by oil spill from a tanker

MANILA: Dozens of people in the Philippines have fallen ill after oil from a sunken tanker washed up on their shores, officials said on Wednesday, as authorities struggled to reach the leaking vessel.

The Princess Empress was carrying 800,000 litres of industrial fuel oil when it sank more than a week ago off the central island of Mindoro, south of the capital Manila.

Diesel fuel and thick oil from the vessel have contaminated the waters and beaches of nine municipalities along the coast of Oriental Mindoro province, Governor Humerlito Dolor told reporters.

Oil has been spotted as far south as Semirara island — which is part of Antique province — more than 130 kilometres from where the tanker went down.

That has sparked concerns for the region’s rich marine life and economy.

Provincial health officer Cielo



An aerial view shows the oil spill on the shores of Pola, in Oriental Mindoro province, Philippines. — Reuters

Ante said at least 43 people living in affected villages had reported suffering vomiting, headaches and nausea since the oil reached their shores.

“They live in areas where the oil spill occurred,” said Ante.

No one was hospitalised and authorities had not confirmed if the symptoms were the direct result of the spill, she added.

Dolor said clean-up efforts were underway to prevent a spike in sickness. — **AFP**

■ ONE DEAD IN ISRAELI RAID



A Palestinian child reacts during the funeral of Abdelfattah Kharwasheh, after he was killed by Israeli forces in a raid, in Askar refugee camp in Nablus. — Reuters

Türkiye’s ruling party presents a competitive gas reform plan

ANKARA: Türkiye’s ruling AK Party presented a draft law to parliament on Wednesday aimed at establishing a competitive natural gas market as the country attempts to become a gas trading hub bringing together suppliers and consumers.

President Vladimir Putin proposed setting up a gas hub in Türkiye in October after explosions that damaged Russia’s Nord Stream gas pipelines under

the Baltic Sea. Türkiye, which currently imports all its gas needs and has extensive LNG import infrastructure, believes it can leverage its existing and new trade relations to become a hub.

The bill submitted on Wednesday says the proposed changes would increase safe and affordable access to energy for Turkish consumers through a diversification of supply and the entry of additional players in the



Supporters of Turkish President cheer during a ceremony to mark an increase in capacity at a natural gas storage facility in Silivri near Istanbul, Turkey. — Reuters

market. The regulations are also aimed at building a trustworthy market where domestic and foreign companies can trade natural gas and allow both state energy company BOTAS and private entities to import natural gas, the text of the bill said.

The draft law also aims to split BOTAS’s natural gas supply and infrastructure operations in order to encourage competition and free trade in the market.

Some Western capitals have voiced concern that a Turkish hub including Russian gas could allow Moscow to mask exports that are sanctioned by the West.

A gas hub summit was scheduled last month but was postponed to March due to massive earthquakes that hit Syria and Türkiye, which also plans to start offshore gas production in 2023 and ramp up output over the next few years. — **Reuters**

KINSHASA

Fighting continues despite ceasefire

Fighting continued in eastern Congo between rebel forces and government forces on Wednesday, a day after a ceasefire agreement was supposed to go into effect.

The March 23 Movement rebel group and the Congolese army both accused each other of attacks on Wednesday in violation of the internationally mediated ceasefire, which was supposed to go into effect at noon on Tuesday.

A resident of the contested



North Kivu region of Congo said on Wednesday that there was fighting about 10 kilometres from the town of Sake, with residents fleeing to the regional capital of Goma. — **dpa**

CAIRO

Four dead, 23 injured in train derailment

Four people were killed after a passenger train derailed near Cairo, the Egyptian Health Ministry said on Wednesday.

Twenty-three others were injured in the accident on Tuesday evening in the city of Qalyub, north of Cairo.

Egypt’s state-run National Railway Authority said the derailment took place as the train was entering the station on a journey from Cairo heading to the Nile Delta city of Menouf.

The train driver failed to



heed the semaphore direction signal and crashed into a buffer barrier, causing the locomotive and a front carriage to derail. Egypt has seen several railway tragedies in recent years. — **dpa**

KUALA LUMPUR

Anti-graft agency summons Ex-PM Muhyiddin

Former Malaysian prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin was summoned to appear at the country’s anti-graft agency on Thursday, following allegations of abuse in stimulus programmes launched under his premiership.

Muhyiddin said he has been called into the headquarters of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) at 11 am on Thursday.

He also denied a news report that he was arrested on Wednesday. Prime Minister



Anwar Ibrahim last year ordered a review of government projects worth billions of dollars approved by Muhyiddin alleging they did not follow proper procedures. — **Reuters**



omanobserver.com/podcast

world

OMANDAILYOBSERVER

THURSDAY | MARCH 9 | 2023

7

In brief

■ LONDON



RISHI SUNAK TO MEET BIDEN AND AUSTRALIAN PM

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will meet US President Joe Biden and Australian counterpart Anthony Albanese next Monday to discuss the emerging AUKUS security pact, the UK leader's spokesman said on Wednesday.

The meeting comes with Australia set to seal a nuclear-powered submarine deal with Britain or the United States, seen as part of the trio's efforts to counter China's growing assertiveness in the Pacific region.

The three leaders will reportedly convene in San Diego, California for the one-day meeting. The US has one of its largest naval bases there.

■ LONDON



PRINCE HARRY LAWSUIT SET FOR MAY TRIAL

Britain's Prince Harry's lawsuit against the publisher of the Daily Mirror newspaper over allegations of phone hacking will go to trial in May.

Harry, the Duke of Sussex, is one of several public figures whose lawsuits against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) will be considered at a trial due to begin in May. Judge Timothy Fancourt ruled on Wednesday that Harry's case, which alleges unlawful information gathering on behalf of MGN journalists between 1996 and 2011, should be part of the trial.

David Sherborne, a lawyer representing Harry, earlier told the court that Harry would be "the only witness."

■ GENEVA



WHO REGIONAL CHIEF KASAI OUSTED

The World Health Organization has terminated the contract of its powerful Western Pacific regional director Takeshi Kasai following staff accusations of abusive and racist behaviour, a diplomatic source said on Wednesday.

The WHO executive board called a two-day, closed-door special session at its Geneva headquarters to discuss the case of Japanese doctor Kasai, who was suspended after allegations first surfaced in January 2022.

"The regional director's appointment has been terminated", the source said. A WHO letter said the decision was made "after careful consideration".

Ukrainians defiant as Russians claim control over Bakhmut

KYIV: The head of Russia's Wagner mercenary group said on Wednesday his forces had taken full control of the eastern part of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut as one of the bloodiest battles of the year-long war ground on amid the ruins.

If the claim is true, it would mean Russian forces control nearly half the city in their costly push to secure their first big victory in several months.

Ukrainian defenders remained defiant, however. Last week they appeared to be preparing for a tactical retreat from Bakhmut, but military and political leaders are now speaking of hanging on to positions and inflicting as many casualties as possible on the Russian assault force.

In Stockholm, Ukraine's defence minister said Kyiv urgently needed huge supplies of artillery shells to mount a general counter-offensive against Russia's army, urging EU members to support an Estonian plan for joint procurement of munitions. "We need to move forward as soon as possible," Oleksii Reznikov told reporters before an EU defence ministers' meeting.

The General Staff of the Ukraine's Armed Forces said in its Wednesday morning report: "The enemy, despite significant losses... continues to storm the town of Bakhmut."

Wagner head Yevgeny Prigozhin said his fighters, who have been spearheading the Russian campaign to seize Bakhmut, had now captured the city's east. "Everything east of the Bakhmutka River is completely under the control of Wagner," Prigozhin said on Telegram.

The river bisects Bakhmut city, which sits on the edge of a swathe of the Donetsk region that is already largely under Russian occupation. The city centre is on the west side of the river.

Prigozhin has issued premature success claims before and Reuters was not able to verify his latest one. Ukrainian military statements said earlier there may be "conditions" in Bakhmut for a



Pedestrians walk through a lighted park in the centre of Kharkiv amid the Russian war on Ukraine.

— AFP

Ukrainian offensive.

"The main task of our troops in Bakhmut is to grind the enemy's fighting capability, to bleed their combat potential," Serhiy Cherevatyi, a spokesperson for Ukraine's eastern military command, told public television on Tuesday.

Russia, which claims to have annexed nearly 20 per cent of Ukraine's territory, has made progress in recent weeks around Bakhmut, but its winter offensive has yielded no significant gains in assaults further north and south.

It says that taking Bakhmut would be a step towards seizing the industrial Donbas region, made up of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. Western analysts say Bakhmut has little strategic value.

But Kyiv says the losses suffered by Russia there could determine the course of the war, with decisive battles expected when the weather is better and Ukraine receives more military

Taking Bakhmut would be a step towards seizing the industrial Donbas region, made up of Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. Western analysts say Bakhmut has little strategic value

aid, including heavy battle tanks.

Luhansk Governor Serhiy Haidai said in comments on Ukrainian television that Russia's strategy in east Ukraine remained the same — to take the remaining areas of Donetsk and Luhansk that it does not control.

"As for tactics - they understand that they are not able to make any rapid advance, so they have one tactic — they advance where they

can. If they see that there is any success somewhere, they throw all the reserves into it," he said.

"So far, in the directions of Kreminna, Svatove and Bilohorivka (all northwest of the regional capital Luhansk) they have had no strategic successes and are making no progress."

The months of warfare in the east have been among the deadliest and most destructive since Russian war in February last year, adding Bakhmut's name to a list of devastated cities such as Mariupol, Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk.

A Ukrainian military drone showed the scale of destruction in Bakhmut, filming apartment blocks on fire and smoke billowing from residential areas. Iryna Vereshchuk, a deputy Ukrainian premier, said fewer than 4,000 civilians — out of a pre-war population of some 70,000 remained in city, which is now in ruins. — Reuters

Antarctic sea ice cover at record low: EU monitor

PARIS: Sea ice in Antarctica shrank to the smallest area on record in February for the second year in a row, continuing a decade-long decline, the European Union's climate monitoring service said. On February 16, the ocean surface covered by ice around the frozen continent shrank to 2.09 million square km, the lowest level since satellite records began, according to figures provided to AFP by the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S).

"Antarctic sea ice reached its lowest extent in the 45-year satellite data record," said Samantha Burgess, Deputy Director of C3S. US government scientists confirmed a new record last month but indicated an even lower figure of 1.79 million sq km, a difference Copernicus attributed to "different sea ice retrieval algorithms".

Sea ice concentrations during the southern hemisphere summer were well below average in all sectors of the Southern Ocean. Startlingly, the record lows this year and in 2022 are about 30 per cent below the 1981-2010 average. "These low sea ice conditions may have important implications for the stability of Antarctic ice shelves and ultimately for global sea level rise," said Burgess. "Polar ice caps are a sensitive indicator of the climate crisis."

Melting sea ice has no discernible impact on sea levels because the ice is already in ocean water. But diminished ice cover is nonetheless a major concern because it helps accelerate global warming, including in the Arctic region.

About 90 per cent of the Sun's energy that hits white sea ice is reflected back into space. But when sunlight hits dark, unfrozen ocean water, nearly the same amount of that energy is absorbed instead, contributing directly to global warming. — AFP

Women march as rights under threat across globe

MADRID: Women took to the streets from Kabul to Bangkok on Wednesday to mark International Women's Day and defend rights that are coming under increasing attack. With the Taliban government's banning of women from universities in Afghanistan and the Ukraine war's impact on women, there are many reasons to protest.

In Afghanistan, which the UN called the "most repressive country in the world" for women's rights, AFP saw around 20 women holding a rare protest in the capital Kabul.

Marches also took place in Thailand and Indonesia, where a few dozen women gathered in front of the country's parliament to urge lawmakers to pass a



Women hold placards during a rally to mark the International Women's Day in Nantes Western France, on Wednesday. — AFP

long-awaited bill to protect domestic workers.

In Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky praised women for taking a central role in defending their country against Russia's war. He thanked "all women who work, teach, study,

rescue, heal, fight — fight for Ukraine."

Global progress on women's rights is "vanishing before our eyes," UN chief Antonio Guterres warned, saying gender equality would take another three centuries to achieve. — AFP



مسقط للمقاصة والإيداع
Muscat Clearing & Depository

MUSCAT CLEARING & DEPOSITORY (S.A.O.G) MCD

POST BOX 952, CODE 112, RUWI, MUSCAT, SULTANATE OF OMAN

hereby gives Notice of following Tender:

Tender No	Description	Eligibility	Participation Charges	Sale of Documents	Last Date of Bid Submission
MCD-TENDER-2023-01	Consultancy Services for Business Development Strategy	Local/ International Financial Market Consultancy Firms	R.O 25/=	19-02-2023 to 09-03-2023	16-03-2023 Extended

Tender Documents shall be obtained from Administration & Finance Department, Muscat Clearing & Depository, First Floor, MBD, RUWI, Sultanate of Oman (Tel.: +968-24822207) during office hours after paying the non-refundable amount mentioned above for the Tender Documents.

Consultancy Firms that are bidding must provide a bank guarantee or a certified cheque from a bank operating in the Sultanate for at least (2%) of the tender value on behalf of MUSCAT CLEARING & DEPOSITORY.

MCD 's Standard Terms and Conditions of Contract Agreement shall be applicable.

Tenderers are requested to submit their **Tender in Hardcopy** as well as **Electronic copies with Password Protection** addressed to the 'Chairmen Procurement Committee', MCD. Electronic copy Technical Document shall be emailed to Salim Al Balushi <salim@mcd.om>, Chairmen Procurement Committee on or before last day 14:00 hours of Tender submission date.

MCD is not bound to accept the lowest tender.

Are you taking the challenge of change



Dr Anchan K

The writer is an advisor on business, economy

Most of us have difficulty in dealing with change? Change comes in a variety of sizes, shapes and flavours with time. Even if you resist or avoid it, it will enter your life just the same. When you initiate the change yourself, it's pretty easy to adopt to it, since it's a wanted one. But are the unplanned and unexpected changes bad? What if all changes were good by default?

It's how you choose to look at and deal with change that matters most. At first it is a bit difficult and annoying, but after a while you get used to the change so much that if it doesn't come for a while, you grow and learn new things every time something changes. You discover new insights about different aspects

of your life. You learn lessons even from changes that did not lead you to where you wanted to be.

Like it or not, change is an integral part of today's business climate. Those employees who embrace and initiate change will thrive, while those who complain and fear change may be headed for the unemployment line. If you want to remain employable, you may have to change more than just your attitude and your reaction to change. You may have to change some of your ideas and goals to create a better future for yourself.

Change not only can make a mighty country, but also can make a person successful.

If we want passion back in our

REMEMBER THAT IT'S YOUR OWN OPINION THAT REALLY COUNTS. HAVE FAITH IN YOURSELF, REALISE ONLY YOU CAN CHANGE YOU, ONLY YOU CAN CONTROL YOUR DESTINY

lives, we must be willing to meet the challenge of change. If you've been reacting negatively to change, it's important to modify your attitude and your behaviour before it's too late. We all have things in our lives we'd like to improve — finances, job, partner, house, etc.

If you want people to accept change, you need to invest time in planning and communication. To get others to accept change, the first step is to understand what, from their perspective, they feel that they are losing. If you can first empathise with their feelings, then begin to compensate for their loss, you have taken a giant first step towards acceptance.

You will never, ever, reach a day where you don't have feelings, the good and the bad. Resisting them will not help, it will hurt. Train yourself to acknowledge your feelings, consider what they're trying to tell you, and let them pass. Suppressing your thought, will not make them go away. They'll make

them more powerful when they eventually all come back to haunt you. Find new things to think about.

Finally, to learn to accept who you are, it's one of the hardest things to follow through on, but it's definitely most rewarding. It's so easy to look in the mirror and point out most of insecurities. But, instead of counting all the things you wish you could be, try counting all the things that you are thankful. Remember that it's your own opinion that really counts. Have faith in yourself, realise only you can change you, only you can control your destiny. Decide what is important to you and set your mind to it.

Graveyard for imported CO2 opens in Denmark

CAMILLE BAS-WOHLERT

Denmark on Wednesday inaugurated a project to store carbon dioxide 1,800 metres beneath the North Sea, becoming the first country in the world to bury CO2 imported from abroad.

The CO2 graveyard, where the carbon is injected to prevent further warming of the atmosphere, is on the site of an old oil field.

Led by British chemical giant Ineos and German oil company Wintershall Dea, the "Greensand" project is expected to store up to eight million tonnes of CO2 per year by 2030.

Still in their infancy and costly, carbon capture and storage (CCS) projects aim to capture and then trap CO2 in order to mitigate global warming.

Over 200 similar projects are currently operational or under development around the world.

But unlike other projects that store CO2 emissions from nearby industrial sites, Greensand brings in the carbon from far away.

First captured at the source, the CO2 is then liquefied — in Belgium in Greensand's case — then transported, currently by ship but potentially by pipelines, and stored in reservoirs such as geological cavities or depleted oil and gas fields.

At Greensand, the carbon is transported in special containers to the Nini West platform, where it is injected into an existing reservoir 1.8 kilometres (1.1 miles) under the seabed.

Once the pilot phase is completed, the plan is to use the neighbouring Siri field as well.

Danish authorities, who have set a target of reaching carbon neutrality as early as 2045, say this is "a much needed tool in our climate toolkit".

Ineos CEO Brian Gilvary said at the opening that at full-scale, the project could meet 40 per cent of Danish requirements to reach "net zero" and that it could account for 2.5 per cent or up to three per cent of European requirements.

The North Sea is particularly suitable for this type of project, as the region already has pipelines and potential storage sites after decades of oil and gas production.

"The depleted oil and gas fields have many advantages because they are well understood and there are already infrastructures which can most likely be reused," said Morten Jeppesen, director of the Danish Offshore Technology Centre at the Technical University of Denmark (DTU).

Near the Greensand site, France's TotalEnergies is also exploring the possibility of burying CO2 with the aim of trapping five million tonnes per year by 2030. — AFP

Facing minefields and cash crunch, Ukraine farmers to sow smaller crop

ROD NICKEL AND PAVEL POLITYUK

Facing fields full of mines and short of cash, many Ukrainian farmers are likely to sow a smaller area this spring than they did following Russia's war, in what could be a further blow to global food supplies after disruptions last year.

Ukraine is a major supplier of wheat and corn to world markets and production and exports slumped last year due to the war, sending prices for key commodities sharply higher before stabilising.

With farmers hurting from soaring costs including fertiliser, Ukraine's export capacity severely limited because of Russia's capture of some areas and unexploded ordnance near former frontlines, supply could be squeezed further.

The farmers, who began planting the country's spring crop last week, also earn less than before as buyers factor in the war's higher logistic costs and risks, giving them little incentive to maximise output. Ukraine can ship from just three Black Sea ports running at half capacity under an international shipping deal.

"Almost all crops are making a loss at the moment," said Dmitry Skorniyakov, CEO of HarvEast, a large agricultural producer. Agricultural companies, which plant most of Ukraine's fields, are short 40 billion hryvnia (\$1.08 billion) to carry out spring work, the Agrarian Council said. The country's spring-planted crops mostly include corn, oilseeds and vegetables.

Denys Marchuk, deputy chair of the Ukrainian Agrarian Council, the biggest farmer organisation, expects plantings of corn, a fertiliser-intensive crop, to plummet 20 per cent from last year, which itself saw a 27-per cent decrease in harvested area.

Overall, the government expects spring plantings to fall only 5 per cent from last year, underlining a more sanguine official assessment of potential losses.

The smaller spring crop would come as Ukraine's harvest of wheat grown over winter is expected to fall sharply, although not enough to spur export curbs.



A rusty vehicle is seen in a field amid Russia's war on Ukraine, near Snihurivka, southeast Ukraine. — Reuters

WITH FARMERS HURTING FROM SOARING COSTS INCLUDING FERTILISER, UKRAINE'S EXPORT CAPACITY SEVERELY LIMITED

"Of course it's not paradise. The situation is still challenging," Ukraine's first deputy farm minister, Taras Vysotskiy, said.

Farmers are likely to prioritise cheaper-to-grow sunflower, said Mike Lee, director of Green Square Agro Consulting. Grains have traditionally dominated Ukraine's fields, but lower-cost and higher-priced oilseeds are gaining popularity during war. Ukraine was the world's fourth-largest corn exporter before Russia's full-scale war in 2022 and the biggest sunflower oil exporter.

Farmers in top exporter United States plan to boost corn plantings, possibly cushioning the blow of lower Ukrainian production. Ukrainians will also likely plant less potato, a Ukrainian diet staple, due to poor profit potential, said Mykola Hordiichuk, managing director of Agrico Ukraine, a farming operation. That may result in a shortage of retail-quality potatoes, increasing prices for Ukrainian consumers later

in the year, he added.

One optimistic sign: Ukraine agricultural scientists said soil moisture reserves looked ample, helpful for germinating crops.

Mines are a growing occupational hazard. On Monday, two farm workers died in separate mine explosions working fields in the southern Kherson and Mykolaiv regions, authorities said.

Vasyl Shtendera, 49, who farms in a Kherson area recaptured by Ukraine last year, doubts he will plant crops this spring.

His fields are mined, some equipment was destroyed and fertiliser is too expensive, he said.

"I have no moral right to send workers to fields as it is dangerous for life," he said, adding that there is no demining work happening there.

Companies lacking demining certification are charging farmers up to \$3,000 per hectare to clear fields, Ukrainian media reported on Tuesday.

Some Ukrainian officials estimate that all land in areas of hostility is mined, totalling some 24.7 million acres or nearly one-third of arable land. Vysotskiy, however estimated that the mined arable area may be just 2.5 million hectares, with only 500,000 hectares that will be impossible to use this spring.

The ministry is aiming to clear up to 800,000 hectares of farmland in time for planting, Vysotskiy said. — Reuters

To comment & email: opinion@omanobserver.om

Fun and entertainment as news deliverance

The media and journalism are letting people down. Those interested in solid forms of reporting are in search of alternatives. While the youth look for entertainment, investors and researchers look for valuable information.

Many may claim that journalism is dead or that people are no longer interested in journalism. Yes, some defend this rhetoric. Influencers who have transitioned to journalism can spread the hype and be handsomely paid.

Complex issues, when reported, are presented in an oversimplified narrative; that brings us to two possible reasons: either the journalist or the influencer is unable to address the implications of them, or the news organisations believe that the readers are incapable of understanding multifaceted topics. One way or the other, the media is not fulfilling its role.

Issues are either glossed over with glowing and pleasant words, or they are written at the level of someone who has completed a year and a half of college. Media material is hardly written at a higher reading level. We have entered an age where there is a daring need for in-depth reporting, well-researched material, and analyses of arguments, ideas and possible consequences.

At large, the role of the media is to inform, provide interpretation, instruct, create bonding and inspiration, entertain and educate. Currently, media roles are chosen based on which audience they best serve. The younger and less educated people are more focused on visual networks and are becoming disconnected from the news.

TikTok is evolving into a trend characterised by visual and short content and dynamics defined by algorithmic recommendations. More news publishers are expected to adopt TikTok as a way to deliver information in the form of entertainment to younger audiences, meaning that individuals are more important than the news brand. The non-algorithmic messaging app Telegram is also expanding fast.

The question of how to preserve such a relevant field is being discussed



Sonia Ambrosio

The writer is journalist, academic, researcher in media studies

globally concerning a variety of narrative and organisational forms. Should it lean more towards explanatory, questions and answers format, investigative, solution journalism, or motivational stories?

Whether we are talking about storytelling formats, user needs, targeted objectives, or the personal journalist, the reality is that we are not sure what changes will be made or whether the news dancing in TikTok will prevail. Time spent on TikTok is increasing among male audiences looking for funny and entertaining videos. Tell me about the most recent book you read... and you get a blank stare back.

Merely producing content is not enough. Now, we have to understand the psychology and sociology that underlie the topics to be covered and how to communicate them. An analysis by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism found that changes in professional journalism and the news industry, as well as shifts in some regions of the world's political contexts, are some of the worldwide trends that are having an impact on reporting.

One of the biggest issues in journalism's survival and in-depth reporting rests mostly on sustainable revenue sources – beyond advertising. For context, according to DataReportal, at the start of 2022, TikTok's ads reached 38.8 per cent, Instagram's ads were equivalent to 37.0 per cent, and Snapchat's ads reached 29.4 per cent of the total online population in Oman. This demonstrates that, in addition to the fact that trust in news is declining, readership and interest in information are brief.

We are rushing towards captivating entertainment and a superficial level of critical knowledge; the use of influencers and an uptick in political media intervention are causing journalism to lose its important function in society.

Journalism still matters. By whom and for whom remain at the heart of this profession. Yes, journalism is less robust these days, but it has not lost its relevance. The challenges are how to be creative in serious reporting, how to attract readership, but also how to have editorial independence.

CURRENTLY, MEDIA ROLES ARE CHOSEN BASED ON WHICH AUDIENCE THEY BEST SERVE

PROTEST AGAINST OCCUPATION



Palestinian youth burn tyres during a protest near the Israel-Gaza border east of Gaza City on Wednesday. – AFP

In Burkina, bikes bring treasured independence for women

MARIETOU BÂ

The motorcycles that buzz along the streets of Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, have a story to tell.

Once the preserve of men and a sign of male status in this West African country, today they are used ubiquitously by women — and are a prized tool of emancipation.

When Nigerian film-maker Kagho Idhebor first came to Ouagadougou he was overwhelmed by how many women whizzed about on a motorbike.

“I’d never seen women drive with such attitude, such independence,” he said. “There are more motorbikes than cars, and more women than men on these motorbikes.”

He was so struck by the phenomenon that he made “Burkina Babes” — a documentary which ran at the pan-African FESPACO cinema and TV festival in Ouagadougou that ended last weekend.

Dressed in jeans or a suit, some with a baby slung on their back, women of all ages ride around on motorbikes in Burkina Faso. “The motorbike is above all a necessity” for getting around, said Valerie Dambre, who had stopped at a traffic light.

WHEN NIGERIAN FILM-MAKER KAGHO IDHEBOR FIRST CAME TO OUAGADOUGOU HE WAS OVERWHELMED BY HOW MANY WOMEN WHIZZED ABOUT ON A MOTORBIKE

But they are also a symbol of autonomy for many women in a deeply poor country beset with problems imposed by a brutal years-long insurgency. Nearly one person in seven in Burkina's population of 22 million has a motorbike, according to transport ministry figures for 2020.

Between 2011 and 2020, the number of motorbikes tripled as a share of the population, cementing their role as a solution for mobility.

“In the coastal countries (in West Africa), people went straight to cars” from walking or using bicycles, said anthropologist Jocelyne Vokouma. “But we (in Burkina) turned to motorbikes before using cars.”

The key period of change was the early 1990s, she said.

Until then, “a woman would proudly say that her motorbike had been bought by her husband. ‘My husband is doing OK,’ was what women used to say,” Vokouma said. But the country went through wrenching austerity and many men lost their jobs.

It was women who picked up the baton, setting up small businesses such as selling fruit and vegetables to make money



A woman rides a motorcycle in Ouagadougou. – AFP

— and as time progressed, many used their savings to swap their bicycle for a motorbike.

With that came greater freedom, in developing their business, taking the children to school, seeing friends or just going out for a ride. But, said Vokouma, some important seeds had already been sown by Burkina Faso's revolutionary leftwing leader, Thomas Sankara.

During his four years in power in the 1980s, which ended traumatically with his assassination, Sankara “played an emancipating role, breaking

down traditional mindsets and thrusting women into the public space, outside the home,” she said. “Young women today were brought up on his ideas.”

Hand in hand with the new mobility has come an entry for women into the male-dominated business of auto maintenance. Since 1997, the Women's School for Skills Initiation and Training (CFIAM) has trained more than 700 women to be mechanics and bodywork repairers.

Its CEO and founder, Bernard Zongo, said he set up the school to help “girls... into non-

traditional areas of work, so that they can become economically independent.”

He hired a full-time woman psychologist and installed a nursery for students with babies.

The centre gets by through donations from NGOs, which account for 75 per cent of revenue, while the remaining income comes from fees. The two-year course costs 100,000 CFA francs (\$163) — a hefty sum in a country where annual per-capita income is little more than \$900.

Other African countries, including Niger, Ivory Coast and Mali have sent representatives to the CFIAM to see how it operates, and “boys are asking to enrol,” Zongo said with a smile.

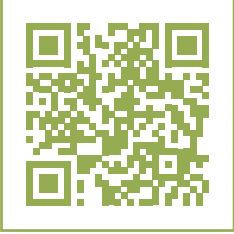
“There are people we know who are jealous of us,” said one student, Salamata Congo, speaking above a racket of cutting and hammering. But patriarchal habits and machismo die hard.

“Men try to discourage you,” said Berenice Zagali, who is learning to become a mechanic.

“They say, ‘You’re a woman, what are doing here? This is man's work. Your place is the kitchen, the office.’” — AFP

sport

Follow us on
omanobserver.om/sports
sport@omanobserver.om



HOSTS FINISH TOP IN QUALIFIER EVENT; YEMEN SECOND, IRAQ THIRD

Oman qualify for tent pegging World Cup



WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

Oman national tent pegging team snatched the first qualifying cards for the tent pegging World Cup in South Africa 2023, at the end of the World Cup qualifiers hosted by the Sultanate of Oman from March 4

to 7 at Al Rahba Farm in Barka. Oman team achieved four gold medals, two silver and two bronze medals to emerge overall champions with 559 points. Yemen came in second with 547 points while Iraq finished third with 528.5 points. First-placed Oman and second-

placed Yemen qualified to the World Cup in South Africa from the Oman Qualifying tournament. The Championship was organised by Oman Equestrian Federation under the supervision of the International Tent Pegging Federation. Five teams competed in the championship including

hosts Sultanate of Oman, Kuwait, Yemen, Iraq and Germany. **YEMEN'S OSAMA WINS GOLD** The third day competitions were on the sword rounds. Yemen's Osama Abdul Khaliq al Hamzi claimed the gold medal in the individual sword category with 82

points. Iraq's Abdulhameed Rashid took the silver medal with 80 points while Oman's Hamad bin Saif al Raisi won the bronze with 76 points. Osama also won the gold in the general category with 161 points, Abdulhameed took the silver with 152 points and Oman's Atta bin Khamis claimed the bronze medal

with 151 points. In the team category, Oman national team snatched the gold medal after collecting 282.5 points, Yemeni team won the silver medal after collecting 275 points, while the bronze medal was claimed by the Iraqi team, which scored 272.5 points.

SEEB AIM TO RETAIN HIS MAJESTY CUP

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAR 8

Defending champions Seeb will take on Al Nahda, who are looking to win the coveted title for the first time, in the 2022-23 His Majesty's Cup football final on Thursday. The final clash will take place at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex in Bausher with kick off at 7:30 pm under auspices of Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, in presence of top dignitaries.

Coach Hamed al Azani's men are keen to lift the long-awaited title. Al Buraimi's representative club is delivering top show in this season as the team is currently leading the top domestic league. Al Nahda featured top faces in the team that can make the difference in Thursday's encounter including the best goalkeeper in the last edition of Gulf Cup, Ibrahim al Mukhaini, besides other national team players Ahmed al Kaabi, Al Munthir al Alawi, Mansoor al Nuaimi and professional player Arsini Loko. The team suffered a big blow after Yemeni player Abdulwasa al Matari got injured and was hospitalised. Al Nahda reached the final on three occasions including 2008, 2013 and 2014. The players expect to end this final on a triumphant note. **SEEB EYE FIFTH TITLE** The rivals, Seeb, on the other

AL NAHDA CHASE HISTORIC TITLE IN FINAL TODAY



hand will eye their fifth Cup and to regain the title. Seeb players are experienced in the final clashes and equipped with the desired skills and tactics to end the finals with a positive result. The AFC Cup champions, coached by national experienced coach Rasheed Jaber, have many key players including many stars of the national team like Salah al Yahyaie, Eid al Farsi, Mohammed al Musallami, Abdulaziz al Maqbali and Ali al

Busaidy besides striker Mohsin al Ghassani. Al Nahda progressed into the final of the prestigious HM Cup after edging past Al Rustaq 1-0 in an exciting return semifinal encounter at Al Buraimi Sports Complex on February 25 while the first-leg match ended in a goalless draw on February 20. Seeb secured a slot in the final after they picked up an aggregate 3-0 win over Al Suwaiq in the

semifinals after winning 3-0 in the return leg on February 26 and a goalless draw in the first leg on February 20. **JABER, AL AZANI PROMISE TOP TUSSLE** Coach Rasheed Jaber voiced confidence in the Seeb team that had played many finals. "Seeb players are very used to the final games and they are very familiar on how to deal with this kind of encounters. The HM Cup

finals are classified as tough matches as it normally end on small details. Our opponent is a very tough team and they are delivering top performance in the local competitions," Jaber added in the press conference on Wednesday. The former national team coach said the team is creating many scoring attempts in all the games with no luck in finishing. "I am expecting a top technical and

tactical match as both teams are comprised of top players," he said. Seeb player Salah al Yahyaie said facing Al Nahda in the final will be tough. "We are fully prepared to meet Al Nahda. There was slight drop in my technical performance during the past period but I am back now with better technical status. We will deliver our best in the final," he said. Al Nahda head coach Hamed al Azani said it is a golden opportunity for his team to claim its first title. "Congratulations to both teams on reaching the final. The way to the final was very difficult. This is a golden opportunity for us to break our bad luck in the finals after four attendance in the final matches. Despite that there are some major absences in the team, but there are other members in the squad in full readiness," he said. The former national team head coach opined that leading the Omantel League does not have an impact on final. "Each competition has its own characteristics. Reaching the final means the team is very close to achieve the desired title. I am fully confident on the players to snatch the title," he concluded. Al Nahda player Mansoor al Nuaimi affirmed that the team is in a best technical shape for the title clash. "We are very ambitious to show top game. We are having top players and everyone is focused on the final," he said.

Women’s volleyball tournament launch on Friday

MUSCAT: As part of the International Women’s Day, Joyalukkas Exchange, a leading money exchange in Oman, is organising its 2nd season of the women’s volleyball tournament. This will be held on Friday, March 10th at Bausher Club. The inaugural ceremony will be graced by MAS part of the International Women’s Day, Joyalukkas Exchange, a leading money exchange in Oman, is organising its 2nd season of the women’s volleyball tournament. This will be held on Friday, March 10th at Bausher Club. The inaugural ceremony will be graced by Ary Antony Jos Joyalukkas Group Director and Anjali Menon, Chief Business Officer, Instant Cash. The Prize distribution ceremony will be graced by Sariya al Hadiyah Member of the State Council and Mumtaz al Balushi, Director of Administration (OPAZ) at 5:00 pm.

More than 250 female volleyball players in 20 clubs consisting of natives and foreigners will participate in the tournament. Various Embassy officials, Oman Volleyball Association players and other delegates will attend the event.

The winners will get attractive prizes including cash awards and many prizes have been prepared for the spectators during the breaks of the competition. The enthusiastic response to the first season of the tournament last year



has inspired the start of the second season in Oman.

Many programmes have been organised in connection with International Women’s Day in Joyalukkas Exchange branches across the Sultanate.

Antony Jos, Managing Director, Joyalukkas Exchange,

said that the acceptance which we got in the first season inspired us to organise more events to emphasise gender equality and women empowerment. Joyalukkas Management aims to provide more opportunities to women and bring them to the mainstream.

Nixon Baby Joyalukkas

Exchange General Manager said that we are committed, and more women should participate in all the programmes including the volleyball tournament held for that purpose. Among the expatriate community in Oman, there are many nationalities who cherish volleyball, but there are very few

platforms where they can showcase their talent.

Ansar Shenthath, Operations Manager, Joyalukkas Exchange said that last year, the women’s volleyball tournament was organised in Oman for the first time and the response was amazing and this year the tournament has

become something that players and volleyball enthusiasts are eagerly waiting for.

In the first season, Slashers Oman were the winners and Muscat Blazers were the first runners-up. Management officials also informed that everyone is welcome to watch the tournament.

Oman Golf U18 team achieved second at Bahrain Championship



Oman Golf national team for youth U18 years achieved second place in the 14th Gulf Youth Golf Championship, held in the Kingdom of Bahrain, Organised by the Bahrain Golf Association, with the participation of all GCC countries, at the Royal Golf Club. Oman team was represented by Ahmed bin Khalil al Wahibi, Ayman bin Ghaleb al Busaidy and Adam bin Masoud al Barwani.





RECALL CAMPAIGN

FOR 2020-2021 CADILLAC XT5/XT6, GMC ACADIA MODEL VEHICLES



Date of Recall: 09/03/2023

Campaign Type: Safety Recall

Recall Segment: Rear Vision Camera

Product Description: Cadillac XT5 2020-2021 / Cadillac XT6 2020-2021/ GMC Acadia 2020-2021

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle Vin Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2020-2021	Cadillac	XT5	1GYKN9R40LZ208720 to 1GYKN9RSXMZ221345	4
2020-2021	Cadillac	XT6	1GYPK9RS0LZ101319 to 1GYPK9RSXMZ223493	14
2020-2021	GMC	Acadia	1GKKN8LS0LZ166559 to 1GKKN8LSXMZ197934	30

DESCRIPTION:
The rear view camera in these vehicles may fail or function intermittently. If the rear view camera is not functioning properly, rear visibility is reduced, increasing the risk of a crash during a backing event.

PROCEDURE:
Dealers will replace the affected coaxial cables.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Customers of the above mentioned vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment LLC for Chevrolet & Cadillac and Moosa Abdul Rahman Hassan & Co LLC for GMC.

CONTACT DETAILS:
For OTE, Call Toll free no. 80050002 on all working days between 8.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.30pm.
For MARH, Call Toll free no. 80076200 on all working days between 8.30am to 1.00pm and 4.00pm to 6.30pm.

Markram leads South Africa to strong start against West Indies

JOHANNESBURG: Aiden Markram fell four runs short of a second century in successive matches as South Africa got off to a strong start on the first day of the second Test against the West Indies on Wednesday. South Africa reached 247 for two at tea in Johannesburg after captain Temba Bavuma won the toss and decided to bat on an easy-paced pitch. Left-hander Tony de Zorzi, playing in his second Test, was 75 not out at tea.

Markram, who was named as South Africa's T20 captain earlier this week, followed up his 115 in the first Test in Centurion with 96 off 139 balls, hitting 17 fours. He looked in imperious form before attempting the first unorthodox stroke of his innings, playing a scoop shot off left-arm spinner Gudakesh Motie.

The ball looped off his bat and Jermaine Blackwood ran around from slip to leg slip to hold the catch. Motie took both wickets, having earlier had Dean Elgar caught at short fine leg for 42. Motie, who took 13 for 99 against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo last month, missed the first Test in Centurion because of a back injury. Although he was the only successful bowler, he was inconsistent and conceded 63 runs in 15 overs. — AFP



Cort takes overall Paris-Nice lead

DAMPIERRE-EN-BURLY, FRANCE: Denmark's Magnus Cort moved to the top of the overall standings of Paris-Nice on Tuesday despite Jumbo-Visma winning the team time trial on stage three in central France.

Nielsen, 30, holds a one-second advantage over Belgian Nathan Van Hooydonck in second place and three seconds over Australian Michael Matthews in third.

Wednesday's fourth stage is a 165km ride

south from Saint-Amand-Montrond to La Loge des Gardes passing through Vichy.

"I thought it was a good route, it wasn't very technical, but not completely flat either," Cort said.

"Tomorrow? It will be a difficult day but I will do my best to keep the jersey."

Tour de France champion and Cort's compatriot Jonas Vingegaard is in fifth spot, with UAE Team Emirates' two-time Grand Boucle winner Tadej Pogacar in 10th.

The fourth stage marks the start of three days of climbing near the cities of Clermont and Lyon.

"The team is in a good place, but we wanted to create a bigger gap between ourselves and our rivals, but all in all we're happy with the result," Jumbo's Vingegaard said.

"Now, it's time for the mountains and we'll see who the strongest is."

The day marked a change in the team

time trial format with the clock stopping as the first rider crossed the line rather than the fourth or fifth.

After a 32.2km ride around the small village of Dampierre-en-Burly, Jumbo pipped Cort's EF Education-EasyPost team by one second.

Matthews' Jayco Alula were third, four seconds behind in cloudy conditions on the 'Race to the Sun' which ends on Sunday on the Cote d'Azur in Nice. — AFP

Chelsea see off Dortmund to reach Champions League quarter-finals

LONDON: Chelsea kept their season alive by beating Borussia Dortmund 2-0 at Stamford Bridge to progress to the quarter-finals of the Champions League 2-1 on aggregate on Tuesday.

Raheem Sterling and Kai Havertz, with a twice-taken penalty, got the goals as the Blues relieved the pressure on manager Graham Potter.

The Englishman's job was on the line after a season that has so far failed to deliver any return on a world-record injection of over £500 million (\$600 million) in one season on new signings.

Chelsea had won just three of their previous 16 matches to fall to 10th in the Premier League and bow out early of both domestic cups.

But some of their expensive collection of stars showed up in time to remain in the hunt for a third European Cup.

"There was a fantastic feeling in the dressing room. We have been through a tough period and this competition means a lot for us," said Potter.

"We wanted to progress and get



into the last eight and it sets us up for the next few weeks."

Dortmund arrived in England on the back of a 10-game winning run in all competitions.

But the visitors posed barely any attacking threat in the first half bar a Marco Reus free-kick that Kepa Arrizabalaga did brilliantly

to palm to safety.

"We have to say, over the course of two games, Chelsea deserve to go through," said Dortmund boss Edin Terzic.

"Both legs were very tight games. In this type of games inches and moments decide if you are going to the next round or

not."

Chances came and went frequently at the other end. Havertz smashed a volley off the inside of the post and then finally found the net via the underside of the bar only for the goal to be ruled out for an offside against Sterling earlier in the move.

The worst miss was to come as Kalidou Koulibaly miscued with an open goal from Ben Chilwell's free-kick and Felix's follow-up effort was blocked on the line.

Potter was uncharacteristically animated on the touchline as he constantly whipped the crowd up to keep pushing his side forward.

"There is a lot of emotion in the end," added Potter. "It was tense in the end but the boys played fantastic."

"I am delighted for them to get the win and great for everyone here."

The home fans finally had something to celebrate three minutes before half-time.

STERLING COMES GOOD

Sterling's first attempt was another one to forget as he swiped and missed Chilwell's low cross, but the England international composed himself to dribble past Reus and fire high into the net.

"I had a little mis-kick with the first touch but it landed perfectly and allowed us to build on that for our performance," said Sterling.

That was just Chelsea's third goal in the last eight games.

Havertz's penalty early in the second half meant Potter's men scored more than once for the first time since December 27, but the German international needed two spot-kicks to make his mark.

Marius Wolf was penalised for handling Chilwell's cross after a VAR review.

Havertz's first penalty came back off the post, but VAR came to Chelsea's rescue once more as Dortmund were further punished for encroaching.

There was no second reprieve as Havertz coolly slotted the ball the same way, this time finding the corner of the net.

Chelsea's spending spree may have ruled them out of the running for Jude Bellingham with the Dortmund midfielder expected to have his choice of Europe's top clubs this summer.

But on his return to England, Bellingham missed Dortmund's best chance to take the tie to extra-time when he side-footed wide from close range. — AFP



Duqm Refinery to operate at full capacity by end-2023

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

The Duqm Refinery project, the largest project in the field of refineries and petrochemicals, is expected to come into full production by the end of 2023, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation's deputy chairman and CEO, Nawaf al Sabah said at a press conference on the sidelines of CERAWEEK energy conference in Houston, Texas.

The refinery project, occupying 900 hectares, is located at the heart of the Special Economic Zone of Duqm (SEZAD) and is a 50-50 joint venture between state-owned Oman's OQ Group and Kuwait Petroleum International (KPI). KPI is the international downstream subsidiary of state-owned Kuwait



WHEN OPERATIONAL, DUQM REFINERY WILL ENHANCE THE COUNTRY'S REFINING CAPACITY BY REFINING 230,000 BARRELS OF CRUDE OIL PRODUCTS PER DAY, WHICH WILL SERVE DEMAND GROWTH IN THE REGION AND GLOBALLY, AS WELL AS ADD TO THE SEZ'S INVESTMENT APPEAL.

Petroleum Corporation.

When operational, Duqm Refinery will enhance the country's refining capacity by refining 230,000 barrels of crude oil products per day, which will serve demand growth in the region and globally, as well as add to the SEZ's investment appeal.

Kuwait has committed to supply about 65 per cent of the crude the

Duqm Refinery will process, Al Sabah said.

As of end-November 2022, the total completion rate of the project is 96 per cent and its trial operation is expected to happen soon.

The Duqm Refinery project is one of the major projects being implemented in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

It serves as the starting line for the plan to transform Duqm into one of the largest industrial and economic centres in the region.

The Duqm Refinery includes 10 main processing units capable of producing diesel, aviation fuel, naphtha, liquefied petroleum gas, sulphur and petroleum coke which will help provide high-quality oil products to customers all over the world.

Securing Oman's critical infra from cyber threats is key



QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

Officials representing a number of cybersecurity agencies underlined the importance of safeguarding Oman's critical infrastructure from cyber threats.

The calls came at the 3rd Oman Cyber Security Conference 2023 forum held on Wednesday under his auspices of Shaikh Abdulmalik bin Abdullah al Khalili, Chairman of the State Council.

The forum was organised by Al Roya in partnership with the Electronic Defence Centre, Oman Data Park, and the Academy for Advanced Cybersecurity.

Held on the theme, "Cybersecurity Governance in the Infrastructure Sector", deliberations focused on the need to enhance operational readiness and response to cyber incidents and attacks targeting national infrastructure institutions, and to develop national capabilities in the field of cyber security.

Following welcome remarks by Hatim bin Hamad al Taie, Secretary-General and Editor-in-Chief of *Al Roya* newspaper, there were presentations by Dr Ali bin Salim al Balushi, Head

of the Electronic Defence Centre, and Eng Maqbool bin Salim al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park. This was followed by a tour of an exhibition showcasing the capabilities of 11 international companies and small and medium enterprises working in the field of electronic security.

According to Maqbool al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park, the Sultanate of Oman should develop adequate national capabilities to attract investments in the design and manufacture of cyber-security hardware and software system, rather than depend on imports alone.

Losses linked to electronic crimes and cyber threats amount to about \$600 billion annually, and are incurred by individuals, institutions and countries that are in constant danger because of increasingly sophisticated attacks.

The Cyber Protection Centre in Oman Data Park provides a range of protection services based on the latest technologies. ODP has also contributed to protecting a number of institutions against cyber threats, he noted, adding that global spending on cybersecurity in 2022 amounted to more than \$198 billion.

Consumer Protection Week targets young consumers

HIBBA AL KINDI
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

The Consumer Protection Authority inaugurated the events of the 'Arab Consumer Protection Week' in a forum yesterday, under the auspices of Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan al Busaidy, Vice-President of the Supreme Judicial Council.

The forum, a first of its kind, is hosted by the Sultanate of Oman with an emphasis on young consumers and sustainable consumption.



In his keynote speech, Chairman of the Consumer Protection Authority, Sulayim bin Ali al Hikmani, shared: "Consumer protection has

become an important part of the economic reform process all around the world. The consumer was and remains the cornerstone of economic society.

Thus, developed societies no longer view him as a marginal element of the economic equation, but as the key element around which the rest of the elements revolve."

"Despite the importance of young consumers being an important segment of society, and given the intellectual and technological challenges facing them and affecting their social and economic behaviours, this segment may not have received enough attention from researchers and scholars."

TO PAGE 14

Move to set up Natural Catastrophe Insurance Pool for Oman

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT, MARCH 8

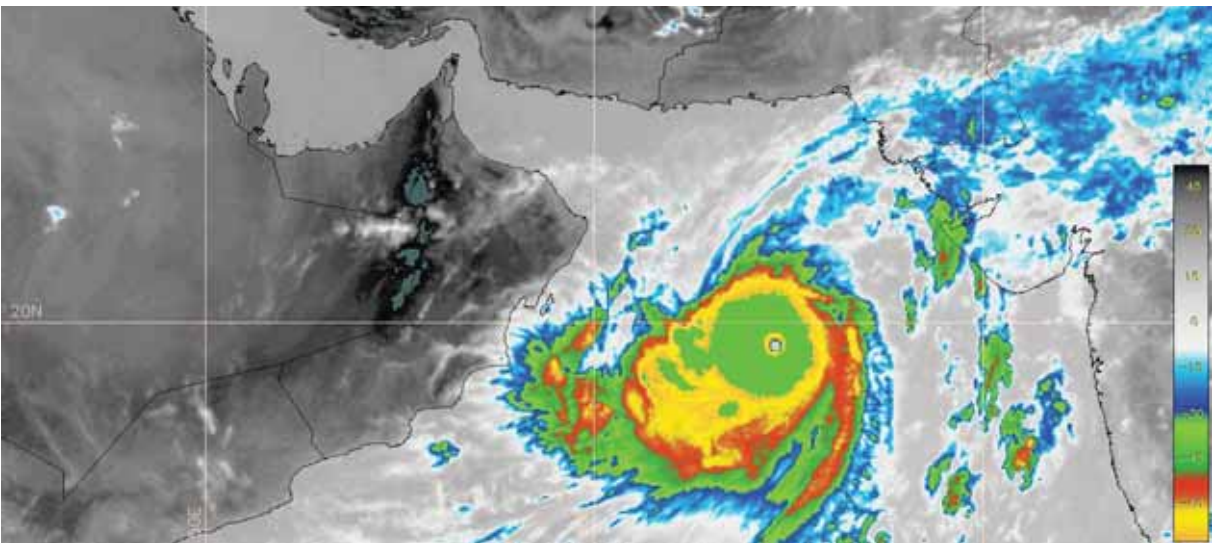
Efforts to establish the first Natural Catastrophe (Nat-Cat) Insurance Pool, aimed at providing coverage against the rising frequency of destructive adverse weather events and natural disasters witnessed in Oman, are gaining steam, according to a key company spearheading the initiative.

Oman Reinsurance Company (Oman Re), the nation's first and only reinsurer, said a Steering Committee set up to oversee the delivery of the Nat-Cat project continues to make headway in its mission to design a framework for the consideration and approval of the sector's regulator, the Capital Market Authority (CMA).

Nat-Cat Insurance Pools are increasingly becoming an imperative in countries that are prone to all kinds of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, cyclones, flash flooding, volcano eruptions and so on.

For the Sultanate of Oman, the primary risk in this category stems from cyclones, severe flooding from adverse weather events, and even pandemics of the kind that swept across the global in 2020.

Notable is the example of Cyclone Shaheen, which



devastated northern parts of Oman in October 2021, causing infrastructure and property damage estimated in the region of around RO 60 million, besides claiming a number of lives as well.

According to Oman Re, a Steering Committee made up of representatives of six local insurance firms is presently working on the various technical aspects of the reinsurance pool's formation.

Oman Re has been named as the Nat Cat Pool Manager in recognition of its role in initiating the effort, it said.

Giving an update on the planned deployment of the National Nat-Cat Insurance Pool for Oman, Oman Re Chairman Dr

Juma bin Ali al Juma stated: "The Steering Committee completed their assessment of the Motor Nat Cat Pool section and shared their proposal with the Capital Market Authority for formal approval and necessary insurance law amendments.

With regards to the Non-Marine Nat Cat pool, the Steering Committee completed the data collection and modelling.

At this point in time, the Steering Committee is working on various pricing option of the cover with international reinsurance market," he added in the Chairman's Report for fiscal 2022.

An uptick in natural disasters in the wider Middle East region

has also prompted the General Arab Insurance Federation (GAIF) to call for the creation of a regional Nat-Cat insurance pool to help strengthen the industry's underwriting capacity at the regional level.

According to Swiss Re, one of the world's largest reinsurers, natural catastrophes caused a total of \$115 billion of insured losses around the world in 2022, with economic losses totalling an estimated \$268 billion.

Increased financial losses are on par with trends from the past decade, and as losses driven by extreme weather continue to grow in numbers, so too does the need for insurance, the company pointed out.

Lulu Hypermarket receives HACCP certification for its stores in Oman

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket has received the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) certification for its stores in Oman. The HACCP, which is a globally recognised Food Safety Management System certification, was certified to stores in Bausher, Darsait, Al Bandar, Markaz Al Bahja, Al Lawami, Mall of Muscat and Suhar.

The certification was awarded by the United Registrar of Systems (URS), which is a well-known international certification body, and accredited by Emirates International Accreditation Centre (EIAC), with the partnership of Total Quality Consultancy (TQC).

The HACCP accreditation is a proof of Lulu's commitment to uphold food safety regulations at all times. Good manufacturing practices are regularly implemented at the grassroots level in all food handling sections to ensure that cleaning and sanitisation, verification activities, food and water testing, quality control, maintenance and calibration have all been followed up. All Lulu stores strictly comply with local municipality requirements as well as international standards for the safety of food products, giving immense importance to the safety requirements of its valued customers.

In order to establish a food safety culture among workers, regular food safety trainings are also organised for food



handlers based on their work categories. Food safety awareness programmes have also been regularly conducted among workers.

Lulu management also makes sure that all policies and procedures are properly implemented at all levels of the organisation.

To ensure sustainable food safety assurance, all systems are reviewed on a regular basis through planned and unplanned internal audits and review meetings.

Commenting on the HACCP accreditation, Shabeer K A, Regional Director – Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, remarked,

“As a committed retailer, Lulu's objective is to produce and distribute safe, wholesome, and palatable food items of utmost quality and hygiene.

We have set the highest standards in food safety, quality, traceability, and accountability and constantly adheres to food safety policy to produce and deliver quality and safe products. Good hygiene practices are the backbone of all operations.”

“We will continue to meet HACCP's extremely high standards of safety and quality control, so that consumers can feel assured while making the right shopping choices,” he added.

HACCP is an internationally

recognised standard that defines the requirement for effective control of food safety, which is based on the “general principles of food hygiene.”

The HACCP guideline provides a frame of general principles for producing safe and suitable food for consumption by outlining necessary hygiene and food safety controls to be implemented in production (including primary production), processing, manufacturing, preparation, packaging, storage, distribution, retail, food service operation and transportation of food, and where appropriate, specific food safety control measures at certain steps throughout the food chain.

CMA cancels licence of insurance broker

MUSCAT: The Capital Market Authority has issued a decision cancelling the licence of Al Dhaman Insurance Services Company LLC related to carrying out insurance brokerage business and deregister the company from insurance brokers' register for failing to adjust its situation in line with the statutory requirements during the suspension period.

The CMA had earlier issued a decision to suspend the company from carrying out the licensed business for four months in line with the statutory requirements for violating Article (4) of the Insurance

Brokers Regulation.

The Article provides that the broker must file with the CMA two audited annual budgets and the accompanying accounts within no more than ninety days as of the end of the financial year.

The Authority has urged all insurance brokers to file their audited financial statements to follow up their financial positions and to ensure the company comply with all statutory and technical requirements to provide adequate protection for all the parties dealing the with the broker.

Consumer Protection Week targets young consumers

FROM PAGE 13

“Therefore, the Arab Consumer Protection Week will include a number of events and awareness programmes that address the category of young consumers, including the establishment of the ‘Young Consumer Village’ (Aman Village) as an entertainment and educational event for young consumers. An electronic application will also be launched for the small consumer, and an awareness programme will be implemented in cooperation with a number of students The schools are entitled (Ambassador of the Small Consumer), in

addition to various awareness programmes in this regard.”

The forum was attended by consumer protection representatives from fellow Arab States, and included working papers addressing the status of young consumers in the region.

‘Aman Village’, an educational and recreational village to raise consumption awareness amongst children and young people will be established during March 9 to 13 in Muscat Grand Mall. Earlier this year, the Consumer Protection Authority in Muscat revealed that it recovered RO 1,553,265 in refunds following complaints from consumers.

Mazoon Dairy wins most trusted brand award for second year



MUSCAT: Mazoon Dairy, the leading dairy company in Oman, has been awarded the Most Trusted Brand Award for 2022 in the ‘Dairy’ category for the second consecutive year. This award comes as the ultimate recognition of the public's confidence and satisfaction in the company's outstanding products.

The award also contributes to enhancing Mazoon Dairy presence in the local market. The sixth annual awards event, organised by the Apex Media, was held under the auspices of Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

Ahmed bin Mohammed al Ghafri, Chief Support Officer of Mazoon Dairy, received the award. During the event, awards were given in more than 50 categories to some of Oman's most

reputable companies. The quality of the brands goods and services as well as consumer satisfaction are attested to by these accolades.

Al Ghafri expressed his happiness at this achievement, which demonstrates the company's level of quality and added value in terms of quality and competitiveness through its products, which are delivered daily, fresh from the farm to all areas of Oman.

Mazoon Dairy is one of the most technologically advanced dairy firms in the region, with state-of-the-art facilities and equipment, with a dedication to maintaining strict standards of quality control. Consumers have a great deal of trust in the company, which is a crucial factor and a persistent commitment to offering consumers the greatest healthy and quality products with exceptional taste.

Oman Shell to highlight key sustainability efforts in OSW

MUSCAT: Committed to meeting Oman's growing energy demands while maintaining the right equilibrium between economic growth and social and environmental needs, Oman Shell recently confirmed its participation at the upcoming Oman Sustainability Week as the strategic partner.

The key national event, hosted under the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, is scheduled to be held on March 12-16, 2023 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre (OCEC).

Dedicated to the future of energy, power, water, waste, environment and society, it will offer a platform for global stakeholders, sustainability experts and industry leaders from different sectors.

Representing Oman Shell at the event will be Walid Hadi, Country Chairman and Senior Vice-President and Malak al Shaibani, General Manager, External Relations and ICV.

Through its dedicated booth, Oman Shell will share its inspiring journey toward driving sustainability while highlighting the progress it has made in contributing to carbon neutrality by developing green hydrogen in Oman through its Green Hydrogen for Mobility project. The company will also showcase the initiatives that were undertaken to empower the youth under its Shell Nawafidh and Shell NXplorers programmes.

To honour the second batch of Nawafidh students and applaud their relentless dedication, Oman Shell will host a graduation ceremony as part of OSW.

Commenting on Oman Shell's participation in OSW, Al Shaibani said, “OSW is set to take place at an incredibly critical time as Oman has made significant progress in its energy transition agenda. An event of such scale further reaffirms the country's unflinching commitment to attaining net-zero emissions



and shifting to a green, circular economy.

With hydrogen being identified and promoted as a green fuel, ESG mandates becoming a mainstay across every sector and the establishment of Oman Sustainability Centre, the nation is uniquely positioned to set new benchmarks and pioneer innovative efforts in the realm of sustainability.”

She added saying, “At Oman Shell, the values of sustainability are embedded into our DNA and are integrated into everything we do. We are indeed delighted to be a critical part of OSW and aim to showcase our key initiatives and exchange knowledge with our partners and other experts in the field.

Through our projects, we also seek to inspire the larger community and encourage them to take concerted action. It is quintessential to acknowledge that embracing and advocating sustainability is the responsibility of every individual.”

Oman Shell is strongly aligned with Oman Vision 2040 as well as the UN Sustainable

Development Goals and has been revered for upholding the highest levels of ethicality, transparency, and integrity in operations. With a number of sustainability-centric endeavours under its belt, Oman Shell has remained dedicated to its mission to reduce carbon emissions.

OSW will commence with the Oman Sustainability Week Awards on March 12 at the OCEC Ballroom A. Co-organised by be'ah, the awards are underpinned by an internationally recognised framework established by the Centre for Sustainability and Excellence (CSE) that focuses on the achievements of organisations around ESG and provides recommendations for future undertakings in line with Oman Vision 2040.

The annual national awards will be geared at acknowledging organisations in the Sultanate of Oman that have excelled in areas of sustainability and corporate responsibility while highlighting the key endeavours that differentiate them from others in the field.

Africa: A promising market for Omani products



HAIDER AL LAWATI
haiderdawood@hotmail.com

The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

Omani institutions are making great efforts to promote national industrial products, some of which currently reach markets in Europe, the Americas and Asia. These efforts are reinforced by facilitating foreign investment procedures to attract more capital to establish profitable projects and diversify sources of income in addition to oil and gas revenues.

There are many projects that the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion plans to carry out during the next phase within the framework of Oman Vision 2040.

The goal is to enhance the importance of the Omani industrial goods as well as the services provided by Omani institutions and companies through the opening of the new lounge “Invest in Oman”.

One such policy seeks to penetrate foreign markets, including African markets, so that Omani products are exported to them within the framework of existing old and new relations and diplomatic missions with those countries.

The Sultanate of Oman can enhance its economic relations with African countries in several other fields, especially in the agricultural, industrial and mining sectors as well.

In order to get closer to the African markets and their people, whose populations are growing annually, Oman Oil Marketing Company signed an

agreement with the Alexandria Petroleum Additives Company (Acpa) recently to establish a centre for the marketing and sale of oils and lubricating products in the African continent.

At the same time, it signed a memorandum of cooperation with Misr Petroleum to manufacture and supply Omani products and lubricants for distribution across the continent, which is witnessing major growth in the commercial and industrial sectors.

The success achieved by the Oman Oil Marketing Company led its Chief Executive Officer, Tariq al Junaidi, attests to the high quality and popularity of Omani lubricants.

The new partnership provides opportunities for the two companies to develop the existing relations and to enhance their growth and development during next period.

Such cooperation will allow the Omani company to increase its market share and consolidate the frameworks and bridges of joint cooperation between them.

There is no doubt that the expansion of the marketing operations of the Omani company in new countries, especially in the African continent, will lead to advancing economic growth in the Sultanate of Oman as well, within the framework of the strategy set by the company to expand its commercial business outside the Omani borders.

Today, Omani oil products are marketed and sold in more than 17 countries, especially lubricants in Asia, the Middle East and North Africa, while the Omani company is expanding its services to a number of other African countries.

Omani companies are working to participate in specialised exhibitions such as oil and gas and various industries in order to promote the products and services they provide in the fields of oil, energy and others, and take advantage of new trends, and ascertain the status of future renewable energy projects.

Green hydrogen: A hype or reality in the energy transition ?



MOHAMMED AL RIYAMI

The author is Business Support Manager at TotalEnergies & member of Hy-Fly (Oman Hydrogen Alliance).

Energy transition is a big buzzword, and many countries are at the crossroad of making some important decisions to achieve net-zero, invariably by 2050.

Oman is on a historic journey on the energy transition path with the recent establishment of a Directorate of Renewable Energy & Hydrogen.

This has further been reinforced with the creation of Hydrom, which acts as an orchestrator of the green hydrogen tender & auctioning of land with award limited to, at end of Q1 2023.

The hype and fanfare of hydrogen in Oman seems to be a reality and is being fast tracked. Green hydrogen is indeed being weaved into the energy fabric of Oman.

The reality is more evident with Oman hydrogen demand, echoed by the government, as indicated in the graph.

At this juncture we need to cross over some hurdles or perceived barriers to ensure the transition path is smooth, cost effective and sustainable.

Oil and gas resources has historically been the main GDP contributors in Oman and will continue play a pivotal role. However, we need to abide to the Paris protocol and reduce our CO2 emission.

The sustainability and environment vectors are key ingredients coupled with energy efficiency, technology and not limited to, are key drivers to trigger a green hydrogen economy.

In a recent workshop conducted on February1, 2023 on developing R&D roadmap



Year	Green Hydrogen production	Electrolyser Capacity	Renewable Capacity
2030	1 mtpa	10 GW	20 GW
2040	3.5 mtpa	40 GW	75 GW
2050	8 mtpa	100 GW	185 GW

Source: Hydrogen R&D Roadmap workshop, Hydrom

for Oman’s hydrogen value chain was indeed a step in the right direction.

It was a platform where academia, industry and the government brainstormed, challenged on key topics on the technical and socio-economic pivots.

The workshop provided a good funnel and grounding to push green hydrogen in the context of Oman trying to be a fast mover.

The focus of the hydrogen value chain was divided into 3 interlinked scopes.

These namely being production, handling and end use. This in itself is complex and cannot fully be covered.

Albeit it shows the importance of getting every facet, barriers and solutions on the table for the relevant stakeholders to contribute and make the value chain successful and fit for purpose.

On the onset, the workshop took a “thermometer reading” with perceived barriers to a cost effective production of green hydrogen but not exhaustive list included renewable and high technology cost, electrolyser

system process cost, policies, regulation, securing offtake.

These barriers become opportunities and the work is already on the anvil to encourage investors with an anticipated policies and national energy strategy to be released soon.

Additionally, R&D topics were requested from participants to find Oman’s top priorities.

To this end it was suggested to research on full scale electrolyser demonstrator, study on the value chain blue and green hydrogen, improve safety on Liquid Organic Vessel Carriers (LOHC), materials as input for electrolyzers, compatibility of water for electrolyser and study of having an optimal mix for renewables energy mix).

This list was quite extensive and only a some will progress to the research stage. At high level, the participants looked at pricing, technology, resources, safety/ reliability, infrastructure, and efficiency of energy conversion as R&D studies to be done.

It is worth noting social aspects and in country value for hydrogen production was discussed. It was emphasised the importance of

Female entrepreneurs’ glass ceiling is intact



LISA JUCCA

The author is Breakingviews’ European Business Editor.

The glass ceiling that holds back female entrepreneurs remains intact.

Two decades after boardroom quotas were first introduced, women have made tangible progress overseeing listed firms.

Yet despite representing 40 per cent of new business founders in the United States, female entrepreneurs capture only a fraction of available venture capital cash. It’s time for governments and asset managers to help raise that proportion.

Forcing companies to look harder for female talent is finally bearing some fruit. Two decades after Norway first introduced boardroom quotas in 2003, gender diversity at listed companies is picking up.

The proportion of women on the boards of top European Union listed companies reached a peak of 32 per cent in April 2022, but was higher in countries with binding rules like France and Italy.

Even regulation-averse Britain last year saw female directors rise above the 40 per cent threshold for the first time.

Investors should care: NEOMA Business School researchers found that companies with more women in senior roles tended to engage in less excessive risk-taking.

Yet for talented women looking to start a company, the global landscape looks less promising. A tendency by venture capital funds to shun female entrepreneurs risks hobbling their contribution to the global economy.

Female business founders were 40 per cent of the total in the United States in 2021, a percentage that has been relatively unchanged since 1996, data from the Kauffman Foundation shows.

But companies founded by an all-female team in 2022 captured only \$4.6 billion, or just 2 per cent of total US venture capital money, according to the PitchBook-NVCA Venture Monitor.

That percentage has not changed much in the past decade. US startups with both female and male founders did better, securing 17.2 per cent of the venture capital pot last year. But new companies run by all-male teams continue to retain the biggest share of the pie.

In Europe, female-led startups also captured barely 2 per cent of venture capital money in 2021, the European Women in VC

report shows. Governments and asset managers could do more.

In Europe, public entities and national investment agencies that tend to devote significant amounts to fund small businesses and startups could allocate a fixed portion to companies led by all-female or diverse teams.

Asset managers and those keen to appeal to environmental, social and governance-conscious investors could press for similar metrics when allocating funds for privately held companies.

If women and men were given the same chances to found and support a business, it could add up to \$5 trillion to global GDP, a 2019 study by Boston Consulting Group found. Helping female entrepreneurs to rise to the top will be beneficial to women and to the world. — Reuters

WJ Towell Group Company

Quality car rentals at competitive prices.

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

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

أوربت ORBIT
Car Rental & Lease

Classifieds



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

WhatsApp
 <your name> to
96473232

THURSDAY

MARCH 9, 2023 SHAABAN 16, 1444 AH

Observer Classified Section

Mohammed al Rashdi: 99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

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

Saada al Rashdi
95919344

94501166
24649593
24649595

Driving School

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

Contact No: 99074072

SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة SAMÁ AL KHADRA TRADING

SERVICES:

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES
DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

Tel: 24501568, 24502479 • Fax: 24503566
Email: sales@samaalkhadra.com
Website: www.samaalkhadratradingco.com

FOR RENT

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

Fat for rent

1) Darsait, near Indian School. Two bedroom flat, bath attached, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat, hall, kitchen and toilet.
2) Al Khuwair, near Rawasco: One bedroom, bath kitchen, AC, curtains.
3) Al Ghubrah near Mars Hypermarket Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat with attached bath, hall kitchen and guest toilet.
4) Al Ghubrah near Indian School. Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall kitchen and guest toilet.
*All flats provided with airconditioners. Contact GSM: 91473374 97886085

2 BEDROOMS luxurious furnished apartment, location Muscat Hills Golf Tower building, size 170 square metre. Available for rent, please call and Whatsapp# 99250801/ 99685330.

SERVICES

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

Autocad/revit arch MEP, part/full- time. Contact WhatsApp: 97103168.

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

SIT. WANTED

ACCOUNTANT and audit assistant, Indian male, 27 years, M. Com and completed 3 years of CA articleship, have more than 5 years of experience in this fields in India. Seeking a position in accounts/ audit fields. Contact Mobile: 78052900, email: ranjithdevan24@gmail.com

QUANTITY surveyor / estimator, Sri Lankan, Bachelor degree in QS (R), diploma in QS and AutoCAD with 5 years experience. Certificate in graphic design. Contact: 77523087. Email: ilm.mhmanheef@gamil.com

ACCOUNTANT (male) with 8+ years of experience in accounts and finance department (MBA finance), experience in SAP S/4 HANA FICO. Looking for a suitable position. Contact: 99685330, email: hussain_ca87@yahoo.com

STORE manager/In Charge, Indian, above 18 years experience in Supermarket and leading retail chain in Oman and India, on visit visa, seeks immediate placement. 99697179 E-mail: mailshaijuvarghese@gmail.com

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

HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

SIT. WANTED

SENIOR accountant, Idian male, 39 years, 15 years experience in accounts & finance at Oman. With Oman D/L, Seeking a senior position in accounts. Available to join immediately. Contact: +968 97921596.

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

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

EXPERIENCED (5 years) Indian male 30, diploma in Graphic design on visit. Looking for suitable position. Skills: Photoshop, 3ds max ect. Contact: 92055251, hafizfora@gmail.com

CHARTERED accountant with 16 years experience in Oman. Looking for suitable opening. GSM: 95782629.

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

AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION

Contact: **97239696 95355638**

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

PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.

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

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503
Direct Line: 24786077
GSM: 99382355, 99172309
pcomctom@omantel.net.om
P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

RENT A CAR

Buttercup Rent A Car
AMAZING OFFERS
 ○ Rent a car for 10 days and get an extra free day.
 ○ Rent for one month and get 5 days free.
 All the cars are 2016 brand new special prices for public departments, companies and long-term contracts. 972494490.

LUXURIOUS Toyota bus 2016, air-conditioned, 30 passengers, offered for daily/monthly/annually, Muscat. Contact: 98080609, 96316269.

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

Please Contact our Team

95210257

OMAN OBSERVER
www.omanobserver.com

f t i g + v @omanobserver



For Advertisements

Please Contact with our Team:

Head Office

Mohd Al Rashdi
99841230
m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

Ali Al Maashari
99639264
wadiameeh@yahoo.com

Salalah Office

Bakhit Al Shihri
92998577
bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

Nizwa Office

Abdullah Al Abri
99429094
nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

Suhar Office

Musalam Al Saidi
99429192
sohardaily@outlook.com



@omanobserver
www.omanobserver.com

Oman remains to be a great destination for sea turtles experience

The peak season for turtle migration in Oman is between April and August of each year. Approximately 20,000 turtles visit Oman's beaches, particularly those in the east, to deposit 50,000 to 60,000 eggs. It is also the best time to experience these magical creatures in the country.. **P20**



Vatican returns Parthenon fragments to Greece

The Vatican is returning to Greece three fragments taken from the Parthenon, the Holy See announced on Tuesday.

The relevant certificate was signed at a ceremony in the Vatican Museums on Tuesday morning attended by Cardinal Fernando Vérgez Alzaga, a representative of

Athens Archbishop Ieronymos II and Greek Culture Minister Lina Mendoni.

The fragments, which are expected to arrive in Athens on March 24, have been held in the papal collections since the 19th century and were on display in the Vatican Museums.



Pope Francis announced his decision to return the artefacts in December 2022.

Greece has for decades demanded the return of the Elgin Marbles, large sections of the Parthenon frieze that have been in the possession of the British Museum in London since 1816.

In 2009, Greece built a new museum to house parts of the frieze in both original and in plaster copy for the missing elements. The Parthenon - Virgin's Chambers - is one of the most famous ruins of Ancient Greece.

Lord Elgin, the British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire at the time, had the best preserved sections removed and taken to Britain at the start of the 19th century, selling them to the British Museum in 1816. Fifty-six of the 96 sections of the frieze are in London. — **dpa**

READ

DAISY JONES & THE SIX

BY TAYLOR JENKINS REID

A fictional oral history charting the rise and fall of a '70s rock 'n' roll band.



ENTERTAINMENT

View of the food which will be served at the Governors Ball during the 95th Oscars at the preview of the 'Governors Ball', the celebration immediately following the Oscars at The Ray Dolby Ballroom in Hollywood, California. The 95th Academy Awards will be held at the Dolby Theater on March 12, 2023. — **AFP**



LIFESTYLE

A yoga instructor (C) leads a yoga class for commuters travelling on a women's carriage of a local train on the occasion of International Women's Day, in Mumbai. — **AFP**





Kenyan innovators turn e-waste to bio-robotic prosthetic

TWO PORTRAITS of Albert Einstein hang on the walls of a makeshift laboratory on Nairobi's outskirts, inspiring a pair of self-taught Kenyan innovators who have built a bio-robotic prosthetic arm out of electronic scrap.

Cousins Moses Kiuna, 29, and David Gathu, 30, created their first prosthetic arm in 2012, after their neighbour lost a limb in an industrial accident.

But their latest invention is a significant upgrade, according to the duo.

The device uses a headset receiver to pick up brain signals and convert them to an electric current, which is then sent to a transmitter that wirelessly relays commands to the arm, prompting it into action.

It all happens in less than two seconds.

"We saw people living with disabilities go through a lot of struggles and desired to make them... (feel) far more abled," Gathu said.

Kiuna said their first prosthetic arm, custom-made for the neighbour, had "helped him operate around the house on his own".

The high cost of prosthetics means only one out of 10 people in need are able to access them globally, with the World Health Organization warning that such exclusion adds to the burden of disability.

"We noticed that Kenya imports prosthetics which are costly," Kiuna told AFP. "So we asked ourselves, 'How can we solve our own problems?'"

RECYCLING WASTE

They found the answer in junkyards.

Since high school, the pair have been scouring dumping grounds around the Kenyan capital in search of discarded gadgets that they have repurposed to create over a dozen inventions.

Although conventional education did little to feed their curiosity, with Gathu dropping out of school at 17 and Kiuna



quitting college a couple of years later, their appetite for learning has not dimmed.

The shelves in the bare-bones lab next to their grandmother's house are stacked with science books and the sheet metal walls are covered with charts detailing human anatomy or the periodic table.

"We studied neurophysiology by reading books and sitting with doctors to explain concepts to us," Gathu said, explaining how they came up with the prosthetic arm.

It is just one of the inventions conjured up by the cousins.

When Covid-19 struck, they built a device to sterilise banknotes using infrared technology, and later, a green-energy generator that converts oxygen into electricity, aimed at tackling climate change.— AFP

DRIVE THE FUTURE

"These two are proof that Africans can make a significant contribution to technology and science as we know it," said Mukuria Mwangi, the founder of the Jasiri Mugumo school in Nairobi, which caters to youths up to 10-years-old.

Mwangi, who regularly invites Gathu and Kiuna to mentor children at the school, said that Kenya's education system did little to encourage innovation.

"Invention is not a discipline harnessed in our schools, yet innovation is what will drive the future," Mwangi said.

Other challenges such as a lack of funds also prevent innovation from taking centre stage in the East African nation, as reflected by the number of inventions gathering dust in Gathu and Kiuna's lab.

The pair hope to turn their prosthetic arm and other innovations into a thriving business.

"We have many other ideas that we can make viable commercially, but we lack finances and support," Gathu said.

THE CHANGING WORLD OF MEN



Shaddad al Musalmy
shadadm75@gmail.com

Take Me Out

HAVING SLEPT for more than ten hours, my body was aching, but I had to get up. Turning right, she was still beside me.

"Hey beautiful! What's the time?"

She checked her phone and told me it was 2:30 in the afternoon. Luckily, it was still the weekend. No rush to go to work, but I have the urge to eat because I am already hungry.

A few minutes later, I was done with my preparations, and I went to the kitchen, hoping to find some nice food — the kind I was thinking about when I was in the shower. When I got to the table, there was nothing apart from some ginger tea and bread.

Still, I was thankful for the tea, though in my heart I was craving for more.

"Tea and bread will be enough, right?" she asked.

"Sure, of course," I quickly agreed because I did not want to let her down.

With the way things seem, this is the first and last meal of the day. I figured it because she was also relaxing and after the meal, she asked, "What is today's program?"

The moment I heard it, I knew it meant, "Take me out."

Later, I drove out with her and I suggested we go for our monthly shopping. Since I knew it would take at least two hours, I dropped her off at the market, and then I took my son with me to the car wash.

I was content that I will be sleeping happily that night when I reached home since there was already an ample supply of food for tomorrow.

Therefore, I am expecting a big, fat breakfast.

LIFESTYLE

Need a nanny? Chinese school trains women to take care of newborns



A GROUP OF MORE than a dozen women, dressed in matching pink lab coats, leans over rows of benches in a classroom, serious-faced as they delicately massage and stretch out the limbs of plastic baby dolls.

They are students who have come to the Yipeitong training centre in Shanghai from around China to learn to be "yue sao" or confinement carers, who look after mothers and newborn babies, particularly in the month after birth.

Confinement care is not new in China, where the practice of one month confinement post-birth, which traditionally included strict rules around bathing, hair washing and teeth brushing for mothers, has long been the norm.

What is different today is the professionalism and expectations of those doing the caring, says Jiang Lei, a teacher at the centre.

Somewhat counter-intuitively, China's declining birth rate, official data released in January showed the country's population fell last year for the first time in six decades, might also be good for business, at least in the near term.

Even as people plan to have less children, working parents in Chinese cities likely only to have one child are increasingly willing to spare no expense in getting the best possible care from day one, Jiang said.

Even though China's booming tutoring industry was hit hard by a 2021 crackdown that aimed to lessen the financial burden on parents raising children and therefore encourage them to have more than one child, parents in major cities still spend large amounts on extracurricular activities aimed at giving kids a head start.

In Shanghai, for example, private one-on-one tutoring costs more than 200 yuan (\$28.97) per hour, music lessons routinely cost over 400 yuan hourly and sports and science camps often cost between 6,000 yuan and 8,000 yuan per week during holiday periods.

"We need professionals to do professional things for professional people," Jiang added, explaining that the centre teaches "scientific feeding knowledge, sleep cultivation and other knowledge such as early childhood education".

Jiang said that women in Shanghai who themselves make only half as much per month as the average confinement carer will still pay for a professional service, as it has become seen as so necessary to modern motherhood.

—Reuters



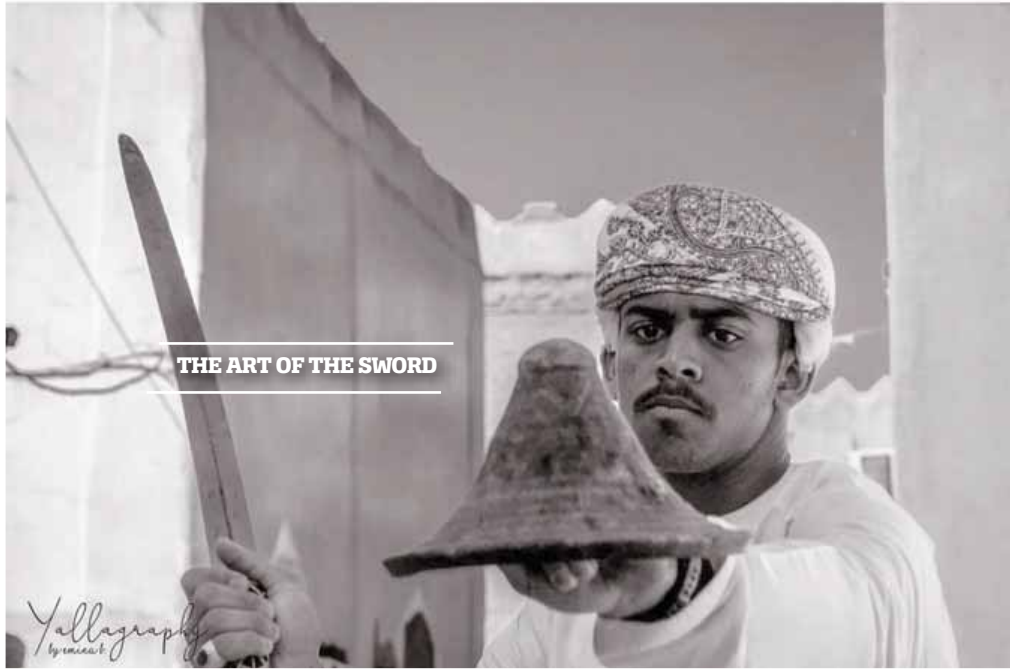
find us on
TWITTER
Scan the QR Code or follow us on
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



yallagraphy
Oman

Follow

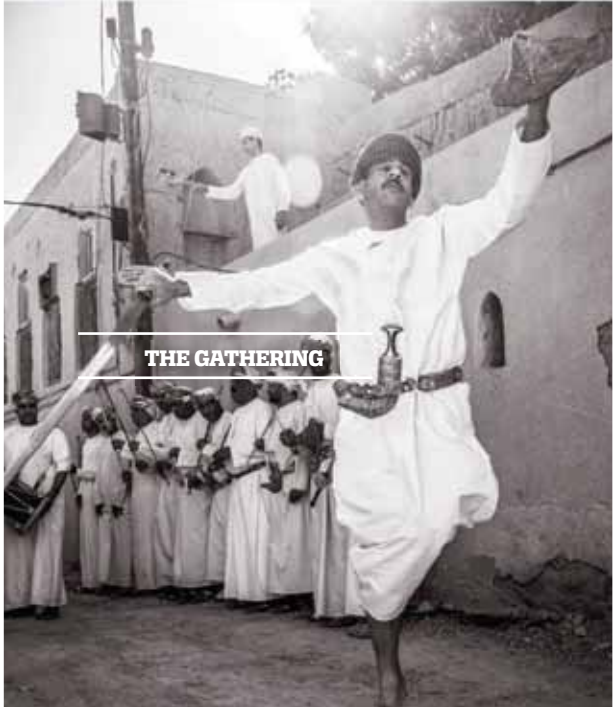


THE ART OF THE SWORD



yallagraphy
Oman

Follow



THE GATHERING



yallagraphy
Oman

Follow



THE PAGEANTRY

SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE



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

AROUND THE WORLD

CONSERVATION

Plastic entering oceans could nearly triple by 2040 if left unchecked: research



PLASTICS ENTERING THE world's oceans have surged by an "unprecedented" amount since 2005 and could nearly triple by 2040 if no further action is taken, according to research published on Wednesday.

An estimated 171 trillion plastic particles were afloat in the oceans by 2019, according to peer-reviewed research led by the 5 Gyres Institute, a US organisation that campaigns to reduce plastic pollution.

Marine plastic pollution could rise 2.6 fold by 2040 if legally binding global policies are not introduced, it predicted.

The study looked at surface-level plastic pollution data from 11,777 ocean stations in six major marine regions covering the period from 1979 to 2019.



"We've found an alarming trend of exponential growth in microplastics in the global ocean since the millennium," Marcus Eriksen, co-founder of the 5 Gyres Group said in a statement.

"We need a strong legally binding UN global treaty on plastic pollution that stops the problem at the source," he added.

Microplastics are particularly hazardous to the oceans, not only contaminating water, but also damaging the internal organs of marine animals, which mistake the plastic for food.

Experts said the study showed that the level of marine plastic pollution in the oceans has been underestimated.

"The numbers in this new research are staggeringly phenomenal and almost beyond comprehension," said Paul Harvey, a scientist and plastics expert with Environmental Science Solutions, an Australian consultancy focused on pollution reduction. The United Nations kicked off negotiations on an agreement to tackle plastic pollution in Uruguay in November, with the aim of drawing up a legally binding treaty by the end of next year.

Environmental group Greenpeace said that without a strong global treaty, plastic production could double within the next 10 to 15 years, and triple by 2050. A separate international treaty was agreed on Sunday to help protect biodiversity in the world's high seas. — Reuters

FASHION

Chanel takes glittering, camellia-themed line-up to Paris catwalk



FRENCH FASHION LABEL Chanel took to a darkened runway for creative director Virginie Viard's fall-winter collection on Tuesday, showing a glamorous line-up infused with references to a key brand symbol, the camellia flower.

The entire set was built around towering, white camellia sculptures that faced the audience, seated in steep risers ringing the space, a sprawling exhibition hall south of the Eiffel Tower.

Projected onto the giant camellias were images of Nana Komatsu, styled to resemble the 1960s film character Polly Maggoo, with thick eyeliner and a sleek hairstyle that curled up at the bottom.

The label's ubiquitous camellia appeared throughout the show, worked into the patterns of sweeping overcoats and dresses, rendered as stark white three-dimensional embellishments on all-black ensembles, and cropping up as a patch of black flowers adorning the collar of a slick black jacket.

Most looks were black and white, paraded by models striding on shiny black platform boots, often with patterned white tights. Bermuda shorts and matching jackets, loose-legged jumpsuits and tweed ensembles were accessorised with the label's signature jewellery — chained belts, earrings and swinging necklaces that sparkled down the runway.

For the finale, the massive camellia sculptures suddenly glowed red, and slowly shifted between red and a bright pink as models rounded the room.

The catwalk presentation was held on the final day of Paris Fashion Week, which drew crowds of celebrities to the French capital, and featured big-name labels including Hermes, Valentino, LVMH-owned Dior and Louis Vuitton, Kering-owned labels Saint Laurent and Balenciaga. — Reuters



LIFESTYLE

British architect David Chipperfield wins Pritzker prize



BRITISH ARCHITECT and urban planner David Chipperfield won the 2023 Pritzker Prize, organisers of the profession's most prestigious award announced on Tuesday.

The 69-year-old was honoured for "timeless modern design that confronts climate urgencies, transforms social relationships and reinvigorates cities," they said in a statement.

Chipperfield said he was "so overwhelmed" to become the prize's 52nd laureate.

"I take this award as an encouragement to continue to direct my attention not only to the substance of architecture and its meaning, but also to the contribution that we can make as architects to address the existential challenges of climate change and societal inequality," the statement quoted him as saying.

Chipperfield is renowned for renovations and reconstructions of old buildings, updating them for the modern age while honouring their history and culture and preserving the natural environment.

Among his best is a rebuild of the Neues Museum in Berlin, which was built in the 19th century and largely destroyed in World War II, and reinvention of a 16th century Venice landmark, the Procuratie Vecchie.

Other major works include the Museo Jumex in Mexico City, the Museum of Modern Literature in Marbach, Germany, Iowa's Des Moines Public Library, and a new building for the Saint Louis Art Museum in Missouri.

The Hyatt Foundation, which sponsors the award, said every work of Chipperfield's "becomes a civic undertaking serving society."

It praised him for his "subtle yet powerful, subdued yet elegant" works that span over four decades and several continents.

"He is assured without hubris, consistently avoiding trendiness to confront and sustain the connections between tradition and innovation, serving history and humanity," said Tom Pritzker, the foundation's chairman.

The Pritzker Prize was first awarded in 1979. Illustrious winners include Britain's Norman Foster, Japanese architect Arata Isozaki and Balakrishna Vithaldas Doshi of India.

Last year, Burkina Faso-born Diebedo Francis Kere became the first African winner.

Chipperfield has completed more than 100 projects across Asia, Europe and North America.

Last month, the National Archaeological Museum in Athens announced that he would lead a massive upgrade of the institution that is expected to take four years.

It is Greece's largest museum and one of the most important of its kind in the world, housing such antiquities as the prehistoric frescoes of Thera and the Bronze Age gold treasures of Mycenae.

Chipperfield said in his statement that architects "can have a more prominent and engaged role in creating not only a more beautiful world but a fairer and more sustainable one too."

"We must rise to this challenge and help inspire the next generation to embrace this responsibility with vision and courage," he added. — AFP

art & life

Local Scene

f t i y l y @omanobserver

THURSDAY | MARCH 9 | 2023

Oman remains to be a great destination for sea turtles experience

By Zuwaina Al Sulimani

Every year, a large number of turtles come to the beaches of the Arab Peninsula to lay their eggs. The peak season for turtle migration in Oman is between April and August of each year. Approximately 20,000 turtles visit Oman's beaches, particularly those in the east, to deposit 50,000 to 60,000 eggs.

Ras Al Hadd and Ras Al Jinz in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, Masirah Island, the Daymaniyat Islands, the coastlines of the Dhofar Governorate, and other beaches in the northeastern portion of the country are some of the most well-known beaches in Oman where turtles lay their eggs.

One of the main turtle breeding sites close to the Indian Ocean is Ras Al Jinz, a natural turtle sanctuary. Ras Al Hadd is also said to be the second most important turtle nesting site, with 50 to 60 distinct turtles laying eggs there each day. In addition, 52 turtle nests can be found at the Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah Resort, one of Muscat's most well-known hotels.

Turtles construct deep nests at night to lay their eggs. Late at night, turtles emerge from the ocean. They find

a

suitable spot by crawling over the sand, and then they start digging a large hole for their eggs. They dig the hole using the tips of their webbed feet. After laying their eggs, they cover the nest with sand and are usually back in the water by dawn.

After around 55 days, the eggs hatch, and the newborn turtles begin their trek to the sea, which is difficult and dangerous; they must avoid being grabbed by hungry foxes, crabs, or seagulls along the route.

There are seven distinct species of sea turtles around the world. Among the sea turtles that frequent Omani oceans and beaches are the Green Turtle, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, Olive Ridley, and Leatherback Sea Turtle.

The first type of turtle is the leatherback, which is the world's largest turtle. It is commonly known as the lute turtle, which does not come to the beaches but can be observed by boats and diving in Oman. Leatherback sea turtles are the world's largest species of marine turtle, and they may reach a height of 6 feet (183 cm). The word "leatherback" refers to the absence of

reaching 2.5 or 3 feet (71 to 89 cm) in length, and distinguished by its narrow head and scales in front of the eyes. The fifth type is the loggerhead turtle which lays eggs on land less frequently than other varieties of turtles. Females lay eggs every 2 to 4 years. The loggerhead turtle, as the name implies, has a huge head and a powerful jaw. Mohammed al Ruzaiqi, an Omani photographer, explains that "the right time to take pictures at Ras Al Jinz Reserve is during the turtle breeding season, during which it is easy to spot them.

Mohammed has been part of the Turtle Commandos programme, which documented the movements of these gentle sea creatures. "It is easier for anyone interested to watch the sea turtles through the Ras Al Jinz Reserve Center. With its museum and well-guarded beaches and the wealth of knowledge of its staff, it has become an important destination and tourist attraction," Mohammed added.

"Beyond the sea turtles, Ras Al Jinns is a beautiful place surrounded by astounding mountain formations and rocks that were formed by wind and sea waves," he said. "During our film documentation, I took photos using my drone camera. But even from the ground, it is a beautiful experience everyone must try. I recommend visiting the place and seeing the sea turtles up close," he added.

The second type is the Green Sea Turtle which is distinguished by its striking green shell. Green turtles are huge sea turtles named after the greenish tint of their cartilage and fat. Adult green turtles are 3 to 4 feet long (83 to 114 cm). It is an endangered species, with only about 85-90,000 nesting females left around the globe. The third type is the Olive Ridley turtle which is the most common sea turtle in the world. The Olive Ridley, commonly known as the Pacific Ridley, is the world's second smallest marine turtle, reaching around 2 feet in length (61 cm). The olive tint of its shell inspired the name. Also, it is well known for its mass nesting, in which hundreds of females deposit their eggs on the same beach.

The fourth type is the Hawksbill turtle, a severely endangered marine turtle species. It is highly endangered, with less than 25,000 nesting females left. It is one of the smallest sea turtles,