

Fee for water services slashed

The Authority for Public Services Regulation (APSR) has issued a decision amending some provisions regulating potable water services. According to the decision, the authority has discounted the fee for water services disconnection and restoration to RO 7.5 from RO 30 charged earlier against each service. – ONA



P10

PERFECT NADAL, BATTLING SWIATEK INTO US OPEN FOURTH ROUND



P14

RUSSIA KEEPS PIPELINE SHUT AS GAZPROM, SIEMENS ENERGY WRANGLE



P20

AN ARTIST ASCENDING PHILOSOPHY TO THRONE



MUSCAT

GOOD RESPONSE TO TOURISM ROADSHOWS

The week-long series of roadshows conducted by a high-power delegation from Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in five major Indian cities evoked an overwhelming response. The delegation was led by Asma al Hajri, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism included 10 leading tourism stakeholders from the Sultanate of Oman as well as the flag carrier, Oman Air. The roadshows covered five key source markets to meet with leading travel trade stakeholders in India to bring Oman strongly back on the itineraries and to introduce innovations. **DETAILS ON P2**

WASHINGTON

OBAMA NOW AN EMMY WINNER

Hollywood newcomer Barack Obama was awarded an Emmy for narrating his Netflix documentary series “Our Great National Parks,” the Television Academy announced on Saturday. The former two-term US president had already won a pair of Grammy Awards — so he now only needs an Oscar and a Tony to complete the estimable EGOT. According to an Entertainment Weekly tracker, only 17 people have achieved an EGOT, including Mel Brooks, Whoopie Goldberg, Audrey Hepburn and — most recently — Jennifer Hudson. — **AFP**



INSIDE



GREECE BLOCKED OVER 150,000 MIGRANTS

P7



NEW YORK POLIO CASE STIRS FEAR, VACCINE PUSH

P9

NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

CURRICULA TO MEET NEEDS OF MODERN TIMES

VINOD NAIR
[@vinot_nair](#)

Thousands of children returned to school on Sunday, marking the start of the academic year 2022-23.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah, Minister of Education, extended her gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for the Royal directives to provide school requirements to deserving students.

On Sunday, 1,242 schools received 729,331 male and female students, 57,033 teachers, and 10,834 administrators and technicians from various governorates to mark the start of the new academic year (2022-2023).

Dr Madeeha congratulated the students, teaching, administrative and technical staff on the start of the school year. “I am pleased to take this opportunity to welcome fellow teachers and



new teachers who have had the honour to join us in the educational system. There are 4,000 male and female teachers to strengthen the work in various sectors of the ministry, which comes within the framework of

global trends aimed at providing the education sector with well-qualified teachers.”

She referred to the qualitative shift in the educational curricula. “The conditions and qualitative transformations that the world is

going through today require all of us to join efforts and do everything in our power to achieve quality and keep pace with the requirements of sustainable development, diversify funding sources, and offer educational paths to enhance.”

The minister touched on the curricula aimed at developing the learner’s ability to communicate, research, self-learn, and develop qualities of leadership and innovation.

Dr Abdullah bin Khamis Ambosaidi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Education for Education, said the ministry will complete the implementation of the ‘Wajhati’ programme in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism to train more than 1,500 male and female students from different governorates on entrepreneurship skills and enable them to establish pioneering student companies in the tourism sector. **TURN TO P3**

23,200 nationals secure jobs in first half of this year

SHAMSA AL RIYAMIYAH
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

Efforts and initiatives taken by the Ministry of Labour have resulted in the employment of 23,200 job-seekers (10,400 in the public sector and 12,800 in the private sector) in the first half of this year.

According to data published by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), the number of nationals who were employed by the public and the private sectors and obtained insurance exceeded 15,000 by the end of July, bringing the total number of insured national employees to 282,000.

The replacement plan adopted by the Ministry of Labour has led to a fall in expatriate numbers in the public sector to 29,800 by the end of July from 37,900 by end-2021. However, the number of expat workers in the private sector reached 1.267 million up from the figure of 1.131 million registered by the end of 2021.

■ OQ PLANT EXPORTS FIRST AMMONIA SHIPMENT



OQ, the global integrated energy group, announced the start of production of the Ammonia Project in the Governorate of Dhofar. This ammonia plant is one of the key strategic projects fully-owned by OQ with an investment of \$463 million and has a designed capacity of 1,000 metric tonnes per day of ammonia. OQ Trading, the group’s trading arm also announced the export of the first shipment of the liquid ammonia from the plant through Salalah Port. **DETAILS ON P13**

Ukraine PM in Berlin, seeks more weapons

BERLIN: Ukraine’s Prime Minister Denys Shmygal on Sunday voiced hopes that Germany would become a leading player helping Kyiv to build up its air defences, as he sought more heavy weapons for Kyiv from Berlin.

Shmygal is the first high-level Ukrainian official to visit Germany in months, in a sign of eased tensions between Kyiv and Berlin after a rocky patch. Germany’s initial stuttering response on providing military support to Kyiv following Russian war on Ukraine had sparked consternation.

But Shmygal acknowledged during his visit that Germany has since significantly stepped

up its military aid, with heavy armaments such as the tank howitzer 2000 or Mars rocket launchers all “working well on the battle field”.

The air defence system Iris-T is expected to be delivered in the autumn, he said, adding that Ukraine “hopes that Germany will become one of the leaders in the process of developing Ukrainian air defence”.

In a speech on his vision for Europe last Monday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz had said he saw Germany taking on “special responsibility” to help Ukraine build up its artillery and air defence systems. **SEE ALSO P7**

Host of tourism activities in Dhofar to attract visitors

SALALAH: Tour of Salalah (cycling), Iron Man and Rub Al Khali “Empty Quarter” figure high on the agenda of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism for the Governorate of Dhofar towards the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023.

The ministry is bracing for the locally-called “Sarab” season, which is the spring season that comes after the monsoon locally known as “khareef”. “Sarab” season begins in the last week of

September and continues till the last week of December every year.

Khalid bin Abdullah al Abri, Director General of Heritage and Tourism in Dhofar Governorate, told Oman News Agency (ONA) that, acting in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and Oman Cycling Association, the ministry will organise the Tour of Salalah and mountain hiking in mid-September.

This is in addition to the Iron Man from September 22 to 24,

an international event in which more than 750 sportsmen from 78 countries will participate. The event includes swimming over a distance of 1.9 km, a 90-km bike riding and a 21-km sprinting, Al Abri added.

He pointed out that the ministry, as part of the attention it accords to ‘conference tourism’, will organise a photography event in cooperation with specialised firms over the coming weeks.

Next year, the Land of

Frankincense Museum will have a new look, after the execution of a restoration tender, he said. In the winter season, the ministry will launch the second edition of the Rub Al Khali Festival towards the end of January 2023. Before that, the Frankincense Season activities will be organised in October 2022.

Al Abri explained that the new tourism projects will be carried out early next year, including Itlatat-Hamrir Ain Jarzeez, Iteen

Gardens camping sites and Al Mughsaal Beach facilities. The projects will be implemented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, in cooperation with Dhofar Municipality and Omran Group.

Al Abri underscored the significance of the role of resorts, noting that the number of hotel establishments in Dhofar Governorate stands at 41, among them four are newly-opened resorts. — **ONA**



Overwhelming response to tourism roadshows

SAMUEL KUTTY
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The week-long series of roadshows conducted by a high-power delegation from the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in five major Indian cities evoked an overwhelming response.

The delegation was led by Asma al Hajri, Deputy Director-General of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism included 10 leading tourism stakeholders from the Sultanate of Oman as well as the flag carrier, Oman Air.

The roadshows covered five key source markets to meet with leading travel trade stakeholders in India to bring Oman strongly back on the itineraries and to introduce innovations. The Oman delegation also met with CEOs of leading travel firms in Chennai to brainstorm about how to promote Oman.

The delegation visited key cities in three regions of India, covering the North with New Delhi, Ahmedabad, and Mumbai in the West, and Bengaluru and Chennai in the South.

According to Al Hajri, the roadshows witnessed not just

We were pleasantly surprised at the turnout of over 250 agents just in Southern India. This is a positive sign of recovery. India and Oman have always enjoyed strong relations in tourism

ASMA AL HAJRI
Deputy Director-General of Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

a presentation on the country but also successful business interactions.

“We were pleasantly surprised at the turnout of over 250 agents just in Southern India. This is a positive sign of recovery. India and Oman have always enjoyed strong relations in tourism”, Al Hajri said in a statement.

The pandemic has made people realise the value of travel and experiencing new horizons. Oman is constantly innovating in terms



of its tourism products to cater to the ever-evolving Indian travellers,” she added.

Travel agents expressed optimism about the country and shared views on strategising for positive growth. Oman has always been a favourite in the Middle East for India, not just for the sun and sea but for its abundance of natural beauty, culture, and adventure activities.

The statement issued by the

revealed that the number of Indian arrivals into Oman for just the month of July 2022 stood at 36,087, the highest in the last ten years for July. With this, the total number of Indian tourists visiting Oman from January to July 2022 stands at 167,678 visitors.

During the roadshows, Oman presented its unique and experiential attractions such as off-road adventures, forts, and castles, an authentic Omani experience of

living in the villages, reliving the land of Frankincense story, and much more.

Oman Air, on its part, informed the Indian travel agents that it had scheduled as many as 48 shuttle flights, including a Boeing 787 Dreamliner that will operate daily between Muscat and Doha during the upcoming Fifa World Cup from November 21 to December 3, with prices starting from just RO 49 for Economy Class and RO 155 for Business Class.

However, passengers are advised to arrive in Doha four hours before the start of a match due to the high frequency of flights each day. All passengers must register for a Hayya card (fan ID) as this is mandatory for travel on all match-day shuttle flights and entry into Qatar.

A no-check-in baggage policy also allows passengers to plan an easy-in, easy-out travel itinerary.

As part of its activities in the South Indian city of Chennai, the Omani delegation also met with the CEOs of key travel trade companies to brainstorm and discuss marketing strategies to better position Oman as a preferred holiday destination among Indian

travellers.

According to a press release issued later, the meeting focused on identifying the right target segments, followed by a better understanding of the market realities. With the Indian traveller constantly evolving and looking for new experiences, there was also a need to realign strategies and think outside of the box.

New mediums of advertising were explored, such as social platforms, digitalisation, and the right promotional platforms.

“Every part of India is unique, and that is evident even in terms of our tourism plans. We are constantly looking to reinvent the wheel and present a new experience. The exclusive meeting was insightful from an industry perspective to better understand the Indian traveller and, more importantly, our partners,” Al Hajri told the Indian partners at the meeting.

Several leading travel trade firms in Chennai, including Madura Travel Service, Baywatch Travels, Peekay Tours, Footprint Holidays, Embassy Travels & Tours, and GJ Phoenix Travel and Leisure, attended the meeting.

Air India cancels some flights

KABEER YOUSUF
@kabeeryousef

Air India flights, which were scheduled to fly from Muscat to Kannur and Muscat- Hyderabad sectors have been cancelled, according to India's national airline.

This announcement will come into effect from September 12 for flights scheduled from Muscat to Hyderabad whereas flights from Muscat to Kannur are cancelled from 13 September.

“This cancellation of flights to these two sectors is due to air traffic regulations

and will continue till further announcement,” a source at the Air India office has informed.

Those who have already purchased tickets on these flights can get their full refund from the concerned travel agent or online partner.

“Those who have booked tickets on these flights can cancel and book their journey on Air India express,” he added.

Air India Muscat — Kannur flight takes off at 16.30 and reaches Kannur at 21.30 and Hyderabad-bound Air India flights too take off at the same time and reaches destination at the same time.

Amerat gets new facility for recreation

AFRAH AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

Muscat Municipality announced the completion of the Al Nahda City Walk in the Wilayat of Al Amerat, which will offer more open space to people for recreation.

Within the framework of its vision aimed at developing the municipal work system with specifications and standards that meet the requirements of sustainability, this project works to provide quality facilities that enhance health activities for individuals.

The project includes having a walkway and bicycle path with a length of 1,200 metres. The width of the walkway designated for walking is 5 metres. It is adjacent to a longitudinal corridor dedicated to bicycles with a width of 3 metres. For asphalt parking, with the installation of lighting poles with an estimated number of 70 columns.

The project objects to exploiting public spaces with projects that promote sports and physical health in the community and develop and beautify the area in accordance with modern concepts in city management and planning.

In addition to exploiting the site in line with the activities



that serve the community, the project is a service adding to the public facilities in the Wilayat of Al Amerat. It will provide an outlet for the people of the area, motivate them to practice a healthy lifestyle, and find the appropriate place to practice walking and cycling in a designated path that ensures the safety of pedestrians.

The project is the third of its kind in the Wilayat of Al Amerat, along with the Al Mahaj Walk and Longitudinal Garden Walk in the Fifth phase, completed to improve the urban landscape of urban planning in the wilayat.

This will provide the components of projects that serve community members for multiple purposes, and thus achieve a healthy and safe city with the elements of prosperity and sustainability that serve all visitors and residents of the governorate.

TEXT& PHOTOS
BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

One who travels to Wadi Al Sahtan will be awestruck by the farms that are scattered on both sides of the mountain road, forming beautiful panoramic views that we rarely find in other places.

Amq village is one of these green patches, which embraces dozens of species of plants, trees and wildlife.

Omanis grew up in this village plowing and cultivating the land, and they still practice agriculture alongside other traditional crafts such as making daggers, palm fronds and weaving textiles in their traditional form.

Whoever visits this village will feel from the first sight the antiquity of this site, as the mud houses that were built on the mountain slopes are still steadfast and survive elements. These houses add another aesthetic touch to this peaceful village. These houses, which were built in the Omani architectural style, are adorned with the Arabic drawings. It is like other mud houses that were built in the mountainous heights of the interior and eastern governorates.

Some of these houses retain their beautiful artistic lustre, and the drawings and inscriptions in these houses are in red and green. These drawings and writings that include Holy Quranic texts and quotes from Arabic literature indicate the literary knowledge of the residents of this village.

“Most of these houses collapsed due to heavy rains and exposure to moisture for long periods. The owners of these houses left them decades ago and today they are in a deplorable state. But some of these remain, which any visitor can see before their complete collapse,” villagers said.

Some of the old houses’ doors are locked, its windows are closed, and its walls are corroded, and it



may pose a danger to those who live next to it.

“These mud buildings may collapse at any moment and this may cause injuries. These houses have become a refuge for insects,

rodents and reptiles, which risks everyone's safety.”

The recent rains have filled the aflaj and hearts of the villagers. Agriculture of this village is heavily dependent on rain and the

citizens are optimistic about an exceptional crop yield this year. This falaj has been well maintained by the residents of the village as it is used to irrigate all crops in the village.



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3

In brief

■ CAIRO



Oman at Secretaries General conference

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the State Council, is taking part in the 9th conference of the Arab Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments (AASGP), held in Egypt. Oman's delegation in the conference is headed by Khalid bin Ahmed al Saeedi, Secretary General of the State Council. The conference discusses a spectrum of topics, namely the agenda of the 40th General Assembly meeting of Arab Parliaments' Secretaries General and the report of the executive committee.

■ MUSCAT



Sixth Issue of music magazine released

Oman Classical Music Centre, an offshoot of the Diwan of Royal Court's Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science, has released the 6th issue of the Omani Music Magazine. The new issue comprises an interview with Khalfan bin Ahmed al Barwani, a long-serving employee of the Centre, who spoke about the professional career of Prof Yusuf Shawqi Mustafa and his contributions to the Omani classical music collection and archiving project. In the interview, Al Barwani also touched on other issues of relevance to Arab musical traditions. The edition covers other areas of interest to Omani and non-Omani musical heritage.

■ AMMAN



Oman takes part in Amman book fair

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth and the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, is taking part in the activities of Amman International Book Fair in Jordan, which will run till September 10. The participation comes within the framework of activating Oman's presence in international book fairs to promote Omani books, as well as highlighting various features of Oman's intellectual, historical and literary aspects. The participation reflects the cooperation between Oman and Jordan. It also aims to enhance areas related to writing and publishing books through communication among Omani and Jordanian publishing houses.

Students jubilant over start of new school year



AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, SEPT 4

Students across the Sultanate of Oman seemed excited on Sunday to begin the new school year. School administrations organised reception to welcome the new students.

The schools began with the morning assembly with students saluting the flag, declaring their loyalty to the homeland and its leader.

The new school year began with the principal and teachers introducing students to the school and its services. Students were also provided with general advice, especially those related to academic achievement, regulations, and methods of security and safety inside the school campus and on school buses.

The teachers distributed books to the students, providing them

with tips to keep them from spoiling.

Ruqayah bint Saleh bin Rashid al Abri, an English teacher at Wadi Ghoul School for Basic Education, said: "the beginning of the new school year is the start that students are waiting to unleash their energies and talents. Whenever schools close their doors, they wait impatiently to turn their dreams to reality."

Azhar bint Zaher al Subhi, a mathematics teacher at Wadi Ghoul School, said: "Every beginning of the year, I prepare myself to receive the school year with all the tasks allotted for me. I set my goals for the year, specifically for the first semester. I set my study plans and put my innovative ideas and strategies to push my students to the top."

The students expressed their joy and happiness at the beginning of the school year as the student Yaroub bin Mahmoud al Abri said:

"Today, I felt a sense of joy after returning to classrooms. I hope to achieve excellent results. I want to participate in student groups to develop my skills in various activities and competitions."

Ahed bint Hamoud al Khiari, a fourth grader at Wahat Al Fikr School, said: "Today I enter my school with excitement. Allah willing, I will be among the topper so that I can progress to higher academic levels with distinction."

The bus driver, Khalfan bin Muhammad al Salmi, said: "We have kept school buses in good condition to ensure the safety of our students."

Talib bin Muhammad al Daghari, another driver, said: "We must be sure the bus doors are closed during the trips and that there are no students near the bus when it starts. I also ensure that there are no students left behind before and after the end of trips."

Girl run over in Maabela

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Tragedy struck on the first day of the new school year when a 16-year-old girl, who is a 10th grade student, was run over by a vehicle while crossing the road after she got down from her school bus in South Maabela on Sunday.

Dr Ali al Jawhary, Director of Education, Muscat Governorate, said that the accident was really unfortunate and that culprits would be brought to the law.

"We are committed to the safety and security of children and we register our concerns over the tragic incident in which a girl student died," Al Jawhary said, adding that "the initial indications show that there has been a clear negligence and recklessness on the bus driver."

A statement issued by the Royal Oman Police said that the girl was dropped on the opposite side of her house which caused the accident and the drivers should make sure children are dropped on the same side of their residence to avoid crossing of the road.

"Drivers should make sure children get down at the same side of their house and not otherwise. By doing this, they are saved from crossing the road and saving their lives," suggests a statement from the Assistant General Traffic Department.

Safety and security personnel strongly advocate parents, children, schools and bus operators as well as employees to follow certain guidelines to safeguard precious lives.

"Parents and teachers should be aware of the routes taken by the drivers to and from school and home and constant vigil should be applied in the routes and stops as most of the mishaps occur when students commute to schools," says Mohammed al Khaddouri, safety official.

He suggests that a proper amount of attention should be given by school authorities to inspecting the school bus as well.

"School authorities should do a regular audit of the buses. All stakeholders, parents, children, and school authorities should conduct awareness of road safety from time to time."

NEW SCHOOL YEAR BEGINS

FROM PAGE1

He said the ministry is moving towards building 42 school buildings in all governorates of Oman in cooperation with the private sector. It is expected that the implementation of some of these projects will start early next year (2023), and the rest of the projects successively.

The number of students in 1,242 government schools is 729,331, including 368,184 male students (50.9 per cent), and 361,147 female students (49.5 per cent). The are 339 schools for the first cycle 1-4, (306) schools for the second cycle (5-10), (489) schools for the continuing cycle, (14) schools for grades (11-12), and (94) schools for grades (10-12). Of these, 383 schools are



only for boys (30.8 per cent), 227 schools for girls (18.3 per cent), and 632 joint schools (50.9 per cent). These schools are also divided into morning schools and evening schools.

Meet this Omani who teaches English in UK

ALI AL MATANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

Salma al Matani, an Omani student, has achieved a rare feat by accepting the challenge of teaching English to native speakers in the countryside of Scotland.

Salma achieved this due to her determination and hard work in her subject as a student. As the only Omani teacher in Scotland, she has immersed herself into the Scottish culture and life. The people of Scotland have welcomed her with open arms and hearts. Moreover, her students see her as an inspiration for her own people and theirs too.

Salma started her career by completing her bachelor's in English Language and Literature

from University of Leeds and then moved to Glasgow, amid Covid chaos, to complete her Educational Qualification from University of Strathclyde. However, her love for the English language began much earlier in her life. What first started as a hobby, reading any book she could find, eventually became a passion that became her motivation for everything. She aspired to change the society she grew up in, to provide insights to the Arab community on the impact of English education.

She overcame all obstacles and achieved the impossible. As a result, Salma received her offer of employment at one of the best secondary schools in Scotland within a few weeks of gaining her Postgraduate Degree in Education.

Salma al Matani achieved this due to her determination and hard work in her subject as a student. As the only Omani teacher in Scotland, she has immersed herself into the Scottish culture and life. The people of Scotland have welcomed her with open arms and hearts

However, as one of the students on scholarship to someday teach in Oman, she has been left with limited choices amid Covid-19

pandemic.

She did not despair or fall into despondency. Instead, Salma turned to her greatest support, her family. Together they decided that this obstacle would not be the end of her education and future. She would be able to prove the opposite. She did not sit idle, waiting for unfulfilled promises and opportunities, but took control of her future and set off to continue her education in Scotland.

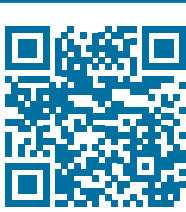
Unfortunately, Salma has been rejected by schools in her own country. Salma was and still is adamant about proving her worth. She pursued the qualifications that ultimately landed her a job as a secondary school English teacher at Berwickshire High school in Scotland. An environment that not

only gave her a chance to become the educator she was destined to be, but has supported and welcomed her as one of their own. And in just one year of working there, Salma is now recognised as a fully registered secondary English teacher by the General Teaching Council for Scotland.

Salma's tremendous success is also a success for her country, Sultanate of Oman. This achievement will be added to the list of brilliant students.

Regrettably, the sad reality is that Salma's achievements have been overlooked.

The challenges that stand in front of our hard-working children, who strive to gain education to benefit their homeland, are increasing daily.



BE INCLUSIVE TO DEAL WITH AUTISM

KAUSHALENDRA SINGH
@patkaushal

Schools have opened. Roles are cut for all — children, parents, teachers and even people in the administration for the smooth sailing of the new academic year. Numbers are big, and so are the preparations and infrastructure — 1,422 government schools for 741,000 students.

Amid this background, thought needs to be spared for a section of people who are in a typical situation by virtue of being slow learners under the influence of a medical disorder called autism. Those who suffer from it and their parents need support from the government and agencies that work for social security.

The Sultanate of Oman has a good track record, and has been proactively taking up the cause of children with autism through government initiatives and private participation - current

numbers and projections indicate some 27,300 cases between 2020 and 2030.

Numbers are high again, which demands higher attention. Rehabilitation is not the only answer. Children suffering from it need education along with rehabilitation. They need specialists and special infrastructure because, somehow or the other, they are special children.

A responsible body like UNICEF calls for an inclusive society to include children with autism into society's mainstream and "make them able to develop their skills and realise their full potential." Along with children who suffer from autism, their parents need support from society. Everyone among them looks for an institution where their children can get both education as well rehabilitation so

that they can manage themselves and be in the mainstream of society without any sense of inferiority.

The concept of inclusive education is quite popular in most parts of the world where children are suffering from autism study with mainstream children. They play, learn, and get requisite support from the experts in the institution. Such institutions have special arrangements for children with autism and have qualified trainers to take care of their rehabilitation.

Due to the involvement of some special features, these schools are slightly expensive. There are many who afford the fee. For others, the role of the government, civic society and social agencies become vital to supporting those who cannot afford such institutions, either by sponsoring an individual's fees or by having some kind of arrangement with the institution.

CHILDREN WITH AUTISM
27,300 CASES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2030

Commenting on inclusive education, Mahesh Verma, who has been in Oman since 1985 and helped start Paradise Valley School, says, "Inclusive education is the most effective way to give children with a broad range of learning difficulties a fair chance to go to school, learn and develop the skills they need to become a part of mainstream society. Inclusive education means all children are in the same classrooms and schools."

"It means real learning opportunities for groups who have traditionally been excluded. Inclusive systems value the unique contributions students of all backgrounds bring to the classroom and allow diverse groups to grow side by side, to benefit all," said Verma.

He calls for sparing some thought for those children who, due to medical reasons, have no access to regular schools and depend on special care.





Oman Trading Establishment LLC



Sultanate of Oman
Consumer Protection Authority

RECALL CAMPAIGN
For HYUNDAI SONATA



Date of Campaign : 5 / 9 / 2022

Campaign Type : Recall

Recall Segment : Software

Product Description : Hyundai Sonata LF

Model Year	Division	Vehicle Model	Affected Vehicle VIN Range	No. of Affected Vehicles in Oman
2014-2016	Hyundai	Sonata LF	KMHE241G0FA020816 to KMHE341GXA170191	5132

Description:

In some vehicle the smart junction box software logic may not work properly. The signal received from the multifunction switch which could cause the turn signal to work in opposite Direction.

Procedure:

Software updating will be done for smart junction box at free of charge

For More Information:

Customers of affected vehicles may please call Oman Trading Establishment for further details/booking Appointment etc from Date - 5/9/2022

Contact Details:

Toll free No 80050003 on all working days between 8.00 AM to 1.00 PM & 2.00 PM to 5.30 PM with effect from Date 5/9/2022



Truss vows to tackle soaring energy bills

LONDON: The frontrunner in the race to become the UK's next prime minister, Liz Truss, vowed on Sunday that if appointed she will present a plan to tackle soaring energy bills within a week.

Talking to the BBC a day ahead of the Conservative leadership announcement, the foreign minister expected to succeed Boris Johnson said: "If I'm elected prime minister, I will act immediately on bills and on energy supply."

She declined to give details before her appointment is confirmed, saying simply: "Within one week I will make sure there is an announcement on how we are going to deal with the issue."

The Tory leadership race has stretched over eight weeks as Britain faces decades-high levels of inflation and is tipped to enter recession later this year.

British households are facing an eye-watering 80 per cent average hike in electricity and gas bills, in a dramatic worsening of the cost-of-living crisis before winter.

Truss, 47, has topped polls among the estimated 200,000 Conservative Party members who pick the next leader, outshining her rival Rishi Sunak, the 42-year-old former finance minister.

Truss previously decried direct handouts, but last week vowed to "deliver immediate support to ensure people are not facing



Liz Truss said she would act immediately on energy bills. — AFP

unaffordable fuel bills" this winter.

Truss's campaign has promised tax cuts but critics note those would do nothing to benefit the poorest.

On Sunday she stressed she believes tax cuts that benefit the wealthy are fair and promote growth.

"To look at everything through the lens of redistribution (of wealth), I believe is wrong," she said.

Sunak has promised further government support to help people pay their energy bills and said curbing inflation would be his priority, attacking Truss's tax-slashing plans as reckless.

"Helping people with the cost of living and energy bills comes above everything else that I might like to do," he told the BBC on Sunday.

Sunak appeared to accept his likely defeat and offer backing to Truss, saying that if he loses: "I look forward to supporting the Conservative government in whatever capacity" and confirming he would stay on as an MP.

The announcement of the next party leader, who will become prime minister, will be made on Monday. Queen Elizabeth II will then formally appoint Johnson's successor on Tuesday. — AFP

'Russia sanctions not working'

CERNOBBIO: The leader of Italy's far-right League party, Matteo Salvini, sparked debate on Sunday by saying that the unprecedented sanctions the West had imposed on Russia over the Ukraine attack weren't working.

"Several months have passed and people are paying two, three, even four times more for their bills," he told RTL radio. "And after seven months, the war continues and Russian Federation coffers are filling with money."

Skyrocketing energy prices since the start of the war in Ukraine have inflicted economic pain on countries in the European Union which before the war had been reliant on Russia for a large chunk of its gas supplies.

Salvini later doubled down on his comments during a debate at an economic forum being held in Cernobbio, northern Italy.

"We need a European shield" to protect businesses and families, as during the Covid pandemic, Salvini told delegates during the forum.

"If we want to go ahead with the sanctions, let's do it, we want



Member of Lega Matteo Salvini and Co-founder and President of the Fratelli d'Italia Giorgia Meloni gesture during the 48th edition of the annual "The European House Ambrosetti" forum called "Intelligence on the World and Italy" at Villa D'Este in Cernobbio, near Como, northern Italy, on Sunday. — AFP

to protect Ukraine — but I would not want that to mean that instead of harming the sanctioned, we harm ourselves," he said.

A day earlier he had tweeted that "those who have been sanctioned are winners and those who put the sanctions in place are on their knees."

"It's evident that someone in Europe has made a bad calculation. It is essential to rethink the strategy to save jobs and businesses in Italy," he said.

Following Salvini's comments,

Enrico Letta, leader of the Democratic Party and one of his main adversaries ahead of parliamentary elections on September 25 retorted on Twitter: "I think (Russian President Vladimir) Putin couldn't have said it better."

He later told reporters on the sidelines of the forum on the banks of Lake Como that they were "irresponsible" statements which "risk causing very serious damage to Italy, to our reliability and to our role in Europe". — AFP



Sultanate of Omanسلطنة عُمان

وزارة التراث والسياحة

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Tender No.	Tender Name	Grade
23/2022	Providing maintenance workers for civil, mechanical and electrical installations for the Ministry's General Office Building 2023	Excellent
24/2022	Providing cleaning services for the building of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism 2023	
25/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Buildings in Muscat Governorate for the year 2023	First Second Third Fourth
26/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in South Al Batinah Governorate for the year 2023	
27/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in North Al Batinah Governorate for the year 2023	
28/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in Musandam Governorate for the year 2023	
29/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in Al Dhakhiya Governorate for the year 2023	
30/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in North Al Sharqiah Governorate for the year 2023	
31/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in South Al Sharqiah Governorate for the year 2023	
32/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in Al Dhahirah Governorate for the year 2023	
33/2022	Providing cleaning services to the Heritage and Tourism Department Building in Al Buraimi Governorate for the year 2023	
34/2022	Providing cleaning services in Al-Baleed Archaeological Park for the year 2023	
35/2022	Providing creek cleaning services in Samahram Archaeological Park for the year 2023	
36/2022	Providing cleaning services to the General Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in the Governorate of Dhofar for the year 2023	
37/2022	Providing cleaning and maintenance services for the two sites of Al-Baleed Archaeological Park and Samharam Archaeological Park of the Heritage and Tourism Department of Dhofar for the year 2023	
38/2022	Providing agricultural services to the Directorate of Heritage and Tourism in the Governorate of Dhofar and its affiliated sites for the year 2023	

Fees of Tender Documents (Non-refundable)

25 OMR

Tender Document Sales End Date

25/9/2022

Last Date for Bid Submission

17/10/2022

E-Tendering Portal

https://etendering.tenderboard.gov

Bids are submitted that fulfill the technical conditions and specifications, accompanied by a tender bond from a local bank registered bank in Oman of not less than (1%) of the bid value, valid for (90) days from the date of its submission online

- Any bid that does not meet the required tender bond will not be considered
- The Ministry shall not be obligated to accept the lowest or any other bids

The bid submission period starts after the end of the inquiry period shown in the e-tendering system, until the last date for submitting bids before (10:00 am, Oman time)

Support and inquiries

For more information, related to the tender, kindly communicate through the website of the e-tendering system: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>

For inquiries related to the technical support for the e-tendering system, kindly communicate through etenderhd@ita.gov.om or 24402200

For further information

Email : sotic@mht.om
Phones : 22088348 - 22088085

Chinese leader to visit Russia next week

BEIJING: China's top legislator Li Zhanzhu will visit Russia next week, state media reported on Sunday, becoming the highest-ranking Communist Party politician to travel to the country since Moscow's attack on Ukraine.

Beijing and Moscow have drawn closer in recent years, ramping up cooperation as part of what they call a "no limits" relationship, acting as a counterweight to the global dominance of the United States.

Meanwhile, tensions between China and the West have risen as Beijing has refused to condemn Moscow's attack on Ukraine and provided diplomatic cover by blasting Western sanctions and arms sales to Kyiv.

Li, who ranks third in the Chinese government hierarchy, will pay official visits to Russia, Mongolia, Nepal and South Korea from Wednesday until September 17, according to the official Xinhua news agency.

He will attend the Eastern Economic Forum due to be held over four days from Monday in Russia's far eastern city of Vladivostok, Xinhua reported.

Li, 72, is likely to retire from his role in the Communist Party at a landmark conference next month, where President Xi Jinping is expected to secure a precedent-busting third consecutive term in office. — AFP



مواصلات

MWASALAT

Tender Number

T-37-2022

Tender Name

MWASALAT Vessels and Pontoons Underwater hull cleaning Services (2 years)

Project Summary

Framework Agreement to provide works of vessels underwater hull cleaning and bottom underwater survey for company fleet and pontoons.

Tender Fee

OMR 50/-

Grade & Specialty

Qualified & Specialized Companies in the Field

Start date for tender document distribution

Monday 05 September 2022

Last date for tender document distribution

Thursday 15 September 2022

Last date for submission

Thursday 29 September 2022

The Tender documents may be shared by email during official working hours between 9:00A.M - 2:00 P.M.

Tenderers are requested to share commercial registration (CR) & business card through email tenders@mwasalat.om and tender number as the subject of email. Tender Document shall be shared by email.

All Tenderers shall submit with their offers a Tender Bond in the amount of OMR. 400/- being one percent (1%) of the Tender Value, valid for (120) days from the date of Tender Submission obtained from a locally registered Bank, drawn in favor of The Chairman of Procurement Committee, National Ferries Company LLC "MWASALAT". Any bid without tender bond will be rejected.

The submission Date / Time shall be on or before the deadline specified in the above table.

Participants should submit their offers in the tender box located in the head- quarter National Ferries Company LLC (MWASALAT) at Ghala, Muscat (Jabal Shams Building 5th floor), Any proposal submitted after the given Date & Time shall be rejected.

"Mwasalat" Head Quarter, Ghala Tel: +968 24121500/2412155 P.O.Box: 911 , Al Khuwair, PC: 133, Sultanate of Oman

For more information please send to: tenders@mwasalat.om



سلطنة عُمان

وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات

Sultanate of Oman

Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

إعلان مناقصة

Tender Notice

The Internal Tenders Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tenders:

TENDER NO.	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
MTCTIT/HQ 121/2022	RE-MAINTENANCE OF (DUJOM-MAHOUT) ROAD DAMAGED BY THE CLIMATIC CONDITIONS	4/9/2022	15-09-2022	11-10-2022	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCTIT/HQ 122/2022	ANALYZE AND SIMPLIFY RELEVANT GOVERNMENT SERVICES	4/9/2022	15-09-2022	12/10/2022	EXPERIENCED SME COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(125/-) ONE HUNDRED TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCTIT/HQ 123/2022	DEVELOPMENT OF IT SUPPORT SERVICES & IT INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES STANDARDS UNDER MTCTIT ACCREDITATION PROGRAM	4/9/2022	15-09-2022	12/10/2022	EXPERIENCED SME COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (FIRST CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE
MTCTIT/HQ 124/2022	IMPLEMENTATION OF NATIONAL OPEN DATA PORTAL	4/9/2022	15-09-2022	12/10/2022	EXPERIENCED SME COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (EXCELLENT, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, FOURTH CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of documents. Tenders should be submitted online on given website. In addition to Tender Bond as Bank Guarantee issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days.

CORRESPONDANCE:

1. Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)

2. E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200, e-mail : etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE



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مجلس البوابة العربية

Muscat Arab Digital Capital

2022



Members of Israeli security forces and emergency services inspect the site of attack. — AFP

7 wounded in attack on bus in West Bank

TUBAS: Gunmen wounded six Israeli soldiers and a civilian on Sunday when they sprayed bullets at a bus in the occupied West Bank, the army said.

The attack in the Jordan Valley, near the city of Tubas, comes amid a spate of violence in the West Bank in recent days and a shooting spree last month targeting an Israeli bus in annexed east Jerusalem.

It also follows months of often deadly Israeli army raids in the West Bank, many targeting gunmen in the Nablus and Jenin areas — both near Tubas. Two suspects were arrested soon after Sunday’s attack near the burnt-out remains of the vehicle they were thought to have used, and guns were found lying on the dirt road nearby. The bus’s windscreen was peppered with dozens of bullet holes and a side window was smashed.

The Israeli military said one soldier was seriously wounded and five others and a civilian suffered lighter injuries. Matti

Carmi, from the Magen David Adom emergency medical services, said “two gunshots victims” were treated outside the bus.

The two were both conscious and were airlifted to hospital in the Israeli coastal city of Haifa.

Three others wounded by flying glass were transported to another hospital in northern Israel, the MDA said.

Defence Minister Benny Gantz said security forces “immediately went in pursuit and got their hands on suspects in the attack”.

The army said security forces were “continuing the searches” after two armed suspects were detained.

Prime Minister Yair Lapid praised rescue and security forces “who acted swiftly and with determination” to treat casualties and apprehended the suspects. “We will continue to put our hands on anyone who tries to inflict harm on Israeli civilians and soldiers,” he said on Twitter. —AFP

Iraq parliament staff resume work after weeks-long hiatus

BAGHDAD: Staff at Iraq’s parliament returned to work on Sunday for the first time since Moqtada Sadr’s supporters stormed the legislature in late July, an assembly official said.

The development came as speaker Mohammed al Halbusi suggested an agenda for an upcoming national dialogue session following an 11-month political paralysis that sparked deadly clashes in Baghdad last week. “All parliament staff have returned to work,” following orders issued on Saturday night, the parliament official told the media.

“Operations in parliament had been suspended since protesters stormed the legislature’s building,” he said. The protesters had staged a sit-in outside the assembly for weeks after initially storming it to demand fresh elections and the dissolution of parliament. They pulled out last Tuesday at



Iraqi forces stand guard at Baghdad's Green Zone. — AFP

Sadr’s orders following nearly 24 hours of violence pitting them against the army and Iran-backed factions that left more than 30

Sadr supporters dead. The battles that started when Sadr supporters stormed the government palace in the capital’s fortified Green

Zone marked one of the deadliest episodes of street violence in the country in nearly three years. — AFP

Money transfer firms replace banks in crisis-hit Lebanon

BEIRUT: Like many people in crisis-hit Lebanon, Elias Skaff used to wait for hours to withdraw cash at the bank but now prefers money transfer companies as trust in lenders has evaporated.

Anyone who relies on traditional banks to receive their money “will die 100 times before cashing it”, said Skaff, 50, who has survived Lebanon’s three-year-old economic downturn with the

help of US dollar payments from a relative abroad.

Once the flagship of Lebanon’s economy, the banking sector is now widely despised and avoided after banks barred depositors from accessing their savings, stopped offering loans and closed hundreds of branches and slashed thousands of jobs.

Last month, a local man was widely cheered as a folk hero after

he stormed a Beirut bank and held employees and customers hostage for hours to demand some of his \$200,000 in frozen savings to pay hospital bills for his sick father.

Increasingly, as Lebanon’s deep crisis shows no sign of abating, money transfer agencies are filling the gap, also offering currency exchange, credit card and tax payment services and even setting up wedding gift registries. Skaff

said he now receives his money via a Beirut branch of Western Union’s Lebanese agent OMT, which says it operates more than 1,200 branches nationwide and handles 80 per cent of money transfers outside the Lebanese banking sector.

“We create services similar to those that banks provide at the request of our customers,” said OMT spokesman Naji Abou Zeid. — AFP

Diseases, snakebites plague Pakistani flood survivors

ISLAMABAD: A massive outbreak of waterborne diseases and deadly snakebites is weighing on hundreds of thousands of flood survivors in Pakistan, officials said on Sunday, as the death toll from the months of devastation rose to 1,300.

At least 26 more people died on Saturday, most in the southern province of Sindh, which has been hit the worst and faces another deluge from Pakistan’s longest river, which is swollen by rain water flowing downstream from the mountainous north.

The latest deaths have taken the toll since June’s start of the climate-induced catastrophe to 1,290, the national disaster agency said in the latest update.

Several towns and cities in



Flood-affected people fill drinking water from a tanker near a makeshift camp in Dera Allah Yar town in Jaffarabad district. — AFP

Sindh that remained submerged for almost two months now face

another deluge from the Indus River, provincial government

spokesperson Murtaza Wahab said.

More than 100 cases of snake bites and nearly 500 of dog bites have been reported from the flood-hit areas

A massive rescue operation backed by helicopters and boats was under way for a third day to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people marooned in remote villages, Wahab added.

At least half a million survivors living in makeshift shelters without access to clean drinking water, toilets and sanitation are now facing waterborne diseases, provincial Health Minister Azra Pechuho said.

More than 100 cases of snake bites and nearly 500 of dog bites have been reported from the flood-hit areas, Pechuho said.

Medics from the military, government hospitals and charities are treating nearly 150,000 patients for diarrhoea, more than 100,000 with skin infections and thousands with malaria symptoms at temporary clinics, the minister added.

More rains have been predicted on the northern mountains through Tuesday. — dpa

SHORT TAKES

TEHRAN

Readiness to counter biological threats

Iranian authorities have introduced defence systems in 51 cities to counter “biological, radiological and chemical threats”, deputy defence minister Mehdi Farahi has announced.

The defence ministry has “provided 51 cities in the country with the necessary installations and equipment for passive defence”, Farahi was cited as saying by Iribnews.

He added that the ministry is “now able to identify the threats thanks to the infrastructure



put in place to confront all sorts of biological, radiological and chemical threats”. The announcement comes as Iran is engaged in negotiations to revive its 2015 nuclear deal.

MOGADISHU

Insurgents kill at least 19 civilians

Fighters from the insurgent group Al Shabaab have killed at least 19 civilians in a night-time attack in central Somalia, clan chiefs and local officials said.

The attack comes two weeks after Al Shabaab, which has waged a long insurgency against the Somali state, besieged a hotel in the capital Mogadishu for 30 hours, leaving 21 people dead and 117 injured.

The sources said at least eight vehicles were travelling on a road between the towns of Beledweyne



and Maxaas when the insurgents intercepted and burned them and killed the passengers.

“The terrorists massacred innocent civilians who were travelling... last night.

SANTIAGO

Chileans vote for new constitution

Chileans voted on Sunday on whether to adopt a new constitution that would break from the era of Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship, foster a more welfare-based society and boost Indigenous rights.

Although Chileans previously voted in droves for a rewrite of the current constitution — adopted in 1980 during Pinochet’s rule — opinion polls suggest the new text could be rejected.

Polling stations opened with long lines of voters gathered



in some parts of the country. Social upheaval that began in 2019 provided the impulse to overhaul the constitution, but the 388-article draft has proved controversial.



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MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 5 | 2022

7

In brief

■ VATICAN CITY



POPE FRANCIS BEATIFIES JOHN PAUL I

Thousands of people gathered in St Peter's Square on Sunday as Pope Francis presided over the beatification of John Paul I, the so-called "Smiling Pope" who led the Catholic Church for just 33 days before dying in contested circumstances. John Paul I, the son of a bricklayer from the Dolomite mountains and a particularly warm and pastoral figure, was elected pope on August 26, 1978, at the age of 65. He died just 33 days later, making him the shortest serving pontiff in modern church history. "With a smile, Pope John Paul managed to communicate the goodness of the Lord," said Pope Francis.

■ BUENOS AIRES



FOUR DEATHS LINKED TO LEGIONNAIRES' DISEASE

Argentine health officials said four people in a clinic in northwestern Tucuman province had died of Legionnaires' disease, a relatively rare bacterial infection of the lungs. The disease, which first appeared at a 1976 meeting of the American Legion veterans group in the US city of Philadelphia, has been linked to contaminated water or unclean air-conditioning systems. Health Minister Carla Vizzotti told reporters that Legionnaires' had been identified as the underlying cause of double pneumonia in the four, who had suffered high fevers, body aches and trouble breathing.

■ LAGOS



TWO DEAD IN BUILDING COLLAPSE

At least two people were killed and more were trapped on Sunday after a seven-story unfinished building collapsed in Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos, rescue authorities said. Building collapses are common in Africa's most populous nation where many reside in dilapidated structures and construction safety regulations are often ignored. The seven-story building collapsed in a commercial area of Lagos, with the structure almost completely flattened, according to photographs released by rescue officials. No reason was given for the collapse.



German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal inspect a military honor guard in the courtyard of the Chancellery in Berlin on Sunday. — AFP

Ukraine PM calls for more arms

BERLIN: Ukraine's Prime Minister Denys Shmygal on Sunday voiced hopes that Germany would become a leading player helping Kyiv to build up its air defences, as he sought more heavy weapons for Kyiv from Berlin.

Shmygal is the first high-level Ukrainian official to visit Germany in months, in a sign of eased tensions between Kyiv and Berlin after a rocky patch.

Germany's initial stuttering response on providing military support to Kyiv following Russia's attack on Ukraine had sparked consternation.

But Shmygal acknowledged during his visit that Germany has since significantly stepped up its military aid, with heavy armaments like the tank howitzer 2000 or MARS rocket launchers all "working well on the battle field".

The air defence system Iris-T is expected to be delivered in the autumn, he said, adding that

In a speech on his vision for Europe on Monday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz had said he saw Germany taking on "special responsibility" to help Ukraine build up its artillery and air defence systems

Ukraine "hopes that Germany will become one of the leaders in the process of developing Ukrainian air defence".

In a speech on his vision for Europe on Monday, Chancellor Olaf Scholz had said he saw Germany taking on "special responsibility" to help Ukraine build up its artillery and air defence systems. Defence ministers of NATO allies are expected to arrive in Germany on Thursday for a meeting led by

the United States to coordinate military needs for Ukraine.

Ahead of the talks, Scholz stressed Germany's commitment to bolstering Ukraine, but added that it would be done in coordination with "our friends and allies".

SOLIDARITY

The Ukrainian prime minister had made the first stop on his trip to Berlin a meeting with President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, where Shmygal said he "discussed the military situation, strengthening sanctions and the need to provide weapons for Ukraine".

Shmygal also thanked Germany "for solidarity with Ukrainians and support".

Germany will "continue to stand reliably by Ukraine's side," Steinmeier reassured Shmygal, according to the German president's spokeswoman.

The cordial read-outs of their talks marked a clear change in tone from previous months,

when a row had erupted in April because Steinmeier's offer to visit Ukraine was rebuffed.

Steinmeier, a former foreign minister from Scholz's Social Democratic Party, had been shunned over his years-long detente policy towards Moscow — something which he has admitted was a mistake following the outbreak of war.

Germany's SPD has historically championed close ties with Russia, born out of the "Ostpolitik" policy of rapprochement and dialogue with the then Soviet Union, devised by former SPD chancellor Willy Brandt in the 1970s.

That tradition contributed to Germany initially refusing any weapons deliveries to Kyiv, with a previous decision to send only 5,000 helmets sparking anger and mockery.

But Scholz's coalition, which also includes the Greens and liberal FDP, has since made a sharp U-turn. — **Agencies**

Greece blocked over 150,000 migrants this year: Minister

ATHENS: Greece has blocked over 150,000 undocumented migrants on its land and maritime border so far this year, the migration minister said on Sunday.

"The entry of 154,102 irregular migrants was averted since the start of the year. Around 50,000 attempted to invade Greece in August alone," Notis Mitarachi told Eleftheros Typos daily.

Border control is a top priority for the conservative Greek government that came to power in 2019, and will seek re-election next year.

Last month, the government announced plans to extend a 40-kilometre long wall along the Greek-Turkish border at Evros by another 80 kilometres as part of efforts to control the flow of migrants.

It will also install thermal cameras and deploy an additional 250 border guards.

Greece is often the country of choice for people fleeing Africa and the Middle East to try to reach a better life in the European Union.

Thousands come via Turkey by crossing the Evros River, and over the narrow and perilous

Aegean Sea crossing separating the traditional rivals. Charity groups have accused Athens of illegally turning back migrants or forcing them over the border to Turkey — something Greece's conservative government has repeatedly denied.

Mitarachi on Sunday denied Athens was involved in illegal pushbacks, and accused Turkey of engaging in "violent push forwards".

Athens last month accused Turkey of forcibly pushing a group of stranded migrants onto a small Greek islet on the river.

Rights groups at the time said a five-year-old child in the

Indian tycoon Cyrus Mistry dies in road accident

MUMBAI: Former Tata Sons chairman Cyrus Mistry died in a road accident in Maharashtra's Palghar on Sunday.

Mistry was returning to Mumbai from Ahmedabad in his Mercedes that crashed on a divider. Mistry was aged 54 years.

Police said besides Mistry, three other persons were there in the fateful car — renowned Mumbai gynaecologist Dr Anahita Pandole, her husband Darius Pandole and his brother Jehangir Pandole.

Dr Pandole is believed to have been behind the wheel.

Jehangir Pandole also died in the accident that took place on a bridge on the Surya river.

Dr Pandole and Darius Pandole are undergoing treatment at a hospital where they are reported to be out of danger.

Mistry was ousted as chairman of Tata Sons in October 2016.

Tributes started to pour in for Mistry soon after news of his death came to light with political leaders and industrialists expressing their shock over the accident.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Mistry was a promising business leader who believed in India's economic prowess. — **Reuters**



Migrants demonstrate in Toulouse, southwestern France. — AFP

Energising children for back to school



Massrat Shaikh

The writer is an educational psychologist

Often as parents, we consider what our children will need when they return to school, and we usually concentrate on getting them school supplies to get through the school year. However, the most important things they may also need and those that cannot be bought or may not fit in a backpack are values and character strengths. It is possible to equip every child with it, and even better, when we do, it can transform their world.

Teaching and refreshing values from time to time are essential, especially at the beginning of each school year. The values we teach children will lay the foundation of who they are, both during their school years and in their life ahead.

Here are some tips on inculcating essential values that any child will need to get through school successfully:

DETERMINATION AND PERSEVERANCE

When children are just starting school, the most important thing we need to remind them is to persevere. School is full of many challenges, and children need to remain steadfast and handle those challenges. If we do not persevere, we stand still, and if we are not resilient, we are stressed and defeated.

Whether a child is destined to fly through academics, excel at sport, or be the next great artist, there will be things they find challenging to master. For some children, it will be social skills; for others, it may be learning their spelling. However, they must master resilience, determination, and perseverance to overcome life's tough spots.

As a parent, it can be tempting to do things for children when they find things difficult. However, a great gift we can give them is to be

TEACHING AND REFRESHING VALUES FROM TIME TO TIME ARE ESSENTIAL, ESPECIALLY AT THE BEGINNING OF EACH SCHOOL YEAR

their champion, their cheer leading squad. Taking this approach will show them that they can succeed even if, at first, something is difficult.

IMPORTANCE OF FAILING

The beginning of the school year is the right time to remind children that failing is okay, and it teaches them that failure is not something to be feared but merely a stepping stone to growth. Also, it is much easier to learn that it is okay to fail,

but children must learn to try several times again until they succeed. Also, as parents, we step in and nag, jostle and cajole a child into doing something but sometimes, children need to learn the consequences for themselves to be more motivated to prevent failure the next time.

HARD WORK

Hard work and determination are essential values to teach children and have a lifelong impact on their future capabilities, confidence, and happiness. Teaching our little ones to work hard to achieve their goals and aspirations is one of the most critical skills.

Hard work teaches discipline, dedication, and determination. We should let children struggle to get their way, encourage them to stay up, to finish their work before sleeping, and not offer an easy way out. Here we should appreciate the

effort more than the result and teach by example.

A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Children must repeatedly be reminded of the value of responsibility – for themselves and their belongings. Though this skill should be inculcated early on, a little reminder can still go a long way. Encouraging children to take responsibility for carrying their bags, remembering their books, and putting things away when they have used them teaches them responsibility. When children are required to do various tasks, they learn self-discipline, time management, empathy, and the consequences of their actions. The research on this subject shows that children who participate in household chores are more likely to succeed in school, careers, and personal relationships.

Norway’s future CO2 cemetery takes shape

ALEXIANE LEROUGE

On the shores of an island off Norway’s North Sea coast, engineers are building a burial ground for unwanted greenhouse gas. The future terminal is to pump tonnes of liquefied carbon dioxide captured from the top of factory chimneys across Europe into cavities deep below the seabed.

The project in the western municipality of Oygarden aims to prevent the gas from entering the atmosphere and contributing to global warming.

It “is the world’s first open-access transport and storage infrastructure, allowing any emitter that has captured his CO2 emissions to deliver that CO2 for safe handling, transport and then permanent storage,” project manager Sverre Overa said.

As the planet struggles to meet its climate targets, some climate experts see the technique, called carbon capture and storage, or CCS, as a means to partially reduce emissions from fossil-fuel-based industries. Norway is the biggest hydrocarbon producer in Western Europe, but it also boasts the best CO2 storage prospects on the continent, especially in its depleted North Sea oil fields.

The government has financed 80 per cent of the infrastructure, putting 1.7 billion euros (\$1.7 billion) on the table as part of a wider state plan to develop the technology.

A cement factory and a waste-to-energy plant in the Oslo region are set to send their CO2 to the site.

But the most original feature of the project is on the commercial side: inviting foreign firms to send their CO2 pollution to be buried out of harm’s way.

PIPELINE PLANS

Using CCS to curb carbon pollution is not a new idea, but despite generous subsidies the technology has never taken off, mainly because it is so costly.

One of the world’s largest carbon capture facilities, at the Petra Nova coal-fired plant in Texas, was mothballed in 2020 because it was not economical.

There are only a couple of dozen operational CCS projects around the world, according to the industry-run Global CCS Institute. But the failure to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with Paris Agreement goals and a massive influx of government subsidies have breathed new life into the technology.

Energy giants Equinor, TotalEnergies and Shell have set up a partnership — dubbed Northern Lights — which will be the world’s first cross-border CO2 transport and storage service at its scheduled launch in 2024. A pipeline will inject the liquefied CO2 into geological pockets 2,600 metres below the ocean floor, and the idea is that it will remain there for good.— AFP

Soothing despair — Red Cross teams tracing Ukraine conflict missing

NINA LARSON

A beautiful old manor on the outskirts of Geneva seems the image of peace and tranquillity, but inside the horrors of the war in Ukraine are ever present.

Dozens of people, most speaking Ukrainian or Russian, are urgently working phones and computers to help locate and determine the fate of prisoners of war and others who have disappeared in the conflict.

“Sometimes it is too hard. Emotionally hard,” said Natalia Novyk.

She heads a team of Ukrainian speakers taking calls from people seeking news of their loved ones from the Red Cross’s Central Tracing Agency (CTA).

Shortly after Russia attacked its neighbour in February, the International Committee of the Red Cross created a special CTA bureau focused exclusively on searching for those captured or missing in the fog of that war.

The ICRC first set up its CTA system more than 150 years ago to help people locate lost loved ones in times of crisis.

But this is the first dedicated CTA bureau set up for a specific international armed conflict in more than 30 years, and its largest operation since World War II. The Ukraine war bureau counts 28 telephone operators and dozens of other staff, spread across three offices in Ukraine, Russia and the Swiss centre.

INVISIBLE SCARS

During a recent tour of the centre, ICRC Director-General Robert Mardini said its work was hard, but vital. “This is very often one of the less visible scars of war. But it’s so important for families to know about the fate of their sons and husbands in the midst of violent armed conflict,” he said.

Nearby, in the buzzing Ukrainian-language call centre, Novyk recalls wives bursting into tears when told their husbands had filled out a registration card proving they were alive and being held as a prisoner of



The offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross Central tracing agency focuses exclusively on searching for those captured or missing of the war in Ukraine.

war.

Her blue eyes well up with tears as she describes how, despite no space on the card to write anything other than identification details, the men often squeezed in a personal message to say “he loves you and he is alive”.

Anastasia Kushleyka, who heads the Russian-language case workers seeking to track those reported missing, also describes the strange, privileged feeling of passing on personal messages from families to PoWs.

“People are announcing the births of their children,” she said. “It is extremely, extremely emotional, (and) gives us value everyday.”

900 ENQUIRIES A DAY

Some of those messages also expose the complex nature of this war, she said, pointing to a Russian PoW being held in Ukraine.

In his message to his mother he asked: “Can you please send me the phone number of grandma who is in Kyiv, so on the way back I can stop by?”

This note, Kushleyka said, contains “all you need to know on the personal level about this conflict”.

Often though, there is no information to share. The bureau

manages around 900 enquiries a day and since March it has been able to provide more than 3,000 families with information about the fate of their loved ones.

But it has also received nearly 29,000 calls and emails seeking information, Mardini said, acknowledging that “much more needs to be done”.

Marta Pawlak, head of the CTA front office, stressed that taking down details and trawling through data “is the visible part of what we do”.

“The invisible part of this work is basically to listen,” she told AFP, pointing out that often, callers “are in despair, they’re in distress... They are crying”.

PRICELESS

And staff never know what awaits them when they pick up the phone or open an email. “It is very heavy. Sometimes you have calls of despair, you have calls of gratitude, but you also have angry calls,” she said, stressing that all those working at the centre have access to psychological support and counselling. Inna Iashchenko, who is part of the team that processes the first emails and forms requesting tracing, agrees it can be rough. — AFP

Students receiving passport to future



Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami aljahdhami22@gmail.com

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

The summer holidays have just bid farewell, welcoming the new school year for all, students, teachers and parents alike! The school time is back again after two different seasons of back to school with Covid-19. The past online seasons were different, but insightful experience for students, teachers and parents all to experience e-learning and digital world. Hence, students, particularly, need to be revived and energised to get back to the traditional physical attendance to school.

Perhaps, the back-to-normal situation this year could bring different feelings of stress, worry and excitement to students. Excitement is there as students try on their new attires and backpacks. Anxiety could also be there for starting the new routine and leaving home where the spent the whole summer holiday and two school seasons during the pandemic. There are always so many emotions when it comes to back-to-school season.

Possibly, not only students who could feel so, but parents too, who are trying to make sure their children got every school supply on their list. On the other hand, teachers are preparing for the year ahead and trying to motivate students of all grades.

Generally, the back to school season is a common observation for all families and society. It marks a significant occasion for all in the annual calendar.

GOING TO SCHOOL IS JUST ANOTHER CHALLENGE THAT STUDENTS EXPERIENCE IN THEIR LIFETIME, BUT EVENTUALLY IT WILL BRING THE LOVE OF LEARNING. LIKEWISE, IT REPRESENTS A REWARDING EXPERIENCE THAT STARTS FROM THE EARLY DAYS OF CHILDHOOD UNTIL THEY GET TO HIGH SCHOOL OR UNIVERSITY

In fact, it is an ongoing learning journey for students and reflects a turning point every year as they move from one grade to another.

Instead it brings a sense of promising hope for parents to see their children growing up and moving up the ladder of acquiring good education. For teachers it embodies the future heroes of a nation and paving way to success. As a matter of fact, parents and teachers are sparing no effort to bring up children and giving them whatever is needed to get the best education. Actually, acquiring good education means receiving

the passport to future! Thus, education is a right, not a privilege for students.

As students are heading back to school again after all these years of online learning and long summer break, it is not easy to establish a routine after those days. Although learning is tough and the daily school routine is boring sometimes, there is nothing like receiving good education and having fun at school. For children it builds a foundation which lasts for the rest of their life, as Aristotle stated, “The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet”.

Going to school is just another challenge that students experience in their lifetime, but eventually it will bring the love of learning. Likewise, it represents a rewarding experience that starts from the early days of childhood until they get to high school or university. However, such an experience could bring stressful feelings for students, especially at the early days. Therefore, one might need just a little more motivation to get students interested to start their new routine.

Children sometimes pick up on parents’ emotions and concerns like a sponge. If a parent, for instance, expresses fear and stress due to children going back to school, such feeling might be passed to the child. Accordingly, if a child seems stressed, parents should empathise him first, trying to fix his worries. Parents should urge their children to regularly express their feelings, concerns and worries.

Parents need to normalise the idea of going back to school to their children by telling stories of their time at school. This could ease the stress of children and making the new challenges familiar will go a long way to reduce their anxiety. The value of education should be emphasised to children, so they could realise the importance of going to school. As Bernard Show, an Irish playwright, said, “What we want is to see the child in pursuit of knowledge and not knowledge in pursuit of the child”. Welcome back to school dear students, teachers and parents!



CIRCLING PARIS

Nearly 1,000 rowers, in some 230 boats, participate in the 37th edition of ‘La Traversee de Paris en Aviron’ as they scull along the River Seine, which flows through the centre of Paris, France, on Sunday. – AFP

New York polio case stirs fear, vaccine push

PETER HUTCHISON AND CELINE GESRET

When Brittany Strickland heard that the United States recorded its first polio case in almost a decade, she was “deathly scared” — the 33-year-old wasn’t vaccinated against the disabling disease.

“My mom was an anti-vaxxer, so I found out that I had never had any polio vaccines as a child,” the designer explained, after finally receiving a shot this week.

Strickland was inoculated in Pomona, in New York’s Rockland County where the first US polio case since 2013 was identified in July. Since then, the disease has been detected in wastewater samples in the area, as well as in a neighbouring county and in New York City sewage, suggesting the virus is spreading.

The developments are leading experts to fear that polio, once one of the most feared diseases in America but now endemic to just a couple of developing countries, may wreak devastation stateside again.

“I had considered it a virus that was on its way to extinction,” John Dennehy, a virologist at the City University of New York, said.

Health officials are urging anyone not immunised to get vaccinated, with Rockland County offering free shots.

The area, 48 km north of Manhattan, has a polio vaccination rate well below the national average.

Only 60 per cent of two-year-olds have received a vaccine, compared to 79 per cent statewide, New York’s health department says. Nationally, the figure is 92 per cent, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that recommends

POLIO IS A CRIPPLING AND POTENTIALLY FATAL VIRAL DISEASE THAT MAINLY AFFECTS CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE, BUT CAN BE DEVASTATING TO UNVACCINATED ADULTS. PERIODIC OUTBREAKS KILLED THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN AND LEFT THOUSANDS MORE IN WHEELCHAIRS AND LEG BRACES BEFORE A VACCINE WAS DEVELOPED IN THE LATE 1950S

people receive the first of four doses at two months old. Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal viral disease that mainly affects children under the age of five, but can be devastating to unvaccinated adults. Periodic outbreaks killed thousands of children and left thousands more in wheelchairs and leg braces before a vaccine was developed in the late 1950s.

A massive global effort in recent decades has come close to wiping out the disease, with wild poliovirus now only existing in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The last naturally occurring US cases of polio were reported in 1979.

“It’s horrifying,” said Strickland. “You don’t think it’s gonna happen here, and then a bunch of people don’t get vaccinated and now we’re in this situation.”

Polio is extremely contagious and can spread from person to person through stools, sneezes, coughs and contaminated water before infected people even show

symptoms.

Analysis of the Rockland case led officials to believe that the original source of the infection was someone who had received the oral polio vaccine, which was discontinued in the United States in 2000.

OPV replicates in the gut and can be passed to others through fecal-contaminated water. While weaker than wild poliovirus, the variant can cause serious illness and paralysis in the unvaccinated.

The case identified in July was in a young man who was not inoculated and the disease was causing him paralysis, officials said. They said he had not traveled abroad, suggesting the disease had transmitted locally.

Shoshana Bernstein, an independent health communicator who is educating members on the importance of getting immunised, says “any community that’s more insular” is susceptible to anti-vax messaging.

“The silver lining with polio is that we do have elders in the community who can talk from first-hand experience. In a community that very much values the family system and its elders, that does make an impact,” she said.

While it is too early to say whether the solitary case is part of a limited or more widespread outbreak, Dennehy fears it could just be “the tip of the iceberg.”

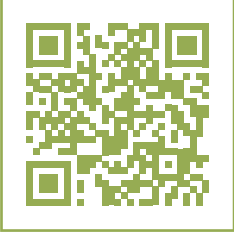
“Only a proportion of the people who are infected will ever show any symptoms, and only a fraction of those people will ever get paralytic polio,” he said. “But if enough people are getting infected, eventually we start seeing more and more paralytic polio.” — AFP



The last naturally occurring US cases of polio were reported in 1979.

sport

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Perfect Nadal, battling Swiatek into US Open fourth round

NEW YORK: Rafael Nadal defeated close friend Richard Gasquet for the 18th time to reach the US Open fourth round on Saturday as world number one Iga Swiatek made the last 16 for a second successive year.

Four-time champion Nadal took his record over Gasquet to a perfect 18-0 with a 6-0, 6-1, 7-5 victory to stay on course for a 23rd Grand Slam title.

Nadal has now won 34 straight sets against Frenchman Gasquet who he first played as a junior.

On Saturday, he was barely troubled, winning the first nine games of the contest before Gasquet got on the board.

Next up for the Australian and French Open champion is 22nd seed Frances Tiafoe for a place in the quarterfinals.

“He’s a great player, very charismatic, very fast,” said Nadal

of the American. Tiafoe made the last 16 for a third successive year by seeing off Argentina’s Diego Schwartzman 7-6 (9/7), 6-4, 6-4.

The 36-year-old Nadal showed no ill effects of the bloodied nose he suffered when he accidentally bounced his racquet into his face in the second round.

“It’s a little bit bigger than usual but it’s okay,” he joked.

ALCARAZ BREAKS SHOE

Carlos Alcaraz, widely-regarded as Nadal’s Grand Slam heir apparent, claimed a season-leading 47th win despite breaking one of his shoes.

The 19-year-old third seed defeated Jenson Brooksby of the United States 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 on the back of 46 winners.

Alcaraz, a quarterfinalist in 2021, managed to break one of his tennis shoes as he slid to reach a ball mid-match.

“It’s the third time that I have done this. As you can see, I do a lot of sliding,” he said.

Alcaraz next faces 2014 champion Marin Cilic who fired 26 aces and 74 winners in total past Britain’s Dan Evans in a 7-6 (13/11), 6-7 (3/7), 6-2, 7-5 win.

British seventh seed Cameron Norrie made the fourth round for the first time with a comfortable 7-5, 6-4, 6-1 win over Danish teenager Holger Rune.

He next faces Russian ninth seed Andrey Rublev who needed five match points to see off Canada’s Denis Shapovalov 6-4, 2-6, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 7-6 (10/7).

World number one Swiatek downed unseeded Lauren Davis 6-3, 6-4.

Swiatek came back from 1-4 down in the second set to reel off five successive games against the American who called a medical

time out in the first set to have her blood pressure taken.

The 21-year-old Pole will face Wimbledon quarterfinalist Jule Niemeier of Germany for a place in the last eight.

Swiatek has now won three matches in a row for the first time since capturing her second French Open in June.

“It’s not like I lost confidence or something. I still know anything can happen on these tournaments,” she said.

Petra Kvitova defeated ninth-seeded Garbine Muguruza after saving two match points.

Kvitova came through 5-7, 6-3, 7-6 (12/10) and will take on Jessica Pegula of the United States for a quarterfinal place.

Two-time Wimbledon champion Kvitova said she had drawn inspiration from Serena Williams when the American



Poland’s Iga Swiatek

legend saved five match points before eventually being eliminated on Friday.

“I watched Serena and it was amazing how she was saving match points, so I tried to do the same today,” said Kvitova.

Muguruza’s defeat, her sixth in seven meetings against the Czech, left only four of the top 10 women’s seeds in the tournament.

Sixth seed Aryna Sabalenka, who made the semifinals in 2021, brushed aside French qualifier Clara Burel, 6-0, 6-2 in just 68 minutes. She will face Danielle Collins. Pegula, the eighth seed, ended the run of Chinese qualifier Yuan Yue, 6-2, 6-7 (6/8), 6-0.

Victoria Azarenka eased past Petra Martic 6-3, 6-0 to set up a last-16 clash with 2016 finalist Karolina Pliskova who downed Olympic champion Belinda Bencic 5-7, 6-4, 6-3.— **AFP**



Heads of clubs appreciate Bank Muscat role in sports development

MUSCAT: A number of sports club leaders from teams across the Sultanate of Oman have appreciated and praised Bank Muscat for its very important role in supporting the youth and local communities in the country.

In particular, they hailed the bank's pioneering role in enhancing sports, social and community bonding and youth empowerment in Oman. The leaders were reacting to the recent announcement of 20 winners for the 2022 edition of Green Sports whereby Bank Muscat continues to develop new green sports fields.

The scope of Green Sports support for sports teams include greening of football fields with natural or synthetic turf as well as installation of floodlights and water desalination equipment in areas facing problems of water salinity. Bank Muscat's long-running CSR programme continues to benefit many sports teams across Oman even as the annual programme brings together different generations on the popular platform of sports. This year's results were announced at the end of a thorough evaluation process, which saw large numbers of teams submitting their applications.

With the announcement of the 2022 winners, the total number of Green Sports beneficiaries has now reached 163 sports teams covering more than 50,000 team members since its inception in 2012.

Pioneering initiative

Speaking after the bank announced the winners for 2022, Sulaiman bin Abdullah



Khalifa bin Hamad al Hassani, Athaiba Team, Bausher



Yousuf Al Maskari, Al Yahmadi team, Ibra



Sulieman bin Abdullah al Karousi, Etihad team, Bahla

al Kharousi, head of the main committee supervising the Green Sports project of the Al Ittihad Sports Team from the Wilayat of Bahla, expressed his heartfelt joy and happiness after his team had emerged a winner in this year's programme.

He expressed great appreciation and sincere gratitude to the Board of Directors of Bank Muscat and its employees for this excellent CSR initiative, which has a positive impact on tens of thousands of youth and families across Oman. He added that the bank's efforts in this direction were a clear indicator of the interest and commitment by the bank's management to support various social and sporting activities in the Sultanate of Oman.

Sulaiman al Kharousi added that the Al Ittihad team would be implementing a lighting system thanks to the support from the bank. He added that Bank Muscat is also well known for its pioneering CSR initiatives and programmes. He wished the bank all success and also thanked all the personnel involved in the project that is making a world of

difference to Omani youth.

Developing talent

On his part, Khalifa bin Hamad al Hassani, deputy head of the Athaiba Cultural and Sports Team from the Wilayat of Bausher, said: "We are thrilled to be selected as a winner in Bank Muscat's Green Sports Programme for 2022. Our team will implement a new lighting system on the field thanks to this support. On behalf of the entire management and members of the Athaiba Cultural and Sports Team, I would like to sincerely thank Bank Muscat on this great occasion. There is no doubt that the bank is leading the way in supporting youth teams and promoting sports in the country. We wish the bank great success in all its projects and all the very best for the future."

Khalifa al Hassani described Green Sports as one of the most important programmes which is empowering Omani youth as well as strengthening sports infrastructure across Oman. Thanks to the new lighting system which will be provided by the bank, the Athaiba Cultural and Sports Team expects to significantly boost

the team's performance in the coming years and also organise many more events and activities during evenings.

Vital support

Yousef bin Saeed al Maskari, head of the Al Yahmadi Sports and Cultural Team from the Wilayat of Ibra, expressed the happiness of the management and members of the team for being chosen as a winner by the Green Sports 2022 programme. He thanked Bank Muscat on behalf of the entire team for the support which will help implement an artificial grass project for the team's sports field. He noted that the achievement constitutes an important pillar of support to the team and to the residents of Al Yahmadi village as well as other neighbouring villages. He stressed that the project would serve the community as a whole, thus achieving Bank Muscat's goal to support different communities across the Sultanate of Oman and develop the infrastructure of Omani sports to world-class standards.

The new development will contribute in the long run to further developing the capabilities and talents of Omani footballers in both local and international competitions as more and more talent emerges through many such projects at the grassroots level.

Yousef al Maskari also expressed his thanks to the people of Al Yahmadi village and the team's members for working together to win the bank's support for their sports project.

Norwich back on top of English Championship

LONDON: Norwich went to the top of English football's second-tier Championship with a 3-0 win at home to Coventry on Saturday.

The Canaries, relegated from the Premier League last season, were bottom of the table after three games.

But they have now posted five successive Championship wins after goals from Teemu Pukki, Josh Sargent and Kieran Dowell saw off Coventry at Carrow Road.

Norwich will lose top spot if Sheffield United win at Hull on Sunday, but delighted Canaries manager Dean Smith said: "It's never easy to win five games on the trot in any league, let alone this one, so obviously I am very pleased with the result."

"It keeps the momentum going, which is important, ahead of another tough game at Burnley next week."

"I was delighted with the performance, especially in the first half when some of our movement was excellent and we scored two well-worked goals."

Nahki Wells scored twice as Bristol City recorded back-to-back wins by climbing to third in the table with a 3-2 win over Blackburn Rovers.

Tommy Conway scored for the Robins just before half-time and Wells doubled the lead just after the break.

Tyrhys Dolan pulled one



back for Rovers but Wells quickly restored City's two-goal lead minutes later.

Blackburn's Ben Brereton Diaz scored in stoppage time but the Robins held out to secure all three points.

Watford dropped to fifth following a 1-1 draw with Rotherham, falling behind to Richard Wood just two minutes into the game before Vakoun Bayo equalised for the Hornets.

Millwall ended a run of three straight defeats with a 2-0 win against Cardiff, thanks to second-half goals from Charlie Cresswell and Benik Afobe.

Thelo Aasgaard struck late for Wigan to come from behind and beat Luton 2-1 at Kenilworth Road.

Carlton Morris headed Luton into the lead just before the break but Wigan equalised 10 minutes from time through Callum Lang.

But Aasgaard curled a superb shot in from 20 yards with two minutes to secure victory for the visitors. — AFP

'NESMA' ROMPS TO SECOND CROWN IN WARSAW



'Nesma' from Oman's Al Hashar Stables achieved a second straight title at the Polish tracks in Warsaw during her fifth participation in the international horse race. 'Nesma', owned by Shaikh Nasser bin Mohammed al Hashar, won first place for the second time in a row in the race dedicated to purebred Arabian horses, three years old, for 2,000 metres, led by jockey Camille Grzybowski and supervised by coach Connie Friesel with a time of 02:24:07. During her five participations, Nesma was ranked first twice, came in second place twice and finished once in third place.

Majees signs partnership agreement with Oman Cricket

MUSCAT: With an aim to provide a strong foundation, Oman Cricket has roped in an energetic partner in Majees Technical Services (MTS) for its youth (under-19) team.

Oman is all set to host the prestigious ICC U19 Men's Cricket World Cup (CWC) Division 2- Asia from September 29-October 7 and the partnership agreement between OC and MTS comes as a perfect boost for the national team.

Speaking at the signing ceremony held at the OC headquarters on Thursday, Ishrath Habibulla, MTS managing director, said, "It is a matter of great pride to join the Oman Cricket family. We are a young company and have been in service for the past 15 years. So our focus and aim is to associate ourselves with a similar age-group bracket. The U19 cricket development perfectly



matches our ambitions and we are happy to join the journey with Oman Cricket."

Habibulla, who himself has been an active cricketer in domestic league during his young days, said 'the remarkable growth of Oman Cricket has made all cricket fans proud'.

"We have also fielded a team in the Oman Cricket Premier Division

last season and had a decent outing. Our love for the game is now further strengthened by our association with U19 cricket," he said.

The MTS top official said that 'the journey with Oman Cricket' and supporting the youth [U19] is the way forward for his company.

Oman Cricket Chairman Pankaj Khimji termed the partnership 'a positive development for the youth



cricket'.

After signing the agreement in the presence of the OC board treasurer Alkesh Joshi, OC board member Kiran Asher and OC chief development officer Duleep Mendis, Khimji said, "U19 cricket is a very important stage in the development of the game and for the future of our national team. We have witnessed the talent of our

U19 players who have grown into our national team stars. The likes of Jatinder Singh, Aqib Ilyas, Sufiyan Mahmood and Wasim Ali have proved their credentials.

"The support we will get for the U19 team from Majees will help us nurture more players in the future. We thank them for their partnership as our boys prepare for the ICC U19 Men's CWC-Division

2 tournament in Oman later this month."

Khimji said, "Oman cricket's rise at the global stage is evident and in cricket parlance, we are now a recognised commodity. This has been a result of the success in hosting the ICC Men's T20 World Cup last year and the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier earlier this year. Our national team's

success at international level has got the corporates to notice the value of supporting the game. We hope to give our partners the value in investing with us."

On this occasion, Mendis said, "The U19 squad acts as a feeder for the national team. To get a partner for the young team is an encouraging development that will go a long way in giving a boost to the youth cricket structure in the country."

Muscat Football Academy launches training programme

WALEED AL JAHWARI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

The Muscat Football Academy unveiled the details of its technical training programme and international tournaments for the next phase at the Cheltenham College School in Muscat.

The Cheltenham College will be the headquarters of the academy to establish the training programme by taking advantage of the various facilities, services, stadiums and sports facilities available at the school.

The induction day, which was held on Saturday at Cheltenham College School, witnessed a large presence of parents and students

wishing to benefit from the academy programme. Under 9 years, under 11 years, under 13 years, under 15 years, under 17 years, under 19 years, and the performance development programme for the rest of the players for the same age groups will be organised. In addition, Saturday of each week is dedicated to friendly matches and training tournaments.

The training schedule includes multiple times for experimentation for different target groups, which includes the morning and evening periods. Performance, enhancing their sporting skills and values, enhancing competitiveness and transferring knowledge and experience among them will be

key objectives. The academy will officially start activating its training programme from Wednesday for a full academic year. Registration will be available for all age groups to enroll and benefit from the various training programmes and activities offered by the academy. The academy succeeded in producing a group of distinguished players, including Tariq al Saadi, Suhaib al Kharousi and Muhammad al Noamani.

The Muscat Football Academy is working on training and refining sports talents according to the latest training and educational methods and advanced training curricula prepared by the best training experts.



Oman bodybuilders excel at Asian meet in Kyrgyzstan

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

Oman's bodybuilders Mazin al Obaidani, Ghanim al Mamari, Sulieman al Riyami and Muneer al Luaihi claimed gold medals as Oman impressed with a total of five gold and two silver medals from the IFBB Asian Championships 2022 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. More than 800 participants from 22 countries took part in the Asian event which ran for four days during September 2 to 5.

Mazin al Obaidani bagged the gold in the men's master bodybuilding (beginners) and he also won silver medal in the men's beginners bodybuilding (75 kg) category on the opening day.

Ghanim al Mamari won two gold to secure the top place in the men's physique (170 cm) category and obtained the professional card after tough competitions against Russian bodybuilders. In the men's physique (173 cm) category, Sulieman al Riyami won gold and was crowned as the champion of all the heights category.

Muneer al Luaihi captured gold in the muscular men's physique



(175 cm) category while Badar al Hosni came in fourth place in the same category. Zaeem al Fazari picked up a silver medal in the men's classic bodybuilding category.

Said al Bahri, board member of the Oman Bodybuilding Committee and head of Oman's delegation, thanked and congratulated all the national bodybuilders for the impressive show during the IFBB Asian Championships 2022 in Bishkek. "This achievement will add to the national sporting accomplishments in bodybuilding. This triumph came after fruitful efforts during the previous period. Special thanks to the coaching staff and the national bodybuilders for their hard work to realise this accomplishment," he concluded.

Pakistan opt to bowl against India in Asia Cup Super Four clash

DUBAI: Pakistan skipper Babar Azam won the toss and elected to field first against India in a key Super Four Twenty20 international of the Asia Cup on Sunday.

The two Asian giants meet for the second time in the six-nation tournament after India edged Pakistan in the group stage last week. Pakistan have made one change from their 155-run hammering of Hong Kong in the group stage with pace bowler Mohammad Hasnain coming in for the injured Shahnawaz Dahani, who was ruled out due to a suspected side strain.

"We will bowl first. The dew could be a factor, that's the reason we're bowling first," Azam said at the toss.

"We had a lot of positives from the last match against India. The message is to play positively."

India, who made the Super Four stage with two wins over Pakistan and Hong Kong, have made three changes to their team with Hardik Pandya, who was rested in the previous match, returning to the XI.

Leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi and all-rounder Deepak Hooda make the team in place of Ravindra Jadeja, who was forced out of the



Pakistan's captain Babar Azam (L) walks past India's captain Rohit Sharma during the toss before the start of the Asia Cup Twenty20 international cricket Super Four match between India and Pakistan. — AFP

tournament with an injured knee, and Avesh Khan, who is recovering from illness.

Skipper Rohit Sharma said they would have bowled first as well had he won the toss but believes playing freely in the much-hyped match would be key.

"We would have bowled first,

but now we need to play freely and amass a good score on this pitch," said Rohit.

"Momentum counts in this format, you've to be on the money from the start, not worry about external pressures"

Rohit said Jadeja has returned home and it was a "headache"

selecting the team for their opening match in the Super Four.

The bitter rivals play each other only in multi-nation tournaments due to political tensions.

The top two teams at the end of the Super Four stage will play the final at the same venue on September 11.

The tournament is a prelude to the T20 World Cup in October-November in Australia.

TEAMS

India: KL Rahul, Rohit Sharma (capt), Virat Kohli, Suryakumar Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Deepak Hooda, Hardik Pandya, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Ravi Bishnoi, Yuzvendra Chahal, Arshdeep Singh

Pakistan: Babar Azam (capt), Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Fakhar Zaman, Iftikhar Ahmed, Khushdil Shah, Asif Ali, Shadab Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Haris Rauf, Mohammad Hasnain

Umpires: Masudur Rahman (BAN), Raveendra Wimalasiri (SRI)

TV Umpire: Ruchira Palliyaguruge (SRI)

Match Referee: Andy Pycroft (BAN) — AFP

Seeb chase win against Kuwait's Arabi SC in AFC Cup

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

Seeb will chase a win against Kuwait's Al Arabi SC in the AFC Cup 2022 West Zone semifinal which will take place on Monday at the Kuwait Sports Club Stadium venue. The match will start at 9 pm (Oman time). The Oman representatives will eye a triumph in their debut to get in contention for claiming their first-ever AFC Cup honours.

The Seeb players arrived in Kuwait city earlier on Saturday and had few final training sessions ahead of the awaiting clash. Both teams did not win the AFC title before making the semifinal an exciting clash on Monday night. The winners of this match in Kuwait will play the winners of Tuesday's derby in Bahrain where neighbours Riffa and East Riffa will meet for the second ticket for the AFC Cup 2022 West Zone final.

Seeb, who claimed Oman's



Super Cup recently, are all set for the tight encounter. Seeb had delivered top show in the group stage as they sealed a spot from the group which featured three-time champions Kuwait SC, Lebanon's Al Ansar and Syria's Jableh SC, who were beaten by the Omanis 1-0 on the opening day.

At the domestic level, Seeb had managed to earn their second consecutive Omani top-tier league title and then they doubled with the HM Football Cup Championship before completing the set by edging Al Nahda 2-0 in the Super Cup in



the previous month in Salalah.

It will be one of the official abroad assignments for the new head coach of Seeb, Romanian Ilie Stan, who replaced Serbian Boris Bunjak. The new coach is fully aware of today's game's importance. He will definitely work hard towards implementing different instructions and techniques to

ensure a positive display for Seeb and securing good result to proceed in the Asian competition.

The best presence of Oman's teams at the AFC Cup was back in 2011. Fanja club reached the Round of 16 as they were defeated 4-0 by runners-up Qadsia SC of Kuwait.

Seeb head coach Ilie Stan said during the pre-match press

conference that he observed different matches of Kuwait's Al Arabi club. "Our target is to accomplish a winning result in this fixture. Topping the domestic league does not put us under pressure. I am confident in my players ability to spread joy among Seeb's fans. There are no injuries in the team and the team is fully

ready for the game," he ended.

Seeb capitan Eid al Farsi told the AFC website that bringing the AFC Cup to home is their focus. "Despite Oman's local teams being defeated by Kuwaiti teams in 2011, we are ready to show our best performance in today's game. The AFC Cup competition is classified as a vital assignment for every player in Oman," Al Farsi added.

"The opponents Al Arabi will not be an easy team but we are confident to focus on strengths and play in our own style. We will go into each game as if it were a final until winning the AFC Cup. The objective is to create history for the club," he said.

It is expected that the Romanian coach will depend on the similar faces who took part in the last games at the domestic league including the key players Mohsin al Ghassani, Abdulaziz al Maqbali, Eid al Farsi, Salah al Yahyaei, Juma al Habsi and Mohammed al Musallami among others.



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Oman commences ammonia exports from Salalah Port

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, SEPT 4

OQ, the global integrated energy group of the Sultanate of Oman, celebrated on Sunday the maiden shipment of a cargo of ammonia produced by its newly operational plant located in Salalah Free Zone in Dhofar Governorate.

The ammonia project, set up with an investment of \$463 million, is integrated with an existing 1 million tonnes per year (TPY) capacity methanol plant, hydrogen-rich purge gas from which serves as feedstock for the production of ammonia.

The new ammonia project has a capacity to produce 1,000 metric tonnes per day (MTPD) of anhydrous liquid ammonia. OQ officials hailed the successful launch of the ammonia plant, as well as the export of the maiden cargo, as further evidence of the Group's efforts to optimise value creation from the country's hydrocarbon resources.



In a statement to ONA, Hilal bin Ali al Kharousi, CEO of the Commercial and Downstream Unit at OQ said, "The ammonia project comes within OQ's efforts to enhance the added value of natural resources and support the Omani government's economic diversification plans. The plant will export its products to targeted global markets, especially in Asia, further contributing to the enhancement of the Omani exports."

"The start of production operations in the plant is a key milestone that enhances the

THE AMMONIA PROJECT, SET UP WITH AN INVESTMENT OF \$463 MILLION, IS INTEGRATED WITH AN EXISTING 1 MILLION TONNES PER YEAR (TPY) CAPACITY METHANOL PLANT, HYDROGEN-RICH PURGE GAS FROM WHICH SERVES AS FEEDSTOCK FOR THE PRODUCTION OF AMMONIA.

contribution of OQ Group. The demand for ammonia products in the global markets is witnessing constant growth leading to higher returns. This situation renders the project highly feasible," he added.

Covering an area of around 12 hectares in the free zone adjoining Salalah Port, the ammonia plant includes facilities for the

production, storage and export and export of ammonia. The plant enhances the sustainability, profitability and diversification of OQ's product portfolio. The project expected to pave the way for future opportunities to develop the processing industries.

Ammonia is widely used as a fertiliser. Ammonium nitrate



and other ammonium salts are excellent fertilisers and help increase crop yield because they have a high nitrogen content.

Besides, ammonia can be oxidised to produce nitric acid, which is used in many important industries. Ammonia is also an essential ingredient in the manufacture of many chemicals, plastics, vitamins and drugs.

For example, ammonia plays the role of a catalyst in the manufacture of plastic materials such as synthetic resin and melamine resin.

OQ's energy transition strategy also envisions the use of ammonia as an alternative to planet-warming hydrocarbons.

In May this year, OQ signed a joint development agreement (JDA) along with American industrial gases firm Air Products and Saudi-based energy company ACWA Power to set up a world-class green hydrogen-based ammonia production facility in Salalah Free Zone. The proposed multibillion-dollar ammonia project will be powered by renewable energy in the Sultanate of Oman.

EU gas markets brace for price surge after latest Russia gas cut



A man is seen inside landfill facilities of the Nord Stream 1 gas pipeline in Lubmin, Germany. – Reuters

LONDON: European gas buyers already grappling with record-high prices face further pain when the markets open on Monday after Russia said one of its main supply pipelines to Europe would remain shut indefinitely, sparking fears over energy rationing.

Lower gas flows from Russia ahead of and following its February invasion of Ukraine have already pushed up European prices by nearly 400 per cent over the past year, sending electricity costs soaring.

Europe has accused Russia

of weaponising energy supplies in what Moscow has called an "economic war" with the West over the fallout from the Ukraine conflict, while Moscow blames Western sanctions and technical issues for supply disruptions.

The Nord Stream pipeline, which runs under the Baltic Sea to Germany, historically supplied around a third of the gas exported from Russia to Europe, but was already running at just 20 per cent of capacity before flows were halted last week for maintenance.

MORE IN PAGE 14

Move to restrict exports of Used Motor Oil to support local recyclers

CONRAD PRABHU
MUSCAT SEPT 4

Buoyed by the growth of a nascent entrepreneurial industry around Used Cooking Oil (UCO) collection and recycling, be'ah – the state-owned entity overseeing the management of the solid waste sector – says it is now focused on replicating some of this success in the recycling of Used Motor Oil (UMO) as well.

For want of local recyclers, almost all of Used Motor Oil and waste lubricants – collected from numerous automotive garages, equipment workshops, industrial yards and other depots distributed around the Sultanate of Oman – are exported out of the country. This outflow of commercially valuable and recyclable waste deprives the country of value-add processing avenues with associated job creation opportunities as well, according to be'ah.

As part of its UMO collection and treatment plans, be'ah says it aims to support the establishment of a collection infrastructure to "prevent illegal dumping, minimise export and optimise the local UMO recycling



industry" within the country.

"be'ah is working with regulators and ROP Customs to control UMO exports and retain its value locally. They do this by diverting the collected quantities to support local UMO recycling plants and to develop a database of locally equipped collectors to collect UMO from various

generation sources and transfer the quantities to recycling facilities," be'ah – part of Oman Investment Authority (OIA) - stated.

The overall objective of the initiative, be'ah noted, is to elevate the "production value of UMO with local offtakers whose processes are environmentally

sustainable".

Oman's municipal and environmental authorities prohibit the disposal of UMO and waste lubricants in drains, open areas or other unauthorized sites.

Any quantities must be collected in drums and stored for safe disposal. There is anecdotal evidence that sizable quantities of UMO and other waste lubricants are generated annually from around the country.

Used oils typically include engine lubrication oil, hydraulic fluids, and gear oils used in cars, bikes, trucks, heavy machinery and industrial equipment. In line with its circular economy ambitions, be'ah says it enabled two local Omani companies to set up recycling operations around Used Cooking Oil (UCO) to produce biofuel.

"In 2021, both Wakud International and Oman Blending Services were granted support letters from be'ah post pre-qualification assessment, and were provided with the relevant project permits from other stakeholders to commence UCO treatment operations," it added in this regard.

BankDhofar meets Al Riadah Priority banking customers

MUSCAT: In line with its constant endeavour to promote positive communication and retain a sustainable relationship with its customers, BankDhofar organised Al Riadah Meet events, where the Bank met Priority Banking customers across the Sultanate of Oman. The gatherings were held in the presence of BankDhofar's executive management members.

Amjad Iqbal al Lawati (pictured), Chief Retail Banking Officer at BankDhofar, noted: "At BankDhofar, our customers' satisfaction lays at the core of our operations. Our products, services and financial solutions are well designed to meet their daily need and exceed their expectations, and we believe that getting real-time feedback helps us enhance the overall customer experience."

Thus, we organised Al Riadah Meet to support our approach. We were glad to meet our priority banking customers and get their valuable feedback."

"We understand the importance of listening to our customers, connect with them and accept their feedback. Al Riadah Meet translates our customer centric approach, and through which we were able to closely understand the needs of our priority banking customers and their expectations. Their feedback was valuable and our team will continue providing



the best services and banking experience to them," Hind Abdul Malik al Sabbag, AGM & Head of Premier Banking at BankDhofar added.

Al Riadah Meet was conducted across the Sultanate of Oman, including Al Dhahirah and Al Dakhiliyah governorates, Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta governorates, Al Batinah South Governorate, and Dhofar Governorate. During the events, BankDhofar presented a brief of the services and products provided to the priority banking customers, and then listened to their detailed inputs of their experience with the bank.

Al Riadah Priority Banking provides a unique range of banking products and services that are tailored to suit the unique lifestyle of priority customers, ranging from personalised cheque book, exclusive Al Riadah card, including; Visa Infinite Debit Card, Visa Signature Debit Card, Visa Infinite Credit Card, and MasterCard Platinum Credit Card.

Alizz Islamic Bank offers car financing at 4.75%



MUSCAT: Alizz Islamic Bank is now offering an enhanced experience for its customers looking to finance their new car at any approved car dealership in the Sultanate of Oman.

Auto Finance starts at a profit rate of just 4.75% with the possibility of completing the process in 10 minutes in some dealerships that have the IFIN Instant Financing service in place, which is becoming more popular due to its ease and flexibility and its compliance with Sharia principles.

Customers that are interested in getting instant finance for their new cars in just 10 minutes can do so at the local car dealerships.

The car dealership, uses a flexible fintech solution that will fetch all the customer's details, verify their eligibility for finance, and then initiate the process immediately.

Alizz Islamic Bank Auto Finance is based on the Sharia principle of Murabaha. Auto Murabaha is available for both Omanis and residents and the financing is up to 80% of the car value with competitive profit rates and a repayment period of up to 84 months.

Experience distinctive luxury in the Lincoln Aviator Presidential

MUSCAT: The Lincoln Aviator Presidential is designed to offer exceptionally elevated experiences for customers. From its range of features to its thoughtful detailing, the Aviator Presidential is an experience that you can make the most of on every journey.

In Oman, the Lincoln Aviator Presidential is available as a Destination Theme. The Destination theme is so thoughtfully curated, you'll feel as though you've arrived no matter where your journey takes you. Details such as French seams, laser-etched diamond perforations and rich textures make the travel just as elegant as the arrival.

Beautiful mahogany red Venetian leather outfits the interior while Diamond-Wave perforations add a further point of distinction.

Center console and doors refined with warm Khaya mahogany appliques gives it a thoughtful touch. The Lincoln Aviator is equipped with a standard twin-turbocharged 3.0-litre V6 engine that is paired with a 10-speed SelectShift automatic transmission.

The Aviator delivers an impressive 400 horsepower and 562 Nm of torque for effortless acceleration. The three-row luxury SUV is equipped with all-wheel drive capability. Making every drive fascinating is the Lincoln Drive Modes' five signature settings — Normal, Conserve, Excite, Slippery and Deep Conditions.



This feature allows owners to further customise their driving experience, while a 10.1-inch standard configurable LCD instrument cluster confirms their choices with beautiful, easy-to-read dynamic graphics and prompts.

Putting on a show right from the start, the Air Glide Suspension with Dynamic Lower Entry automatically lowers the vehicle to "greet" the driver, adding a new level of sophistication to Lincoln's signature welcome lighting embrace. The convenience of this feature makes loading cargo easier as well.

For better driving experiences, the Aviator is also equipped with a technology that enables Aviator to "see" most potholes or uneven pavement and immediately make suspension adjustments to keep

the ride as smooth as possible. Adaptive Suspension with Road Preview uses an advanced forward camera to constantly scan the road, seamlessly adjusting the suspension as needed. All Lincoln vehicles come standard with a suite of driver-assist features known as Lincoln Co-Pilot360.

Traffic Jam Assist helps guide the vehicle using adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go, lane centring and traffic sign recognition, adjusting speed based on the information obtained. Evasive Steer Assist offers assistance to the driver to help avoid a collision with a slower or stopped vehicle; it provides additional steering support when a collision cannot be avoided by braking alone.

Reverse Brake Assist can help stop the vehicle while

backing up if Aviator's integrated rear sensors and camera detect an obstacle at the rear. Active Park Assist 2.0 removes the stress from parking by taking over steering, shifting, braking and acceleration functions with the touch of a button to navigate parallel and perpendicular parking spaces with ease.

The boundless allure of flight has long inspired automotive design, and the all-new Lincoln Aviator takes that inspiration to the next level. In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Please log on to www.lincolnoman.com, or www.facebook.com/lincolnoman or www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

Russia keeps pipeline shut as Gazprom, Siemens Energy wrangle

MOSCOW: Russia kept one of its main gas supply routes to Europe shut on Saturday, stoking fears of winter fuel shortages and spotlighting differences between Gazprom and Germany's Siemens Energy over repair work on the pipeline.

Already struggling to tame soaring gas prices, European governments had expected the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to resume flows after a short maintenance this week but Russia abruptly cancelled the restart, citing an oil leak in a turbine.

Europe has accused Russia of weaponising energy supplies in what Moscow has called an "economic war" with the West over the fallout from Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Moscow blames Western sanctions and technical issues for supply disruptions. The latest Nord Stream shutdown, which Russia says will last for as long as it takes to carry out repairs, added to fears of winter gas shortages that could help tip major economies into recession and energy rationing.

The discovery of the oil leak on Friday coincided with the Group of Seven (G7) wealthy democracies proceeding with plans to impose a price gap on Russian oil, intending to shrink President Vladimir Putin's resources to fight the war in Ukraine. Gas shortages also prompted European Union member Sweden on Saturday to unveil a financial



An employee walks at Russian gas export monopoly Gazprom's Sudzha pumping station. — Reuters

support package for energy firms.

"If we do not act, there is a serious risk of disruptions in the financial system, which in the worst case could lead to a financial crisis," said Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson.

"Putin wants to create division, but our message is clear: you will not succeed," she said.

Gazprom said Siemens Energy was ready to carry out repairs on the pipeline but that there was nowhere available to carry out the work, a suggestion Siemens Energy denied, saying it had not been asked to do the job. Siemens Energy has also said that sanctions do not prohibit maintenance.

Before the latest round of maintenance, Gazprom had already cut flows to just 20% of the pipeline's capacity.

"Siemens is taking part in repair work in accordance with the current contract, is detecting malfunctions ... and is ready to fix the oil leaks. Only there is nowhere to do the repair," Gazprom said in a statement on its Telegram channel on Saturday.

Siemens Energy said it had not been commissioned to carry out the work but was available, adding that the Gazprom-reported leak would not usually affect the operation of a turbine and could be sealed on site. "Irrespective of this, we have

already pointed out several times that there are enough additional turbines available in the Portovaya compressor station for Nord Stream 1 to operate," a spokesperson for the company said.

Flows through Nord Stream 1 were due to resume early on Saturday morning. But hours before it was set to start pumping gas, Gazprom published a photo on Friday of what it said was an oil leak on a piece of equipment.

Siemens Energy, which supplies and maintains equipment at Nord Stream 1's Portovaya compressor station said on Friday the leak did not constitute a technical reason to stop gas flows. — Reuters

Germany agrees 65bn euro inflation relief package



Workers sit in front of a banner reading 'Stop the Inflation Monster' in a harbour in Hamburg, in this file photo. — Reuters

BERLIN: The German government on Sunday agreed a 65-billion-euro (\$65 billion) plan to ease the pressure on households as Russian gas supplies dwindle and energy bills soar, according to a policy paper.

"Timely and proportionate relief for citizens and businesses is necessary due to the rapidly increasing burden of high energy prices," Germany's coalition partners said in the document, adding that the total package came to "over 65 billion euros".

The measures include a one-off payment of 300 euros to millions of pensioners to help them cover rising energy bills. The government will also target students with a smaller one-off payment of 200 euros, and an heating cost payment for people receiving housing benefits.

The announcement follows two previous relief packages of 30 billion euros. — AFP

CEOs, not proxy cards, are what fuel activists

Investors in US companies have a new way to weigh in on corporate matters. On Thursday marks the launch of changes to how they vote for board directors, and it's likely more companies will be targeted by cage-rattlers, sometimes with absurd demands. Still, chieftains who are doing their jobs have little to worry about.

Previously when an activist proposed alternative directors for election at the company's shareholder meeting, they had to send a separate voting card to investors with only their candidates on it.

New rules say companies must include dissident nominees on the same voting card as their own. Shareholders no longer have to choose between one group or another.

Campaigning against a company's board may now get cheaper. Activists won't have to try so hard to get shareholders to pay attention, and many have noted that it could make it easier for shareholders to put a potential board member up for election.

Activists won't have to try so hard to get shareholders to pay attention, and many have noted that it could make it easier for shareholders to put a potential board member up for election.

But the change may be subtle. Many companies already let shareholders who have been around for more than three years propose a director for election, but it's hardly ever used.

It's good that shareholders have more freedom to express their preferences, something even dissenting SEC commissioner Hester Peirce supported back in November. But a campaign is only as strong as the suggestions a grumpy activist makes. Suggestions will only resonate with other shareholders if they too are disappointed in the company's performance – and specifically the chief executive's.

Even the most obstreperous activists have struggled with campaigns that had bark but little bite. Carl Icahn earlier this year failed in his bid to shake up fast food chain McDonald's.

His gripes about the treatment of pigs didn't resonate, but also McDonald's performance versus peers wasn't bad enough to be worth the battle. Company bosses have other challenges aplenty. Rising interest rates make funding more expensive, workforces are restless and global economic conditions remain shaky.

But shareholders ought to be able to tell the difference between a bad market and bad management. Even with universal voting, head honchos on top of their game will find their control is as assured as ever. — Reuters



Women work at the Ola Electric factory in Pochampalli, near Bangalore, India.

India's electric vehicle boom is built on mopeds and rickshaws, not Teslas

EMILY SCHMALL AND JACK EWING

In the United States, luxury-car buyers are snapping up Teslas and other electric cars that cost more than \$60,000, and even relatively cheap models cost more than \$25,000.

In India, those are all out of reach of the vast majority of families, whose median income is just \$2,400.

But an electric vehicle movement is taking place nonetheless — not on four wheels, but on two and three.

Electric mopeds and three-wheeled rickshaw taxis that sell for as little as \$1,000 are zipping along India's congested urban thoroughfares, cheered on by environmentalists and the government as a way to clear some of the oppressive smog.

India's success with the low-cost vehicles is also providing a template for how developing countries could ditch combustion engines and combat climate change without pricey electric

cars.

Consider Kuldeep Singh. Twice a day, he replaces the depleted lithium-ion batteries in his sky-blue Piaggio electric rickshaw with fully charged ones at swapping stations around New Delhi.

"The best thing is, there's no pollution," said Singh, who pays about half as much for fresh batteries as he would to fill the tank of a conventional rickshaw. "I feel proud and that India will become stronger."

Indian automakers sold 430,000 electric vehicles in the 12 months that ended in March, more than three times as many as a year earlier. Most were two- and three-wheeled vehicles, with cars accounting for just 18,000, according to industry data.

Americans bought about 487,000 new electric cars in 2021, a 90 per cent increase from 2020, according to Kelley Blue Book.

Almost 15 years ago, Indian tinkers and small businesses began

importing electric motors and lead-acid batteries from China to assemble cheap vehicles. With little regulation, the vehicles became popular, causing safety and other problems.

But they also created a space for startups and established automakers looking to build something sturdier. Now the Indian government and auto industry are betting heavily on affordable electric vehicles.

Competition and subsidies have made electric mopeds and rickshaws as cheap as or cheaper than internal-combustion-engine models. For a couple of hundred dollars, some startups are converting combustion-engine vehicles to battery power. At the same time, the recent surge in oil and natural gas prices has made it much more expensive to operate combustion-engine vehicles.

"There are many regions in the world which don't buy a \$60,000 car," said Bhavish Aggarwal, the 37-year-old founder and chair of Ola Electric,

which makes electric mopeds at a factory in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

"Technology to serve in hotter, dustier climates or more potholed roads is very different," he added.

"India is like a very nice microcosm of the rest of the world. If we can build it here, it will be very relevant beyond."

Starting with smaller vehicles makes economic and environmental sense for India. Most of the country's transportation fuel is used by two- and three-wheeled vehicles, and car ownership is incredibly low: There are just 22 cars per 1,000 people in India, compared with 980 per 1,000 Americans.

"If you are able to electrify two-wheelers and three-wheelers, you will have changed the game," said Amitabh Kant, a former CEO of Niti Aayog, the government agency that created a subsidy programme for electric two- and three-wheeled vehicles in 2015.

—The New York Times

Will the dollar's surge end in whiplash?



KENNETH ROGOFF

The writer is a Professor of Economics and Public Policy at Harvard University and recipient of the 2011 Deutsche Bank Prize in Financial Economics, was the chief economist of the International Monetary Fund from 2001 to 2003.

The US dollar has been on a tear this summer. The Japanese yen and the euro have fallen to their lowest levels against the greenback in two decades; the euro, long worth more than one dollar, is now hovering close to parity.

The US Federal Reserve's broad trade-weighted dollar index has almost re-attained the peak it reached in March 2020 amid the panic triggered by the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. In fact, if one adjusts for inflation in the United States and its trading partners, it is already higher.

This is happening despite the US recording its highest annual inflation rate in four decades and its worst trade balance since the global financial crisis. What is going on, and is the dollar set to plummet? While acknowledging that exchange rates are extremely

difficult to explain, much less predict, four major factors seem to be influencing the movements of the world's major currencies.

Most importantly, the Fed has begun hiking interest rates, and with the US economy seemingly nowhere near a true recession, there is still room for it to tighten policy further.

Despite equally high inflation in Europe, the European Central Bank is being more cautious. This is partly because the economic outlook for the eurozone is more fragile. The ECB is worried about Italy's high debt levels, but also believes that current rates of energy-price inflation will not continue.

Japan, like China, has so far not experienced significant inflation. The Bank of Japan is unlikely to tighten policy anytime soon, and the People's Bank of China cut rates in August. Geopolitics is also a

WHAT IS GOING ON, AND IS THE DOLLAR SET TO PLUMMET? WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT EXCHANGE RATES ARE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN, MUCH LESS PREDICT, FOUR MAJOR FACTORS SEEM TO BE INFLUENCING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE WORLD'S MAJOR CURRENCIES.

factor behind the dollar's strength.

The war in Ukraine presents a much more immediate risk to Europe than to the US, while China's ominous saber-rattling toward Taiwan is a huge risk for everyone, but most of all to neighbouring Japan.

Recession or not, both Europe and Japan will have to restructure their defence capabilities significantly, with a concomitant rise in long-term military expenditures. Then there is the ongoing economic slowdown in China, which affects Europe and Japan far more than America.

The root causes of China's decelerating growth – including zero-Covid lockdowns, the legacy of overbuilding, a crackdown on the tech sector, and over-centralisation of economic power – are issues I have been commenting on for some time, and I do not see a sharp, sustained turnaround.

Finally, with energy prices still very high, the fact that the US is self-sufficient in energy while Europe and Japan are huge importers also benefits the dollar. Some would add that the US is a safer haven than Europe and Japan.

That may be true, despite

America being mired in a cold civil war that can have no end as long as former President Donald Trump is in the mix. Eurozone integration, which promises to advance whenever there is a crisis, will be sorely tested if global real interest rates ever start rising. Inflation in Germany is on track to hit a 70-year high, but more aggressive ECB interest-rate hikes could cause spreads on Italian government debt to explode.

The dollar's current strength has profound implications for the global economy. A large share of world trade, perhaps half, is denominated in dollars – and for many countries, that applies to both imports and exports. As such, a rise in the dollar causes much of the world to cut back on imports, so much so that researchers have found a statistically significant negative impact on global trade.

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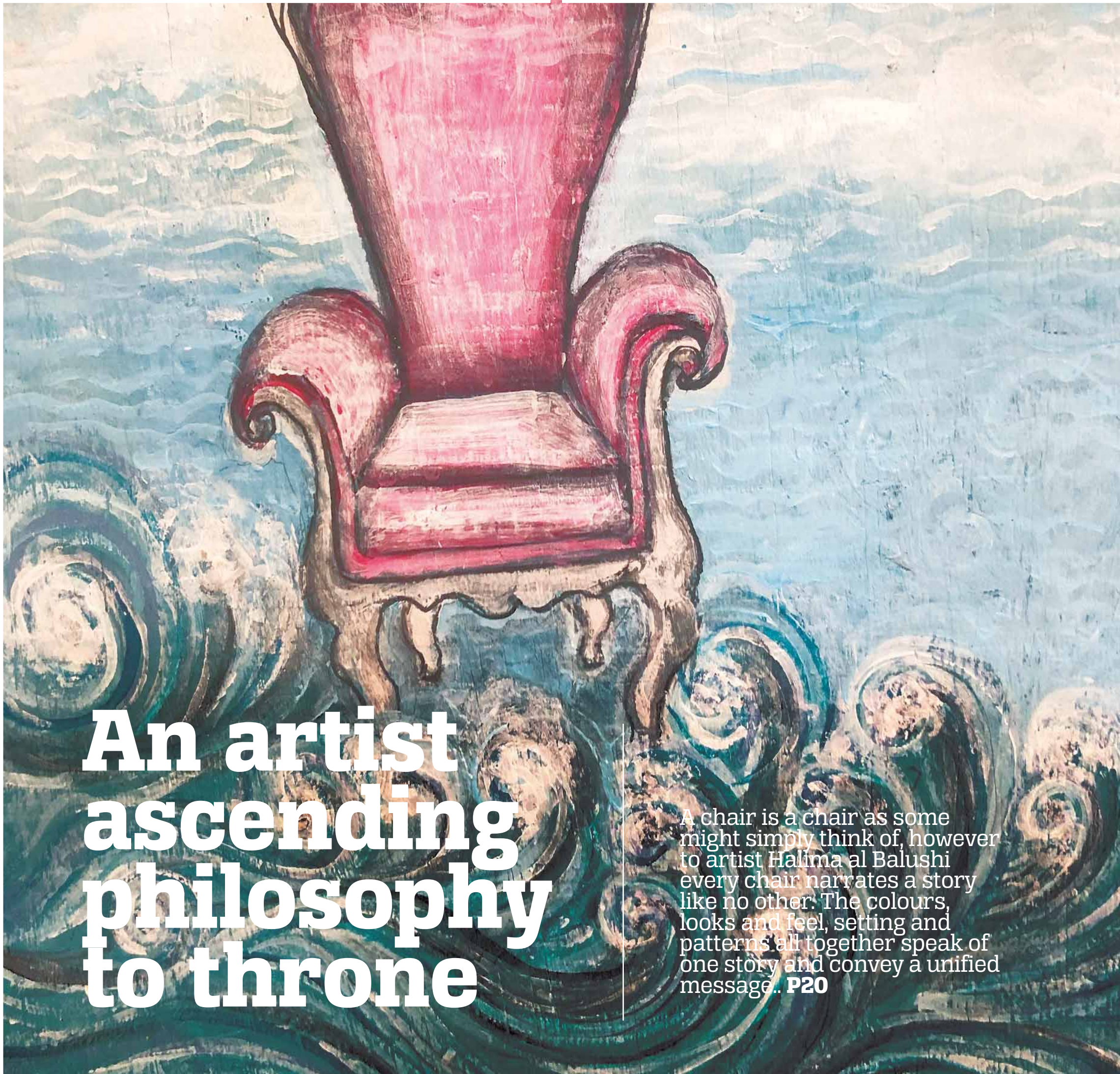
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An artist ascending philosophy to throne

A chair is a chair as some might simply think of, however to artist Halima al Balushi every chair narrates a story like no other. The colours, looks and feel, setting and patterns all together speak of one story and convey a unified message. **P20**

Greece to exhibit 'nearly intact' ancient Santorini statue

A RARE AND nearly intact 2,700-year-old statue will go on display at Greece's popular tourist island of Santorini over the weekend, the culture ministry said on Friday.

The Kore of Thera, a 7th century BC statue of a long-haired woman that is believed to be a

funerary monument at the cemetery of the ancient city of Thera, was discovered in November 2000, a ministry statement said.

Standing nearly 2.5 metres (more than eight feet) tall and made of marble from the nearby island of Naxos, the statue is missing only the tip of its nose



and an elbow.

"It is one of the few surviving large early Hellenic statues made of stone," the ministry said.

Similar statues found in the cemetery in the past were in far worse condition.

The statue will be briefly displayed at a temporary exhibition inaugurated on Sunday at the museum of Santorini, which is undergoing renovation, the ministry said.

One of Greece's leading travel destinations, Santorini was completely reshaped by a volcanic eruption in the late 17th century BC that wiped out a culturally advanced Minoan colony.

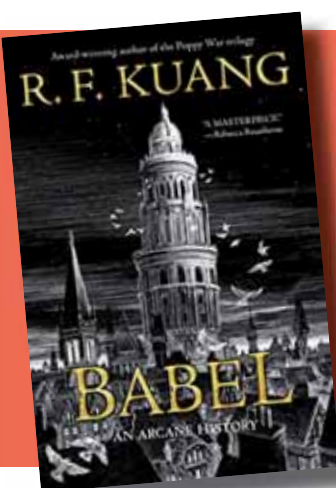
The statue is from a subsequent Doric civilisation that built Thera in the 9th century BC. — AFP

READ

BABEL

BY R.F. KUANG

In 1828, Robin Swift studies at Oxford University's Royal Institute of Translation and faces a choice when Britain pursues a war with China.



ART TREND

The painting "192 Farben" ("192 Colours") by German artist Gerhard Richter will be auctioned off in London on October 14, in a sale expected to exceed £13 million (\$15.1 million). Painted in Düsseldorf in 1966, the work is considered a key work by the painter, who is one of the most influential living artists in the world. — dpa



FASHION TREND

British supermodel Kate Moss on Thursday launched a website selling her own beauty and lifestyle products called Cosmoss, becoming the latest star to venture into branded e-commerce. Moss follows celebrities such as US actress Gwyneth Paltrow who has forged a second career marketing wellness products on her Goop website. — AFP





K-pop, K-drama... K-art. Frieze fair lands in Seoul

THE ART WORLD landed in Seoul this week for the inaugural edition of Frieze in Asia, as the vibrant South Korean capital looks to position itself as the region's next art hub.

Previous Frieze fairs have been held in traditional art capitals like London, Paris and New York, but industry experts say Seoul was a natural pick for the first Asian edition of the prestigious event.

South Korea has emerged as a cultural powerhouse in recent years with the global success of the Oscar-winning film "Parasite" and the Netflix series "Squid Game", and with K-pop superstars BTS sweeping the Billboard music charts.

"Frieze looks to cities where there is a vast appreciation of culture," Patrick Lee, the inaugural director of Frieze Seoul, said.

Seoul boasts a rich art scene, he added, with "incredibly talented artists, world-class museums, corporate collections, non-profits, biennales and galleries, which make it an ideal location for an art fair".

The fair also takes place at a time when the art world is turning away from Hong Kong — long considered the hub of the lucrative Asian art market — over looming financial and political uncertainties, as well as quarantine restrictions still imposed on visitors.

"Seoul is definitely the most vibrant and exciting market in Asia for now," said Alice Lung, director of Galerie Perrotin, which opened its second Seoul gallery last month.

Tim Schneider, art business editor of Artnet News, said the openings by major Western galleries like Pace, Lehmann Maupin, Perrotin and Thaddaeus Ropac, followed by Frieze, confirmed that Seoul had "levelled up" on the international art stage.

"Frieze Seoul is just the final confirmation that the demand has been here," he said.

COVID BOOST

The local art market has seen explosive growth since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, with local art fairs seeing record foot traffic and sales figures last year.

"When the borders were closed for a while, people focused on



online viewing," Lung of Galerie Perrotin said.

"This helped Korean artists and galleries grow faster without any physical limitation, bringing in new collectors," especially millennials and Generation Z, she said.

During this time, skyrocketing housing prices prompted many young South Koreans to seek alternate investment options, such as stocks, cryptocurrency and, for some, artworks.

"Many young people tasted bitter losses from stock and crypto

investments and artwork appeared a safe bet, especially after high-profile success cases," said Hwang Dal-seung, president of the Galleries Association of Korea.

The late Samsung chairman Lee Kun-hee left a trove of antiques and artworks — including works by Claude Monet, Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso — reportedly worth two to three trillion won (\$1.5-2.2 billion) which had soared in value during his decades-long ownership, Hwang added.

Schneider said South Korea was a "microcosm of Asia" in terms of the rise of collectors born after 1980, who now exercise heavy influence on the market.

"Buyers from this age group and this region have been reshaping the hierarchy of which artists are most in demand internationally, as well as significantly ramping up the speed at which artists can transition from the emerging level to blue-chip prices and global fame," he added.

The country's art market was estimated to be worth around 532.9 billion won in the first half of 2022, according to a July report from the state-run Korea Arts Administration Service — more than the whole of 2021.

FRESH APPROACH

Thaddaeus Ropac, who opened his Seoul gallery last year, said South Korea offered a balanced demographic of collectors.

"You have very established collectors who are not too young anymore and who have incredible experience and who collect art for 30 years or 40 years and you see the results, which I think is quite astonishing in its quality," Ropac said.

"But then you also feel a very fresh new approach to art" from younger collectors, he added.

The Austrian gallerist, who began working with South Korean artists nearly two decades ago, said the country's art scene — artists, curators, collectors — had been "built for generations".

The arrival of Frieze Seoul would certainly open new doors for South Korea's art market, he said, but it was "also a result of what Seoul has become".

Schneider added: "Historically, anytime a grade-A international fair sets up shop in a new city, it simultaneously confirms that the art-market infrastructure there is sustainable."

But he dismissed framing Seoul's rise in terms of Hong Kong's potential fall.

"I think it's misguided to act as if Asia — a massive continent composed of numerous countries with unique cultural histories and tremendous wealth — can't support two legitimate art-market hubs," he said. — **AFP**

TRAVEL TALES

British port unveils statue memorialising WWII's child escapees



A MEMORIAL commemorating the British port town that was the main point of entry for most of the 10,000 children from Nazi Europe on the Kinder transport was unveiled in Harwich, Essex, on Thursday.

The bronze statue depicts five children descending from a ship's gangplank. It was sculpted by artist Ian Wolter, with inscriptions of quotes from child refugees and space between the figures so they can be viewed closely.

The Kinder transport was organised immediately after the anti-Jewish violence of Kristallnacht, often referred to as the Night of Broken Glass, in Germany in November 1938. On that night, groups linked to the Nazis rampaged through multiple German cities, smashing the glass out of synagogues and store windows owned by Jews.

An evacuation of mostly Jewish children to Britain began, with the British government waiving the need for visas, and agencies including World Jewish Relief helping to bring trainloads of children across.

The first children arrived in Harwich on December 2, 1938, and the effort continued until war broke out nine months later.

Some continued their journey to London, while others spent a freezing winter at a holiday camp in Dover court Bay, around 2 miles from Harwich's docks.

Guests at Thursday's ceremony included more than 30 refugees who originally arrived in Britain on the Kinder transport in 1938 and 1939.

Dame Stephanie Shirley, who was 5 when she arrived in Harwich on a Kinder transport, unveiled the memorial. She said: "I shall never forget my first sighting of Harwich as 1,000 of us children came in from the grey North Sea after a horrendous two-and-a-half days' journey from Nazi Europe."

Vernon Katz, who also arrived in Britain on a Kinder transport, said: "At 11 years of age I boarded the train in Bunde, Germany, heading towards the Netherlands.

"When the train stopped, some nice Dutch ladies gave us biscuits and drinks, and then we continued to Hoek van Holland, where we boarded a boat heading to England.

"On arriving in Harwich, after all we had been through, we thought English people were angels."

Several Kinder transport memorials have been erected in Europe and Britain, including at Liverpool Street station in London, but Harwich had been neglected until now.

The German government contributed a "significant sum" to make the Harwich memorial possible, while the Association of Jewish Refugees (AJR) donated £22,500 (\$26,189) and a grant was given by the Harwich Haven Authority Community Fund, a fund administered by the Essex Community Foundation.

Mike Levy, chairperson of the Harwich Kinder transport Memorial and Learning Trust, said: "This is a day that so many of us have waited for."

"Now Harwich can take its full place in this remarkable part of British history.

"With the unveiling today, in some ways the journey of those children more than 80 years ago is complete.

"Today is a day of celebration, of commemoration, a looking back, but also, we hope, a way of looking forward to a kinder future."

In addition to the memorial, an audio bench and new information boards have been installed around the town.

AJR chief executive Michael Newman said: "Harwich will always have a special place in the hearts of those refugees who arrived on the Kinder transport.

"The AJR is proud and delighted to be a prominent supporter of the effort to establish this memorial that honours them and their loved ones who sent them to safety, and to sponsor the development of the accompanying educational programme that will spread awareness of this vital history and inspire and educate generations of visitors."

Guests at the unveiling of the memorial also included the German ambassador to Britain, Miguel Berger, and Lord Eric Pickles, Britain's special envoy for post-Holocaust issues. — **dpa**



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AROUND THE WORLD

ENTERTAINMENT

Actress Jane Fonda says she has cancer



US ACTRESS AND activist Jane Fonda announced on Friday that she has cancer, and has begun chemotherapy in her battle against the disease.

The 84-year-old Oscar winner, a prominent supporter of the Democratic Party, vowed to fight the "very treatable" illness.

"I've been diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma and have started chemo treatments," she wrote on her verified Instagram account.

"This is a very treatable cancer. 80 per cent of people survive, so I feel very lucky.

"I'm also lucky because I have health insurance and access to the best doctors and treatments."

Fonda, an avowed environmentalist and social campaigner, said her position was more fortunate than that of many others in her situation.

"Almost every family in America has had to deal with cancer at one time or another and far too many don't have access to the quality healthcare I am receiving and this is not right," she wrote.

Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma is a kind of cancer that starts in the lymphatic system, a part of the body's immune defenses, and can develop into widespread tumours.

According to the Mayo Clinic, symptoms can include: swollen lymph nodes, abdominal pain or swelling, chest pain, coughing or trouble breathing, as well as persistent fatigue and fever.

"In most instances, doctors don't know what causes non-Hodgkin's lymphoma," the clinic says on its website.

"It begins when your body produces too many abnormal lymphocytes, which are a type of white blood cell"

Usually those cells die, and the body creates new ones to replace them — but in non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, they don't, even as the body keeps making more.

"This oversupply of lymphocytes crowds into your lymph nodes, causing them to swell," the clinic's website states.

CLIMATE ACTIVISM

Fonda vowed that her treatment will not impede her environmental campaigning, and urged action on fossil fuel use, which she linked to cancer.

"I'm doing chemo for six months and am handling the treatments quite well and, believe me, I will not let any of this interfere with my climate activism.

"We're living through the most consequential time in human history because what we do or don't do right now will determine what kind of future there will be.

"I will not allow cancer to keep me from doing all I can, using every tool in my toolbox."

She pointed to November midterm elections which could determine whether US President Joe Biden's Democrats lose control of both houses of Congress, saying they were "beyond consequential."

As a result, "you can count on me to be right there together with you as we grow our army of climate champions," she wrote.

Fonda first appeared on screen in 1960, and scored Academy Awards for best actress for "Klute" (1971) and "Coming Home" (1978).

She has five other Oscar nominations in her career, four of them for best lead actress.

As well as anti-war activism during the US-Vietnam war that saw her dubbed "Hanoi Jane" and blacklisted in Hollywood, she was also a major figure in the home fitness. — AFP

DISCOVERY

It's raining diamonds across the universe, research suggests



IT COULD BE raining diamonds on planets throughout the universe, scientists suggested on Friday, after using common plastic to recreate the strange precipitation believed to form deep inside Uranus and Neptune.

Scientists had previously theorised that extremely high pressure and temperatures turn hydrogen and carbon into solid diamonds thousands of kilometres below the surface of the ice giants.

Now new research, published in *Science Advances*, inserted oxygen into the mix, finding that "diamond rain" could be more common than thought.

Ice giants like Neptune and Uranus are thought to be the most common form of planet outside our Solar System, which means diamond rain could be occurring across the universe.

Dominik Kraus, a physicist at Germany's HZDR research lab and one of the study's authors, said that diamond precipitation was quite different to rain on Earth.

Under the surface of the planets is believed to be a "hot, dense liquid", where the diamonds form and slowly sink down to the rocky, potentially Earth-size cores more than 10,000 kilometres (6,200 miles) below, he said.

There fallen diamonds could form vast layers that span "hundreds of kilometres or even more", Kraus told AFP.

While these diamonds might not be shiny and cut like a "a nice gem on a ring", he said they were formed via similar forces as on Earth.

Aiming to replicate the process, the research team found the necessary mix of carbon, hydrogen and oxygen in a readily available source — PET plastic, which is used for everyday food packaging and bottles.

Kraus said that while the researchers used very clean PET plastic, "in principle the experiment should work with Coca-Cola bottles".

The team then turned a high-powered optical laser on the plastic at the SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory in California.

"Very, very short X-ray flashes of incredible brightness" allowed them to watch the process of nanodiamonds — tiny diamonds too small to see with the naked eye — as they formed, Kraus said.

"The oxygen that is present in large amounts on those planets really helps suck away the hydrogen atoms from the carbon, so it's actually easier for those diamonds to form," he added.

NEW WAY TO MAKE NANODIAMONDS?

The experiment could point towards a new way to produce nanodiamonds, which have a wide and increasing range of applications including drug delivery, medical sensors, non-invasive surgery and quantum electronics.

"The way nanodiamonds are currently made is by taking a bunch of carbon or diamond and blowing it up with explosives," said SLAC scientist and study co-author Benjamin Ofori-Okai.

"Laser production could offer a cleaner and more easily controlled method to produce nanodiamonds," he added.

The diamond rain research remains hypothetical because little is known about Uranus and Neptune, the most distant planets in our Solar System.

Only one spacecraft — Nasa's Voyager 2 in the 1980s — has flown past the two ice giants, and the data it sent back is still being used in research.

But a Nasa group has outlined a potential new mission to the planets, possibly launching next decade.

"That would be fantastic," Kraus said.

He said he is greatly looking forward to more data — even if it takes a decade or two. — AFP

OF BOOKS, LIFE, AND POP CULTURE



Rasha al Raisi

Fardan, the lucky kitten

ON ONE OF those mornings where you expect nothing, I heard one of my kittens meowing persistently and went out to check if it was stuck on a tree (the usual kitten trouble!).

As I approached the laundry room — still looking for the source of meowing — an unfamiliar white and tabby kitten jumped out and came straight to me. It was almost two months old with blood crusted all over its ear, neck, and chest.

I was shocked by the sight that I picked it up instantly and went inside although not sure what to do. I assumed that he must've been attacked by the dogs and managed to escape and hide in our garden.

Despite its gory looks, the kitten was obviously starving and ate heartily to my own surprise. I decided to take him to the vet when I met Sham the helper on the way out.

He asked if I'd seen the injured kitten outdoors and upon seeing it in the carrier, he shared his story: as he was returning from his day off in a taxi, Sham witnessed an accident; a kitten was run over by a bicycle rider who never turned to inspect the damage he'd caused the poor animal.

Sham asked the driver to stop immediately and picked up the injured kitten to bring it home. The driver was astonished and asked what he'll do with it, to which Sham replied confidently: "I can help it." I shared this story with the vet who insisted on x-raying the kitten in case he had any ruptured organs.

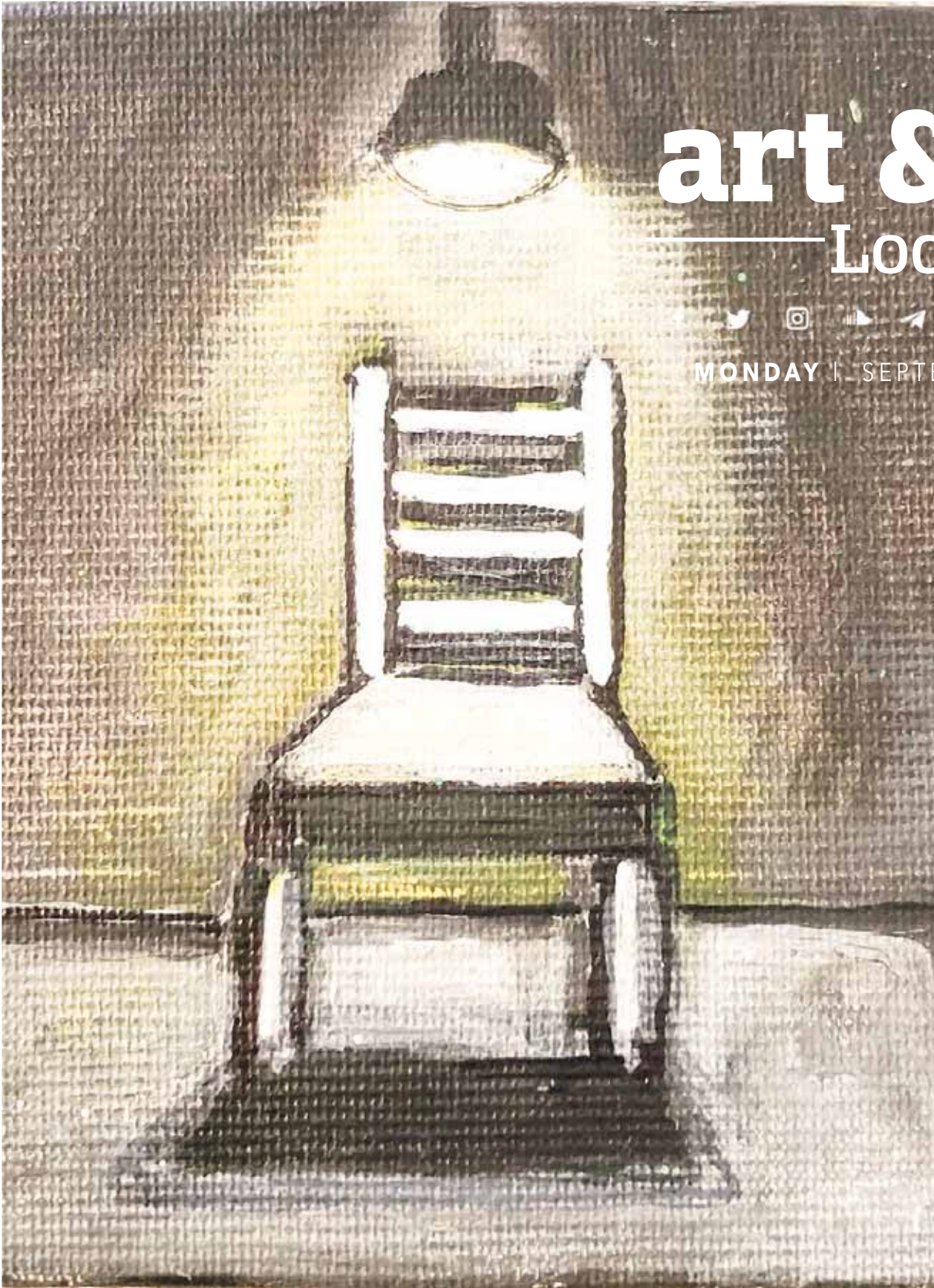
Luckily, everything was intact yet along with his severe neck wound he suffered from a hernia caused by the pressure of the bicycle running over his neck. He was put on a three weeks course of antibiotics to heal the wound and had to stay in the guest's bathroom. I decided to call him Fardan which meant unique as everything about his story was extraordinary.

During his recuperation time indoors, Fardan displayed a super hyper character. It was always hard to medicate him or clean his wound as he constantly scratched and bit. Once the wound healed, I put him outdoors and he blended well with the other four kittens and started bossing them around.

However, within a few weeks Fardan developed another wound on his neck and his energy started seeping out as he stopped eating. We visited the vet again who was baffled by the appearance of the second wound and Fardan's sudden quietness. He ran a blood check that showed that Fardan was suffering from a severe anaemia caused by a certain type of bacteria and was kept in the clinic for a few days. When I went visiting, Fardan jumped on my lap and sat there quietly, something odd to his usual self. He was put on antibiotics for a whole month and had to return to the bathroom again. Within a few days of treatment, Fardan was becoming his hyper old self again. This time, I didn't mind the scratching and biting for as much as he wasn't worryingly quiet. Within two weeks of being locked up, he became excessively hyper and started trashing the bathroom every single day; a sure sign that he was bored.

Therefore, I put him out and continued medicating and cleaning his wound that healed and left a tiny new scar. Fardan's dominant and territorial character is becoming more evident every day. The adult Kitzanians learned to never share his plate or slap him around as he slapped back. An unmistakable little tyrant in the making. Welcome to Kitzania, little Fardan!

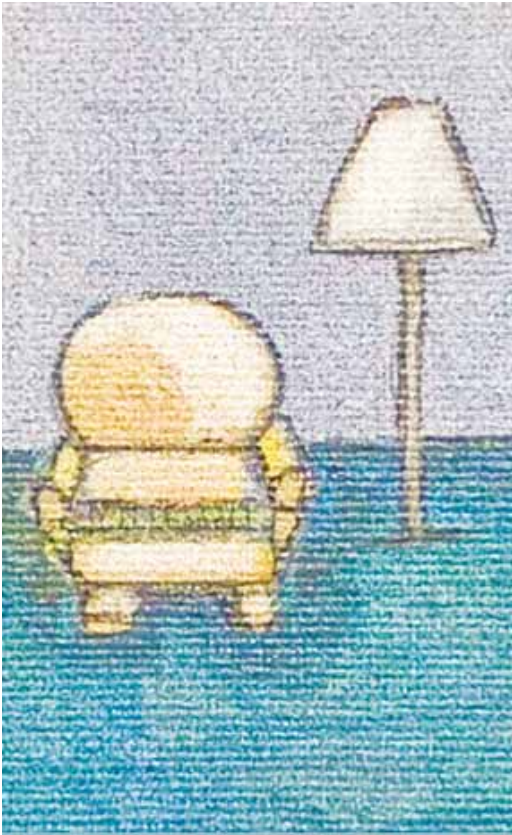
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art & life

Local Scene

MONDAY | SEPTEMBER 5 | 2022



An artist ascending philosophy to throne

By Abdulaziz Al Jahdhami

WHAT COMES TO your mind when you first see a picture of a chair, regardless how it looks and what colour or shape it reflects! When you first look at a painting, your eyes often deceive you. Your eyes can only take you so far in terms of the appearance of something. Though the eyes value the beauty of a painting or a sight much more than the mind and heart. It's the eyes that first catches charm and prettiness of objects and people too.

However, still for untrained eyes, a painting is a painting; they don't see the multiple layers behind the gentle hit of a brush on a canvas or a piece of paper. The eyes don't necessarily see the hid-

den meaning and theme, which an artist is trying to mirror in his piece of art. Take these mystical illusive paintings by Halima al Balushi for example. We see drawings of different chairs; each with certain patterns of lines and shapes, reflecting various settings.

A chair is a chair as some might simply think of, however to Halima every chair narrates a story like no other. The colours, looks and feel, setting and patterns all together speak of one story and convey a unified message as the artist pointed out. However, the chance is also given to the spectators to interpret the story behind every chair painting as not every chair means a throne! They all look alike as chairs, but not all chairs are the same in terms of the purpose

they serve.

Possibly, each painting of her communicates a diverse story or theme behind it. In fact, there is much more concept of thought to these paintings than what we think. This is where the similarity with philosophy comes in, so are the differently sketched chairs artworks that we are looking at here. Actually, she is connecting philosophy, which she studied over the years with her creative drawing talent. Her philosophy of life is being inspiringly narrated in separate stories of each piece of art.

Halima al Balushi is a philosophy graduate from Sultan Qaboos University (SQU) in 1994. As a distinguished talented artist, she has always been inspired by philosophy, which makes her artworks mysteriously unique, mesmerising and thought-provoking. "Art is just an inspiring branch of philosophy; both are expressive crafts. My artworks always serve as an opportunity to better help others understand their place within philosophy and discover different ways of life as well", Halima expressed.

Though Halima was born as a talented artist who started sketching since childhood and school age throughout years of undergraduation at SQU, she stopped practice since 1997 for almost 15 years. Here personal life has taken much of her time and effort all these years. However, she resumed back in 2013 in full swing, thriving the arts march and inspiring other young artists.

All these years since she first picked up a brush, she made her ways to be a skillful artist, participating in different local and regional arts exhibition and competing with other artists. Over the past 9 years since she came on track, Halima al Balushi produced over 100

pieces of arts, reflecting her passion of art as a way of life. To serve the arts and artists, she recently started conducting weekly art session called "Chair & Lamp", training participants and art enthusiasts on philosophical art, and could be approached (insta @halima_art).

Out of her passion of philosophy, Halima believes that an artist is a philosopher expressing thoughts and ideas in hopes of public reaction. A philosopher does just the same thing as s/he tries to address deep questions that can make the life of the average person make more sense. The artistic idea of a painter is the same as the philosophical question of the philosopher. They are both working on canvas; one strokes the brush, the other lets the pen flow.

Commenting on her experience with art and philosophy, Halima stressed, "I believe art and philosophy are synonyms in their creation. To me, thinking and expecting ideas to come out with a single grain of wisdom is art. In fact, art has a life of its own; it is a creation of the mind. The colours, patterns and details of everything surrounding us tells a story and inspires an artist, a writer, philosopher, a poet or someone else. Philosophy tries to figure out how we can better live and how we can navigate life with all its challenges, blessings and opportunities that people come across and experience every now and then".

To interpret a work of art is to go beyond imagination. One has to try exploring the different stories, messages and concepts of paintings. Looking at a painting should be similar to reading a novel, where creativity, imagination and focus are required all time. As well, one has to maintain an intersection of philosophy and art in mind whenever observing a piece of art.