

Leftover food releasing 3.3 bn tonnes of greenhouse gases

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The leftover food dumped in landfills results in 3.3 billion tonnes of greenhouse gases annually, according to the Oman Animal & Plant Genetic Resources Centre (OAPGRC).

Up to 18 per cent of all food produced in Oman — intended for consumption — is not eaten, which equates to RO 57 million a year, Oman Environment Services Holding Company (Be'ah) has said as part of a campaign to make the people aware that food waste is harmful to the environment.

Food that gets thrown ends up in landfills, where it gradually rots and releases methane, a strong greenhouse gas. The decay of food waste in landfills is not the only source of greenhouse gas. Resources needed to produce food also have a carbon footprint.

Globally, the effect of processing food that goes waste is equal to 3.3 billion tonnes of Carbon Dioxide (CO₂).



Although there are a few charity organisations that distribute leftover food to the needy, awareness against food wastage is a must, Be'ah said.

In an earlier study on household food waste conducted by Esma Karim al Balushi from the Department of Natural Resource Economics, Sultan Qaboos

University (SQU), food wastage was found to be quite high in the Sultanate.

Effective waste management is important to Oman's sustainable future and critical for conservation of the Sultanate's natural resources, OAPGRC said.

"Food waste is hot business", it

The decay of food waste in landfills is not the only source of greenhouse gas. Resources needed to produce food also have a carbon footprint

said, adding it has the "potential to generate thousands of permanent Omani jobs" in recycling, composting and related fields.

Many countries have already started 'Rescuing Leftover Cuisine' projects which aims to feed the hungry and reduce food waste.

Such initiatives provide solutions to prevent excess wholesome cuisine from being wasted. Arranging pickups of leftover food and delivering it to the poor families and human service agencies is the main purpose of such projects.



Summer programme for school students begins

MUSCAT: All preparations were completed well in time for the two-week summer programme for school students across all governorates which began on Sunday.

The programme will be held under the slogan of "our summer is responsible citizenship".

The programme will witness the participation of 3,100 students.

The head of the main committee said, "the key focus goes towards the importance of patriotic dimension as values of citizenship should be instilled into students. This can be done through an initiative to serve the local society and deal with its health, social and environmental issues."

The programme now in its ninth edition aims at building a constructive and positive personality for all

students. Meanwhile, the participants will enrol in cultural, scientific and sport activities.

"The local committee picked out the heads of the qualified centres and equipped the selected schools with all equipment needed. A meeting was also held with the heads of the centres to explain the mechanisms should be used to implement the programme.

A media plan has been conducted to cover the activities of the summer programme.

The committee made sure that all needs in the centres, including water, electricity, cleaning tools and means of transport stand ready. All work procedures in the centres are ready for the actual start from the first day of the programme.



Sultanate a magnet for investments

FROM PAGE 1

According to him, establishing a strategic partnership constitutes a strong political guarantee for the development of relations, which leads to further collaboration in the 'Belt and Road' initiative and safeguard joint interests in regional and international matters.

"China is ready to join efforts with the Sultanate, based on mutual respect and common development, to achieve and maintain world peace in order to promote strategic relations and deepen cooperation to fulfil

greater achievements."

Speaking about the 8th Ministerial Meeting of the China-Arab States Cooperation Forum, which was held in Beijing last week, he said the meeting saw 300 representatives from the member states of Arab League, its secretariat and Chinese parties concerned to discuss ways to build Belt and Road, and "promote collective cooperation that shape the broad blueprint for China-Arab relations" in the current era. "The forum, established in 2004, has gradually become a platform for collective cooperation covering all

fields and includes over 10 indicating mechanisms," he said.

"China has signed an agreement to be a part of Belt and Road along with nine Arab countries and established comprehensive strategic partnerships and cooperation with nine Arab countries as well," he added.

He said that China is ready to exert joint efforts with the Sultanate based on mutual respect and joint development to promote peace in the world and enhance reciprocal trade to enable the Chinese-Omani strategic relations achieve more.

Oman-based geoscientist wins prestigious award for research

MUSCAT: A Muscat-based geoscientist credited with undertaking pioneering research work in a number of areas, notably on tsunami hazards in the Sultanate, has been conferred a prestigious award.

Prof Dr Gösta Hoffmann, who is teaching and researching at GUTech, was awarded with the Rectorate's Teaching Award 2018 of the University Bonn recently.

With this award the management of the University and the Faculty of Mathematics, Geosciences and Natural Sciences of the University Bonn recognizes Prof Gösta's strength in teaching.

"Prof Gösta Hoffmann successfully combines theory and practice in his teaching. His classes are very popular and are focused on applying the theory during excursions and the student's overall learning experience in the field.

"The award was given according to student's evaluations and a student survey from the faculty," said Prof Dr Thomas Bartolomäus, member of the Faculty of Natural Sciences during the award ceremony held at



Prof Dr Gösta Hoffmann with Katrin Holm-Mueller, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs of the University Bonn, at the award ceremony.

the university.

"The field excursions are very popular among our students and they help to educate the next generation of Geoscientists. They highly qualify them to think out-of-the box and for their future work in the industry or in the academia," said Prof Gösta.

Initially, Prof Gösta Hoffmann studied Geosciences at the University of Greifswald (Germany) where he completed his PhD in 2004.

In 2008 he and his wife Dr Anne Zacke moved to Muscat, where they were among the first faculty members in the Department of Applied Geosciences at GUTech.

Prof Gösta has been teaching at GUTech since 2008 and conducting research on tsunami hazards in Oman. In October 2015 he was awarded with the National Research Award by the Research Council (TRC).

Prof Gösta is teaching courses on geohazards along with excursions.

In the past three years he has been conducting field excursions through Oman with students from different universities and research institutes in Germany.

Mandatory health cover in pvt sector

FROM PAGE 1

"Work on the development of legislation, regulation and necessary controls to manage and operate healthcare insurance systems is progressing," added the statement.

In Oman, healthcare accounts for three per cent of government spending.

In the GCC, public and private healthcare spending exceeded \$62 billion in 2016 and is projected to reach \$132 billion by 2020.

In Oman, spending on healthcare is reported to have increased to six per cent of government expenditure in 2016.

Between 2007 and 2016, the government spending on healthcare reached an average annual growth of 14 per cent, while the average investment spending in the sector reached around 25 per cent.



89 per cent say 'no' to plastic bags

FROM PAGE 1

The Gulf standard for oxo-biodegradable plastic bags was highlighted during the meetings. In addition, specialists from the ministry held awareness lectures

in schools and associations as well as campaigns to clean the beaches with participation from different sections of society in order to raise awareness about the dangers of excessive use of plastic bags.

UN: Civilian deaths in war-torn Afghanistan hit record high

KABUL: The number of Afghan civilians killed in the country's long-running conflict hit a record high in the first six months of 2018, UN figures showed on Sunday, with militant attacks and suicide bombs the leading causes of death.

The toll of 1,692 fatalities was one percent more than a year earlier and the highest for the period since the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) began keeping records in 2009.

Another 3,430 people were wounded in the war, down five percent from the same period last year, the report said. Overall civilian casualties — 5,122 — fell three percent year on year. Hours after the report was released a suicide attacker blew himself up at a government ministry in Kabul, killing at least seven people, including civilians. More than 15 were wounded.

The record high death toll came despite an unprecedented ceasefire

by Afghan security forces and the Taliban last month that was largely respected by both sides, UNAMA said.

The ceasefire for the first three days of Eid was marked by scenes of jubilation as security forces and Taliban fighters celebrated the Islamic holiday, raising hopes that peace was possible after nearly 17 years of conflict.

But the suspension of hostilities was marred by two suicide attacks in the eastern province of Nangarhar that killed dozens of people and were claimed by the Islamic State group, which was not part of the ceasefire.

The Taliban refused a government request to extend the truce, returning to the battlefield and ignoring calls to enter talks with Kabul to end the war.

"The brief ceasefire demonstrated that the fighting can be stopped and that Afghan civilians no longer need to bear the brunt of the war," Tadamichi Yamamoto, the UN Secretary

General's special representative for Afghanistan, said. "We urge parties to seize all opportunities to find a peaceful settlement — this is the best way that they can protect all civilians."

Suicide bombs and "complex" attacks that involve several militants accounted for 1,413 casualties — 427 deaths and 986 injuries — up 22 per cent from a year earlier.

If that trend continues, the figure will top the 2017 full-year record of nearly 2,300 casualties.

UNAMA attributed 52 per cent of civilian casualties from suicide and complex attacks to IS, mainly in Kabul and Nangarhar where the group established a stronghold after emerging in Afghanistan in 2014.

While the Taliban is Afghanistan's largest militant group and holds or contests more territory than any other, IS has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to carry out devastating attacks in urban areas.

— AFP