

SPECIAL CLIMATE ISSUE

INTERNATIONAL  
**Newsweek**



**SCIENTISTS  
HAVE A  
NEW MESSAGE  
FOR A  
GENERATION  
GRIPPED  
BY CLIMATE  
ANXIETY**

DON'T LOSE  
**HOPE**

**PLUS: EIGHT YOUNG INNOVATORS LEADING THE WAY FORWARD**

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**“I really feel  
like it’s taken  
all 22 years of  
my life so far  
to be ready for  
this moment.”**



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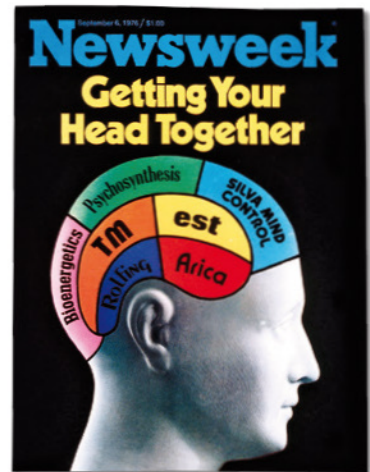
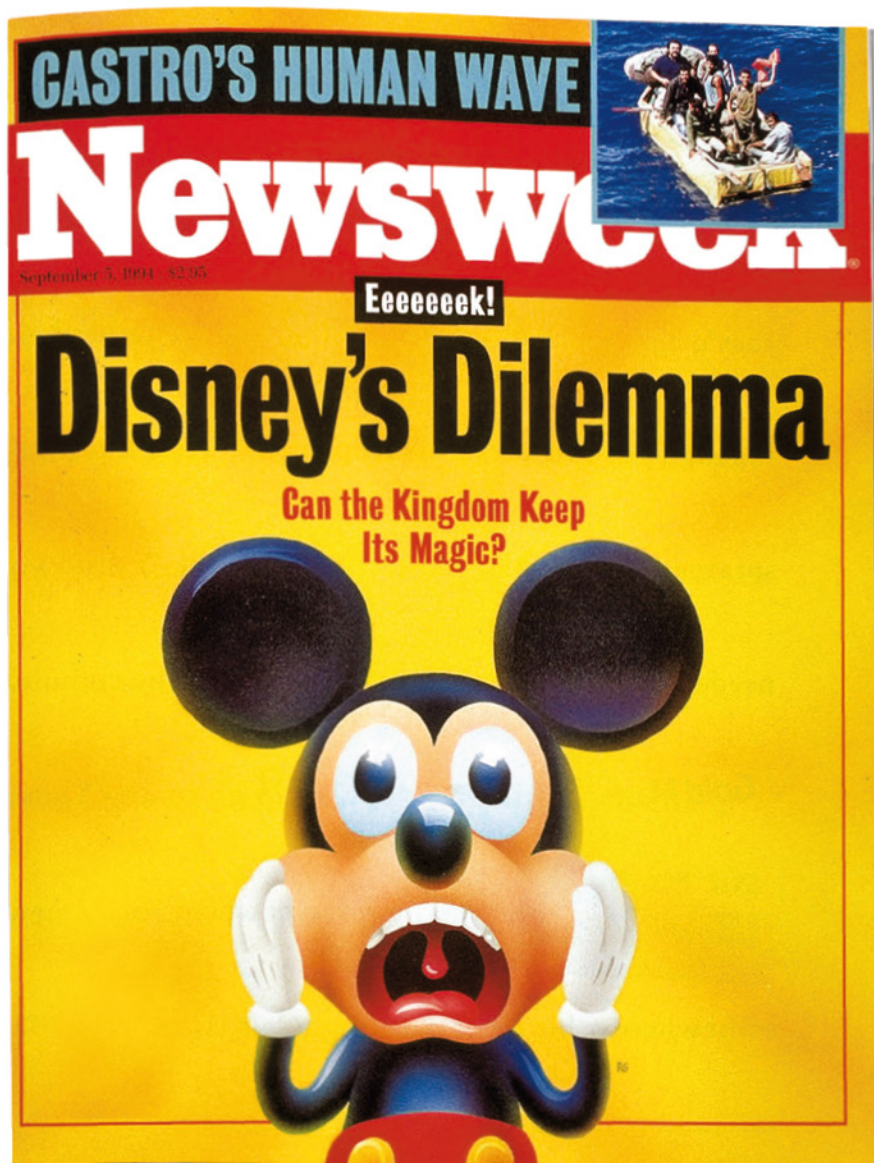
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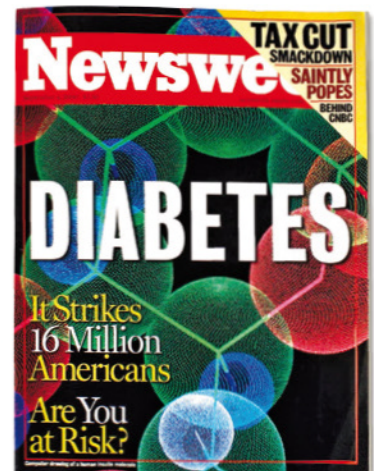
1994

“What is the Walt Disney Co. but a dream machine, a teller and seller of fairy tales? And at the heart of every Disney saga are some of life’s most basic themes: friendship, family and the struggle for independence,” said *Newsweek*. Disney’s magical reign in Orlando has hit some road bumps as Florida Governor Ron DeSantis limited much of Walt Disney World’s authority over the land on which it sits. In July, the new board eliminated diversity, equity and inclusion programs in an ongoing effort on behalf of the Republican governor to eradicate all DEI initiatives in the state.



1976

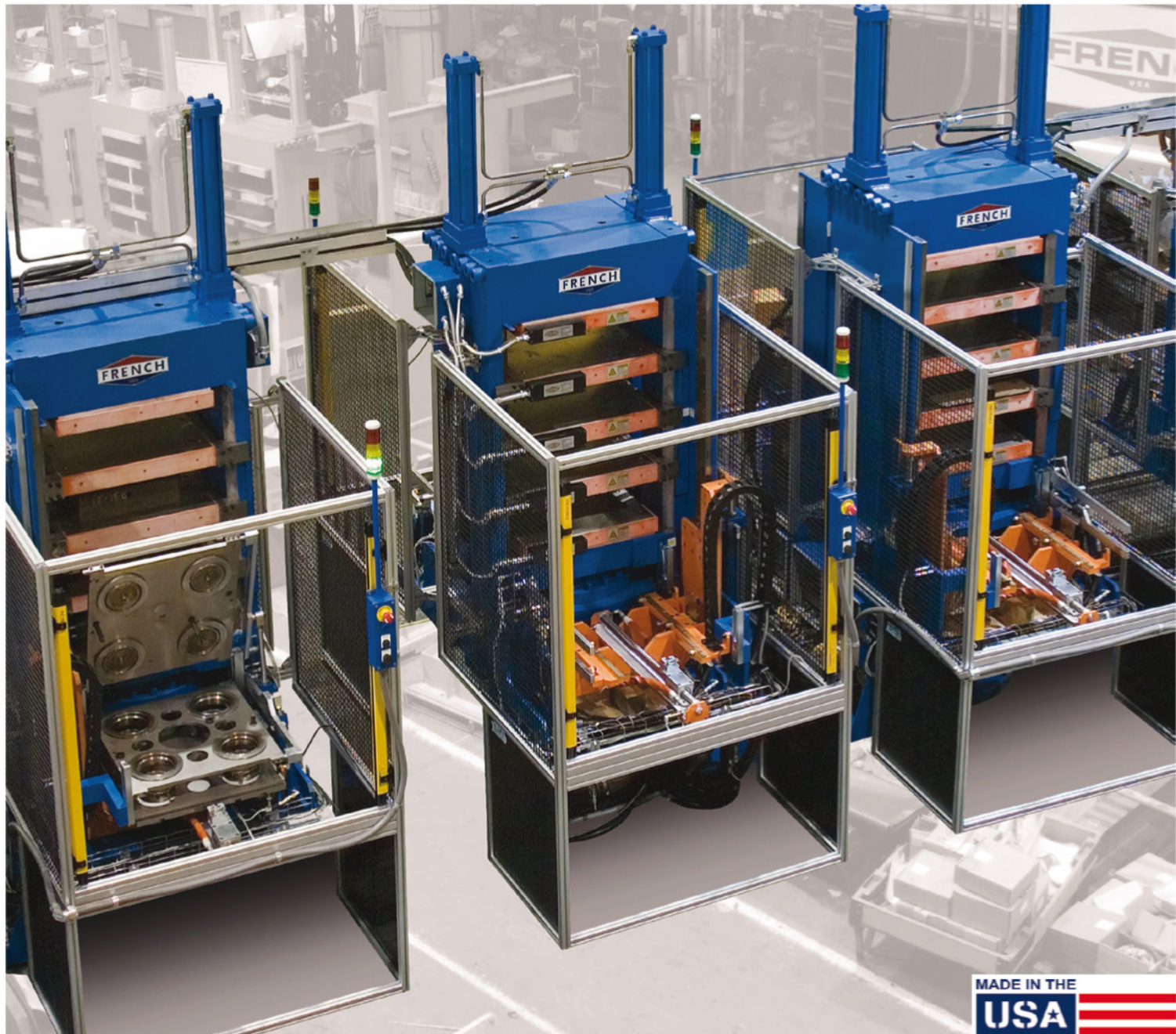
“At their most respectable, the consciousness cults merge Western psychotherapy with Eastern religion; at their most tawdry, they combine high-pressure salesmanship with outright charlatanism,” said *Newsweek*. Debates now over benefits of marijuana and psychedelics also span wide differences of opinion.



2000

“With conscientious monitoring of their blood sugar, regular exercise and the right attitude, many [type 2] diabetics can now allow themselves an occasional sweet,” said *Newsweek*. The disease still afflicts more than 37 million Americans, including millions still undiagnosed and millions more on the brink, according to data from the CDC. **N**





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# In Focus

THE NEWS IN PICTURES







MAUI, HAWAII

## Devastating Inferno

A National Guardsman patrols Nahale Street on August 16 in Lahaina, after wildfires engulfed the island. The fires, which began August 8, burned at least 2,200 buildings and took the lives of at least 114 people, with the death toll expected to rise. In the aftermath, multiple lawsuits have been filed against Hawaiian Electric for failing to preemptively shut down the electric grid. Meanwhile, amidst criticism for not sounding emergency sirens, the head of Maui's emergency management agency resigned, citing health reasons.

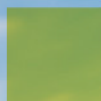
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LOS ANGELES TIMES/GETTY





AS YOUNG PEOPLE SINK INTO A **PARALYZING DESPAIR** OVER EXTREME





# FIGHTING CLIMATE CHANGE WITH

WEATHER AND IMPENDING CATASTROPHE, SCIENTISTS AND ACTIVISTS TRY **A NEW MESSAGE**

# HOPE

by **DAN HURLEY**







**J**OSH SPECTOR GOT THE MESSAGE ABOUT climate change early on. At age six, he was already passionate about the need to meet humanity's existential challenge. In college, he majored in geographic data analysis at the University of Oregon and interned at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. Upon graduating in 2020, he joined Planet Labs, a maker of tiny Earth-imaging satellites.

But as the pandemic dragged on, and heatwaves and wildfires ravaged the western United States, his life began to unravel. Disillusioned with the values of his company's corporate clients, he quit his job, moved back to his parent's home in Portland and volunteered for a non-profit.

"I was hyper-focused on the climate crises that were happening all around me," he says. "Many days I would wake up, go on Twitter and see the suffering from acute events around the world. Sometimes

**EXTREME SUMMER**  
Clockwise from top left: In July, the hottest month on record, Montpelier, Vermont, flooded; temperatures soared in Phoenix, Arizona; a heat wave sickened tourists in Rome; flood damage in Highland Falls, New York. Right: Katharine Hayhoe.

that would cripple me for hours with feelings of immense depression, anxiety, sadness and helplessness."

Similar feelings are now afflicting many people during this summer of climate hell. Apocalyptic forest fires in Canada sent a pall of smokey haze over much of the Northeast and Midwest, and a blaze swept Maui, killing more than 100 people. Heatwaves have broken temperature records across California, Arizona and much of the south. Ocean waters around southern Florida have nearly reached hot-tub temperatures, exceeding 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Torrential rainstorms powered by heat have destroyed roads, flooded homes and left at least six dead in Philadelphia and New York state.

Europe and Asia are reeling from record-breaking temperatures. In mid-July, Italy placed 23 of its cities on red alert as the mercury there reached 114 degrees F. In Greece, forest fires raged near Athens. Beijing had temperatures over 95 degrees F





for 28 days in a row, setting a record. Most shocking of all: the 15 hottest days for the entire planet, on average, all occurred in the first 18 days of July.

It only makes sense, then, that millions of people are worried that humanity may be facing the end of civilization, if not our species. In a 2021 survey of 10,000 children and young adults from 10 countries (including the U.S.), 59 percent said they were very or extremely worried about climate change. More than half said they felt sad, anxious, angry, powerless, helpless or guilty. Three-quarters said they think the future is “frightening.” Another survey, of people in 31 countries, found 40 percent did not want to have children because of the effects of climate change.

Welcome to the age of eco-anxiety—what the American Psychological Association defines as “the chronic fear of environmental catastrophe that comes from the seemingly irrevocable impact of climate change and the associated concern for one’s future and that of next generations.”

But what if we’re not actually headed to climate Armageddon? What if the long-term outlook for the future has lately become far less dire?

That’s the question posed by a new breed of climate activists—eco-realists, they call themselves—who point to the surprisingly positive steps that governments, industry and ordinary people have taken in just the past few years far outstripping

recent projections. More progress is needed, of course, but greater gains, they say, will depend on millions of people trading their despair for positive action.

“If there were nothing we could do about climate change, being depressed or giving up would be a logical response,” says Katharine Hayhoe, chief scientist at the Nature Conservancy and one of the new climate messengers. “But if we realize that the future is in our hands, that means we can make a difference. That is what our hope is based on.”

### The World May Not End

TO BE CLEAR, HAYHOE AND LIKE-MINDED SCIENTISTS and activists are not saying climate change isn’t real. They concede it’s hard to peddle hope when so much news is downright apocalyptic. In March, for instance, the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) announced the planet’s average temperature is likely to exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees F) over pre-industrial levels within the first half of the 2030s, crossing a threshold once considered disastrous. “There is a rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all,” the report stated.

But hold on, eco-realists say: another trend has emerged in the past five years. As recently as 2019, many climate scientists were predicting by the end of this century, the planet’s average temperature

▷ **“If we realize that THE FUTURE is in our hands, that means WE CAN make a difference. That is what our HOPE IS BASED ON.”**



would rise by nearly 5 degrees C (9 degrees F) over preindustrial levels, turning large swaths of the planet into uninhabitable hellscape. Now, however, thanks to a dramatic and previously unimaginable increase in the use of green energy, temperatures are expected to rise by more like 2.5 to 3 degrees C—still bad, but not nearly as catastrophic.

The case for improving climate forecasts is made most powerfully in a new book by Hannah Ritchie, lead researcher at Our World in Data and a researcher at the Oxford Martin Program on Global Development at the University of Oxford titled *Not the End of the World* (Little Brown Spark, January 2024)



"In a season of record temperatures, fires and floods, there's a glimmer of hope that averting the worst of climate change might still be possible," Ritchie wrote in a recent editorial in *The Washington Post*. "China, the world's top carbon emitter and greatest user of coal, is rolling out renewables at breakneck speed."

China, she says, is likely to add more solar power this year than the U.S. has ever put in place. One of every three cars sold in China last year, she notes, was electric—compared to just one in 15 in 2020.

Worldwide forecasts from five years ago failed to account for the speed at which green energy sources would be adopted or their prices would fall. According to the International Energy Agency, the average cost of industrial-scale solar energy plummeted by 88 percent between 2010 and 2021, while the cost of onshore wind projects fell by 68 percent and the cost of offshore projects fell by 60 percent.

The remarkable drop in prices goes a long way toward explaining why this March, the U.S. Energy Information Administration announced that, for the first time renewable energy sources generated more electric power in the U.S. than did coal. As recently as 2014, coal generated 42 percent of the electricity from U.S. power plants. By 2021, that figure had fallen by more than half, to just 19 percent. Global coal use, meanwhile, is believed to have peaked in 2013. Previous projections had assumed ever-rising use of coal through the end of the century.

Another development virtually unimaginable five years ago: skyrocketing sales of electric vehicles around the globe. Since 2020, the total number of E.V.s on the road has tripled, from 10 million to 30 million. Last year, sales of E.V.s jumped 60 percent. And that's just the beginning of the E.V. revolution: On April 12, the Environmental Protection Agency proposed rules requiring two-thirds of all new passenger vehicles sold in the U.S. to be electric by 2032. Compare that to last year, when a mere 5.8 percent of new cars sold in the U.S. were electric.

By limiting the expected rise in global temperatures, the shift toward green energy is projected to have a profound real-world impact. For instance, sea levels would be expected to rise by nearly three feet at 5 degrees C warming over pre-industrial levels, but less than one foot at 2 degrees C warming. The probability that the Arctic Ocean will be free of ice in any one year is 63 percent at 3 degrees C warming but only 16 percent at 2 degrees C warming. The average

#### PUTTING ON THE HEAT

Taking part in a global protest in March 2022, women from the Masai community in Kenya demanded climate reparations and meaningful action from world leaders.



TONY KARUNBA/AP/GETTY









length of a drought anywhere on the planet would increase by two months if temperatures rise by 1.5 degrees C, climate scientists estimate, compared to ten months if temperatures rise by 3 degrees C.

The lower projected increases in global temperatures are also expected to be substantially friendlier to plants and animals. If warming is kept to just 2°C above preindustrial levels, 8 percent of mammals are projected to lose more than half of the range they currently inhabit on Earth. If warming reaches 4.5°C, however, 42 percent of mammals will lose more than half their range. Plants would lose 16 percent of their range at 2 degrees C, compared to 68 percent at 4.5 degrees C. Birds would lose 6 percent at 2 degrees C versus 40 percent at 4.5 degrees C. And butterflies and moths would lose 10 percent of their range at 2 degrees C versus 58 percent at 4.5 degrees C.

“There’s increasingly broad recognition that the worst-case scenarios are implausible,” says Matthew G. Burgess, assistant professor of environmental studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder. “Yet people seem to have a hard time wrapping their heads around the idea that climate change can be real and serious, which it is, but that it might not be the greatest threat to humanity we’ve ever known.”

The public, says Hayhoe, needs to hear about the improving outlook. “Ten years ago, we were heading toward a world that would be 4 to 5 degrees Celsius warmer than today,” she says. “Now we’re heading to a world that will be only 3 degrees warmer.”

### Appealing to Our Better Angels

CLIMATE SCIENTISTS, WHO FOR DECADES HAVE TRIED to grab public attention with worst-case scenarios, are beginning to wonder if that was

**“If your HOUSE IS ON FIRE,  
what do you do? You try to  
put it out. The best ANTIDOTE  
for despair is action.”**

counterproductive. With so many people scared out of their wits, the worry is that they are paralyzed—unable to act just when action is needed urgently.

Climate leaders from the early fire-and-brimstone days of the movement are beginning to emphasize the need to instill hope in the next generation. For instance, back in 1988, James E. Hansen, then director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, made headlines when he testified before Congress that global warming was real and getting worse. Recognized as one of the world’s foremost climate scientists, he went on to write a book in 2009 with an ominous title: *Storms of my Grandchildren: The Truth about the Coming Climate Catastrophe and our Last Chance to Save Humanity* (Bloomsbury USA).

Now consider his latest book, *Sophie’s Planet* (Bloomsbury Publishing), scheduled for publication in 2024. According to his publisher, “Hansen remains an optimist. *Sophie’s Planet* turns toward solutions, asking: How can we connect the dots from climate observations to necessary policies? What can be done to preserve our planet for the young people who will follow us?”

In an email to *Newsweek*, Hansen says, “Young people should not be discouraged. They have a challenge, but it’s an exciting one and less dangerous than many earlier ones, like World War II and the Vietnam War.”

Bill McKibben is another lion of the movement to forestall calamitous climate change. His 1989 book *The End of Nature* (Random House) was one of the first to ring the alarm for a general audience. His latest, however, mixes in a note of hope to his otherwise bleak views. “I think we’re uniquely ill prepared to cope with the emerging challenges,” he writes in *Falter* (Henry Holt, 2019). “Still, there is one sense in which I am less grim than in my younger days. This book ends with the conviction that resistance to these dangers is at least possible.”

On the phone, McKibben explains what gives him hope: “People always come up to me at my talks

**COOLER HEAD**  
Below: Bill McKibben, who rang the alarm about climate in 1989, now tempers his bleak views with a modicum of hope.







to say, 'How do I make things better?' That strikes me as a very psychologically healthy response to the situation we're in. It's in some respects like any other emergency. If your house is on fire, what do you do? You try to put it out.

"The best antidote for despair," he says, "is action."

Even climate activist Peter Kalmus, who chained himself to the front door of the JP Morgan Chase building in Los Angeles to protest the bank's investments in fossil fuels, says despair is not the answer.

"Too many people are feeling anxiety and despair about climate change and don't know what to do," he says. "We have to start connecting and building communities. Join a group. Talk about it. And know that you're not alone. It's a lot easier to deal with this if you're with friends and working together on something that can make a difference."

Perhaps the most surprising entrant to the eco-realism movement is a group calling itself "Bros for Decarbonization"—so surprising that the

very title of their X (formerly Twitter) page states that it is "not parody."

Initially, the Bros struggled to be taken seriously. But their message went viral after an April article in *The New York Times* described them as thinking "the best way to combat climate change is to ditch the gloom of earlier environmentalism and focus on what new technology can do."

And then there are the two women who, on May 23, protested climate change in their own way. In front of the Italian Senate in Rome, they dumped buckets of mud over their bare-chested bodies. Positive action, it seems, comes in all shapes and sizes.

## Getting Better


TO PULL HIMSELF OUT OF HIS CLIMATE DESPAIR, Josh Spector sought help from Thomas Doherty, a psychologist in Portland who specializes in what he calls "eco-therapy." Doherty began devoting his practice to climate anxiety more than 10 years ago, but now he has company: the Climate Psychology Alliance of North America lists 14 therapists around the country who are "climate aware."

One of his jobs, Doherty says, is to reassure clients that their worries are legitimate. "A lot of people just need reassurance that it's normal to have these feelings," he says. "And they often feel isolated, like they're the only ones who feel the way they do. I encourage them to reach out to others who share their concerns." Spector, now 25, began seeing Doherty in the spring of 2022.

"He helped immensely," Spector says. "I was trapped in this urgent mindset. He helped me shift into realizing this is a decades-long process. He talked about thinking of the movement as a line. I felt I always needed to be at the front of the line. He was saying that to be sustainable, you need to recognize that where you are on the line can change over time. You can move forward, you can move back. I had been guilt-tripping myself."

Doherty also encouraged Spector to pull away from spending hours online reading about climate catastrophes. Instead, he encouraged Spector to see friends—including even old friends who have jobs with corporations that might not be eco-friendly.

"I'm definitely feeling better," he says. "I guess I realized I couldn't just live my life being this depressed, sad activist."

Climate change is bad enough, it would seem, without being incapacitated by grief and despair over it. 

## EVERY BIT HELPS

**Top:** A German farmer put solar panels in his apple orchard. **Above:** Teslas at a green tech expo in Washington, D.C., in July.



# INSPIRING HOPE FOR

MEET EIGHT **INNOVATORS** WHO ARE COMING UP WITH CREATIVE SOLUTIONS TO THE CLIMATE



# A BETTER PLANET





## CHALLENGES FACING THE WORLD



ASUS/GETTY

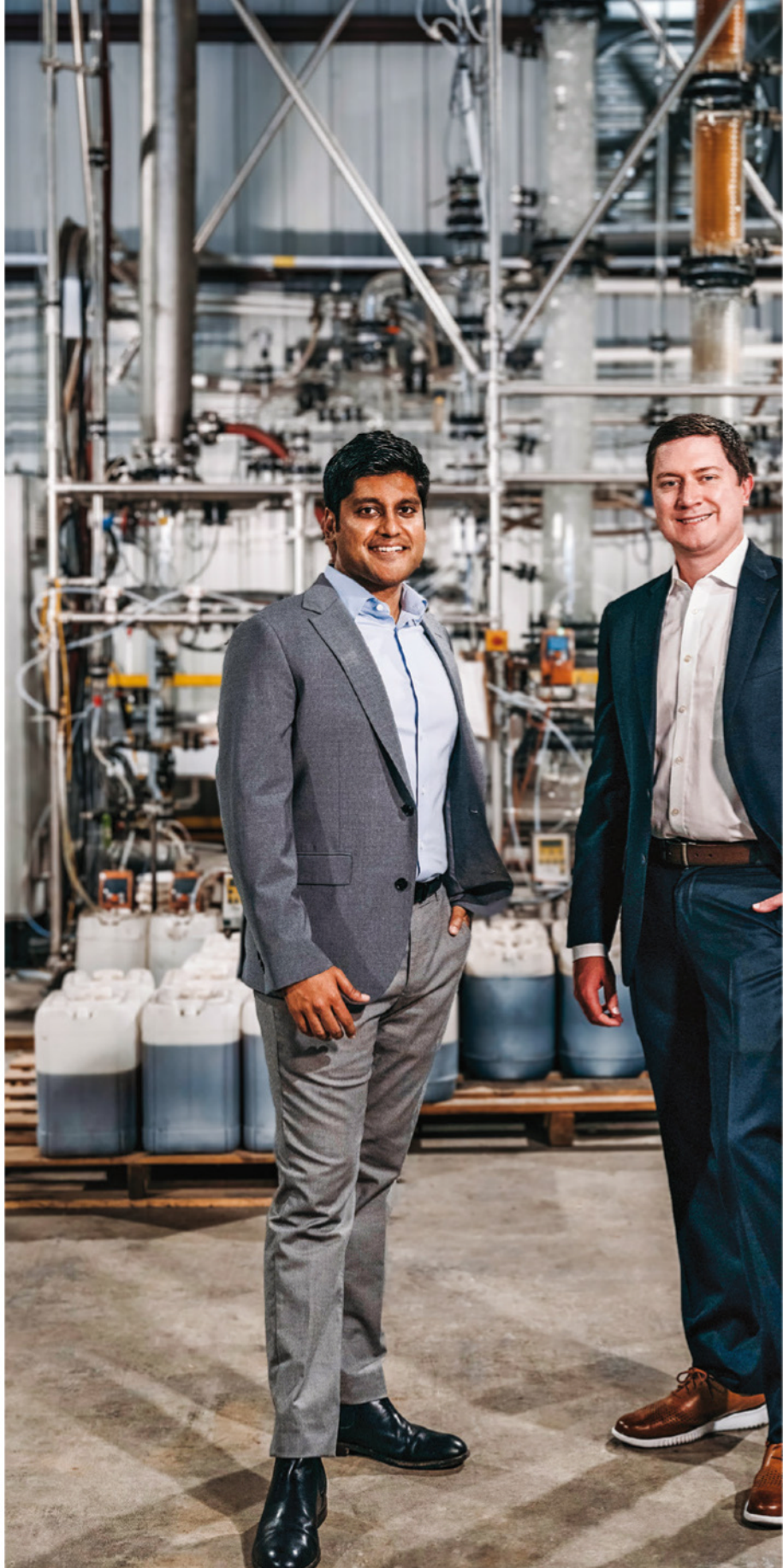




**T**HIS SUMMER, THE HOTTEST ON RECORD, may go down in the history books as the turning point when climate change became truly personal. Extreme weather has become our new normal, affecting a majority of Americans and many millions more around the world: deadly heat waves across the U.S., Mexico, southern Europe and China; torrential rain and flash flooding in Chicago and the Hudson Valley; intense wildfires, first in Canada, blanketing cities a thousand miles away with smoke, then in Hawaii, which quickly became the deadliest such blaze in a century.

It's not exactly surprising then that nearly half of Americans now feel that climate change poses a serious threat *in their lifetimes*, according to a recent Gallup poll—including about 60 percent of people ages 18 to 34. With the most at stake over the coming decades, it's also not surprising that young people are the ones leading the way to find solutions to our global environmental challenges, many of them rejecting prevailing climate gloom-and-doomism to focus on ways to sustain hope for the future of the planet.

On the following pages, you will meet eight of these young climate pioneers, the first in a series of profiles of "Planet Heroes" on *Newsweek's* new content hub Better Planet ([newsweek.com/better-planet](https://newsweek.com/better-planet)). This new section highlights the innovators and innovations leading the way to a healthier, safer world, and the actions we can take to help the environment. Because the first step in making a difference is recognizing that we can.







**Gaurab Chakrabarti & Sean Hunt**

FOUNDERS, SOLUGEN

# MAKING INDUSTRIAL CHEMICALS WITHOUT THE CARBON EMISSIONS

A BIG, BUBBLING CAULDRON OF CORN SYRUP sounds like an unlikely weapon against global warming. But Gaurab Chakrabarti and Sean Hunt think it holds the key to a new carbon-neutral way of making everyday chemicals for households and industries.

Greening the chemicals industry would go a long way to reducing global greenhouse-gas emissions. Chemical manufacturing accounts for a third of the carbon released into the atmosphere each year—mostly petroleum processing, which emits 1.5 billion metric tons of carbon per year.

Chakrabarti had an epiphany in 2015 while he was doing research on novel treatments for cancer at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center (he holds an M.D. and a Ph.D.). He was studying enzymes—chemicals produced by all living creatures to speed up chemical reactions in their bodies—when he started thinking about how enzymes could be engineered to speed up chemical reactions in industrial processes. He wondered, in particular, if enzymes could make chemicals without troublesome byproducts such as carbon dioxide.

A year later he teamed up with Sean Hunt, then a chemical engineering graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, to develop a way to make industrial chemicals with environmentally friendly ingredients like corn syrup, instead of the

by  
**DAVID H.  
FREEDMAN**

often environmentally harsh and climate-disrupting ingredients in the manufacturing processes currently used to make those chemicals. Together, they founded Solugen.

“We use systems that have been in nature for millions of years,” says Chakrabarti,

the company’s CEO. “We just needed to create an environment where it could happen more efficiently.” With a combination of conventional chemical engineering and bioengineering knowhow and a heavy reliance on artificial intelligence to design new biomolecules, Chakrabarti and Hunt came up with the “bioforge”—a 60-foot-tall tank that houses harmless ingredients like sugars, subjects them to biochemical reactions, and aerates them with a dense stream of microbubbles.

Today the bioforge can, in principle, produce a vast range of industrial chemicals and some new ones that work as well or better at certain tasks than those now commonly in use. For example, phosphates, currently widely used around the world in water-treatment systems to reduce corrosion, also cause aquatic-life-killing algae blooms. Solugen’s biomolecule alternative, which the company is manufacturing in industrial quantities, is equally effective against corrosion but breaks down afterwards into harmless constituents. Other chemicals that the company is already manufacturing can be used in



**GREEN PLANT:** With its bioforge, Solugen's factory (right) can, in principle, produce a vast range of industrial chemicals and some new ones that work as well at certain tasks than those now commonly in use.

concrete production, cleaning and agriculture. And the company is planning to start manufacturing polymers and other chemicals that are widely used throughout the clothing and automotive industries.

Not only are the bioforges emissions-free, but the plants run on renewable energy, making Solugen's operations carbon-negative—that is, they actually remove more carbon from the environment than they put into it. Equally important, says Chakrabarti, the 10,000-gallon bioforge can produce the chemicals at enormous volumes, and do so profitably. Two 500,000 square-foot factories in Houston are churning out well over 10,000 tons per year of chemicals, and a third one is scheduled to go live this year in the Midwest. To pay for this expansion, Solugen has raised more than half a billion dollars from private investors.

"We're creating a chance for the complete decarbonization and defossilization of the chemicals industry," says Chakrabarti.

Chakrabarti envisions bioforges becoming available in a wide variety of sizes and functions, perhaps



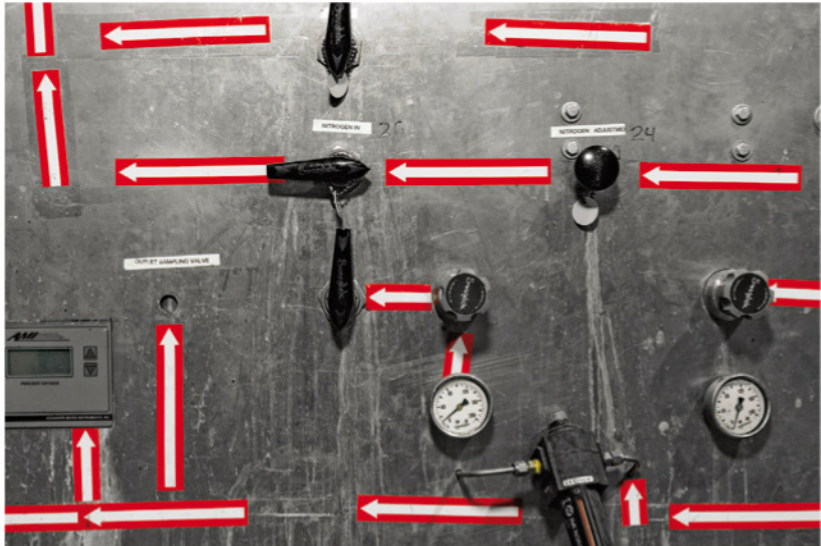
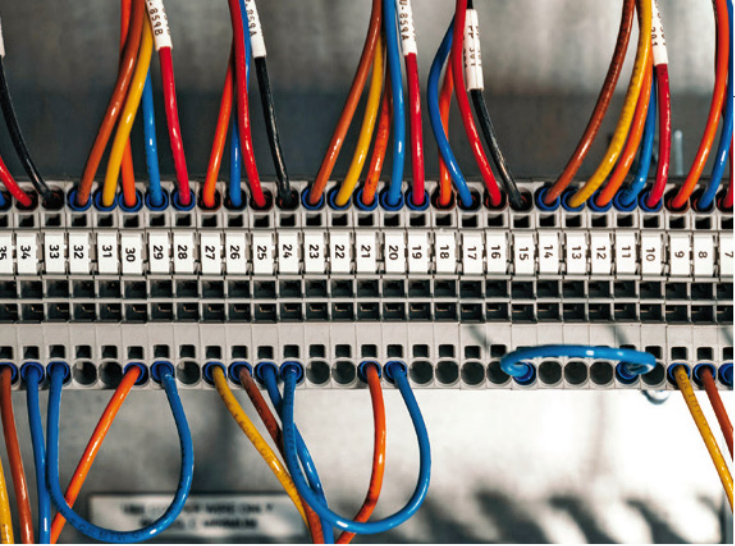
## **“We’re CREATING a chance for the complete DECARBO**

by manufacturing them, or licensing the technology to others. These forges would run automatically, so that everyone in the industry from chemical giants to tiny shops will operate them. The biggest challenge right now, he says, is simply educating chemical buyers about the need to switch from their tried-and-true but carbon-intensive chemicals to greener, bioforged alternatives. “There aren’t enough incentives in place at the moment,” he explains. “But the regulatory environment is changing, we expect to see those incentives coming in.”

The company's goals over the next seven years are to reduce the carbon emissions released by industry into the environment by an amount equivalent to eliminating 2 million cars, and to make enough bioplastic to get rid of 5 billion non-degradable plastic bottles. It's just a matter of keeping the corn syrup flowing.







## NIZATION and DEFOSSILIZATION of the chemicals industry.”







**Alaina Wood** \_\_\_\_\_ SUSTAINABILITY SCIENTIST,  
#THEGARBAGEQUEEN

# LEADING THE CHARGE AGAINST CLIMATE DOOMISM

by  
**MEGHAN  
GUNN**

ANYONE WHO HAS LISTENED TO A WEATHER REPORT lately, read the headlines, seen the dire warnings on social media or even just stepped outside knows the news on climate change is bad, often apocalyptic-level bad. Sustainability scientist Alaina Wood knows that too—and she also knows such messaging can make people feel hopeless and demoralized, so much so that they’re discouraged from taking action to help save the planet. So, Wood is on a mission to change the narrative, debunking “climate

nihilism and misinformation” and inspiring hope with positive news about environmental wins, one viral TikTok video at a time.

Under the moniker #TheGarbageQueen, Wood takes a no-frills approach, typically talking straight to the camera, peppering her viewers—some 365,000 of them and growing—with details of promising new studies and advances in the fight against climate change and explaining the science behind them in plain language. A weekly segment called “Good Climate News” highlights five positive developments from the past seven days in a minute or less—say, Egypt’s plans to build the largest wind farm in Africa, capable of powering 1 million homes once completed; or a new law in Europe that aims to restore 30 percent of the continent’s damaged lands and water by 2050 or the invention of an ultra-white paint that deflects most sunlight and might help cool temperatures in overheated cities.

Though she’s focused on environmental solutions, Wood doesn’t sugarcoat the severity of the climate problems the world faces. Instead she tells viewers to think of the challenge as a war in which you lose some battles and win others but have no chance of

FROM LEFT: STEVEN BRIDGES/UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE; EIFEL KREUTZ/GETTY



overall victory if you give up. Like a general rallying the troops, she tells her audience: “Don’t let anyone convince you it’s too late.”

Wood is as concerned about easing her audience’s anxiety around climate change as she is about educating them, freely sharing her own fears and anger. She encourages viewers to “feel their feelings” and take breaks from climate news and social media periodically to recharge—a form of self-care that she practices herself. “Don’t let those feelings overwhelm you to the point of giving up,” she said in a recent video. “Seriously, don’t give up.”

Wood’s empathetic approach reflects how deeply personal the fight against climate change is for her. Descended from a long line of Appalachian coal miners in East Tennessee, she had a front row seat growing up to the devastating impact of ecological disaster on a community, when in 2008 a dike ruptured at the Tennessee Valley Authority’s Kingston Fossil Plant, spilling 5.4 million cubic yards of coal ash into the environment. Several homes in her area were destroyed, rivers were contaminated and workers involved in the \$1 billion clean-up effort subsequently developed cancers.

In college, where she studied sustainability science and geography, she took her own environmentalism to an extreme. “I would turn down invitations to hang out with friends because, oh my gosh, what if I produced trash?” she says. She went vegan; allowed herself to generate only enough trash every week to fit in a single mason jar; biked everywhere, even during thunderstorms, so her friends wouldn’t judge her for driving a car and developed a full-blown case of eco-anxiety, a condition recognized by the American Psychology Association as a “chronic fear of environmental doom.”

When the pandemic hit and Wood was spending more time scrolling on TikTok, she saw an epidemic of eco-anxiety like her own. Her feed was increasingly filled with bleak videos of mass environmental destruction, and young people sharing their experiences of panic attacks and suicidal thoughts related to the climate crisis. Wood, who since college has seen a counselor for her own eco-anxiety, knew how debilitating those feelings are—not only for individual health but for the movement too. She also noticed a lot of the fear-inducing videos were contradictory to what the science was saying. So in 2021, she made a video to refute the



**“Don’t let FEELINGS [about climate change] overwhelm you to the point of giving up. Seriously, DON’T GIVE UP.”**

doomsayers, pointing to experts saying it’s not too late to counter the worst effects of climate change if the global community puts in the effort. Cynical commenters said, prove it, so she made a second video citing a landmark 2022 United Nations report finding that it’s still possible to mitigate extreme climate change. That video went viral, with the comments reflecting a hunger for more positive, solutions-based posts—and so #TheGarbageQueen platform took off.

To the remaining critics who sometimes still accuse her of spreading irrational optimism or “hopium,” she responds simply: “Everything I say is based in science.”

These days Wood is focused on taking her message to new platforms. She has been engaging more on Instagram and is looking to expand on YouTube and Threads as well. She’s also co-founded EcoTok, a collective of fellow climate educators with a shared goal: to save the planet. “No matter what happens or how I feel, I remind myself that I’m not the only one fighting for change,” she says. “I can’t give up.”

#### **RIISING FROM ASHES**

Wood grew up in eastern Tennessee near South Holston Lake, an area that was devastated by a coal ash spill disaster in 2008.







Kristy Drutman

FOUNDER, GREEN JOBS BOARD

# FIGHTING FOR GREEN EQUITY, ONE POST AND JOB AT A TIME

KRISTY DRUTMAN WAS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT in New Jersey in 2013 when she heard the news about Super Typhoon Haiyan's devastating impact on the Philippines, her mother's home country. The typhoon, one of the worst the world has ever seen, killed more than 6,300 people. "It was my wake-up moment," recalls Drutman.

She awoke to the havoc that a changing climate is starting to have on the world, and the ways it hits some people harder than others. That realization started her on a journey that has made Drutman, now 27, a social-media influencer advocating for diversity and equity in environmentalism—and an entrepreneur whose much-watched business, Green Jobs Board, provides an important tool for that cause.

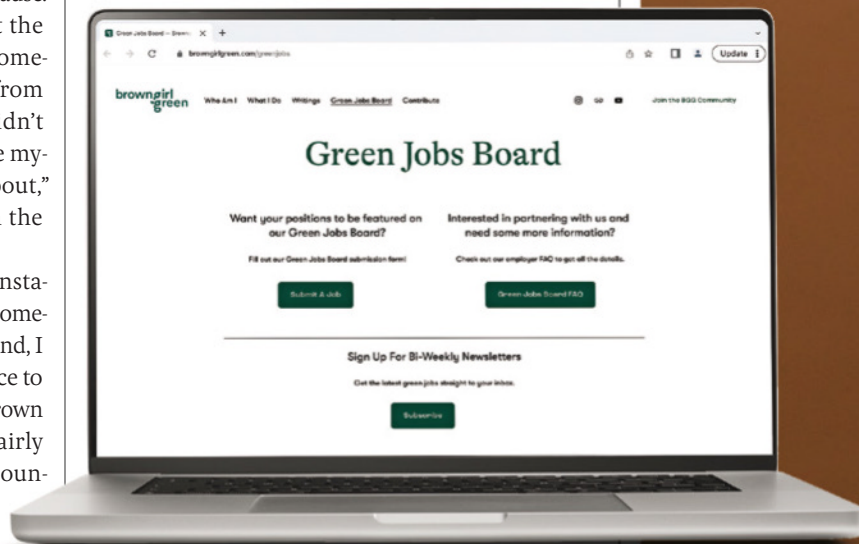
Drutman studied environmental policy at the University of California in Berkeley but felt something was missing from the program, as well from much of the climate-change movement. "I didn't see people who looked like me, and I didn't see myself reflected in the people we were talking about," she says. "And I felt like a fish out of water in the environmental activist spaces."

To address the problem, Drutman took to Instagram as BrownGirl\_Green to make her case. "As someone coming from a Jewish and Filipino background, I wanted to bring a multiracial, multicultural voice to environmentalism," she says. Her posts and her Brown Girl Green podcast call out activists who unfairly blame environmental woes on poorer Asian countries, highlight Tonga's fight against deep sea mining, support indigenous women joining the

climate fight and rail against "environmental racism."

To her surprise, her following kept growing. It hit nearly 75,000 followers by the time she had graduated. That success put her on the environmental speaking and consulting circuit—a good thing, because she was having trouble finding a job in line with her environmental activism interests. "Within two years of graduating college, I was a full-time entrepreneur," she says. But that got her wondering: Why was it so hard for young people, and especially those of color, to get a job in the environmental field?

She started searching out job opportunities in the field, posting them on her Instagram feed. "Engagement with those posts was the highest I had





ever seen,” she says. “And people were starting to get hired because of them.” When environmentally aligned organizations looking to improve their own diversity hiring started contacting her about getting in on the posts, Drutman decided to team up with a friend to spin the effort off as its own business.

The Green Jobs Board attracted thousands of visitors in its first week. Soon organizations, both profit and non-profit, were lining up to pay for the privilege of posting jobs there. “Environmental organizations haven’t always been able to reach diverse talent,” she says. “We’re reaching those people, and they trust us.”

Green Jobs Board gives extra attention to attracting and highlighting environmental businesses owned by individuals who are Black, Indigenous or people of color, notes Drutman. But she says she’ll

**“There’s so much CLIMATE ANXIETY and despair out there, and I don’t want to CONTRIBUTE to that. It’s important to have humor and HUMANITY in there as well.”**

work with any type of organization that wants to support environmentalism and diversity—including companies that may face criticism from environmentalists. “As long as they’re committed to learning and doing better, it’s better to engage them in the conversation rather than just X’ing them out,” she says.

Drutman emphasizes that the year-old, six-employee company is just getting started. She’s exploring options to bring in investors who would help her expand, and possibly spin off other ventures. But she insists that any venture she leads will remain laser-focused on her core mission of promoting diversity in environmentalism. “I always see this field through the lens of equity issues,” she says. That lens is especially apparent in her recently revamped podcasts, which feature diverse environmental leaders from around the world.

Another guiding principle of her budding media micro-empire: Inject some lightness into the mix. “There’s so much climate anxiety and despair out there, and I don’t want to contribute to that,” she says. “It’s important to have humor and humanity in there as well. That’s why I often show myself being silly and having fun in my posts.” So far, it’s been a winning mix. —DF



**Robert Kabera** \_\_\_\_\_ FOUNDER, SYNC ENERGY AI

# PROTECTING THE POWER GRID WITH AI



IN 1998 A TEN-YEAR-OLD ROBERT KABERA WAS TRYING to study a high-school science textbook by the light of a kerosene lamp in the Kalahari Desert in Botswana. But the strong desert winds kept blowing it out as soon as he lit it. “I didn’t know much about electricity back then,” he recalls. “I just knew that after living with darkness for six years, I had become obsessed with light.”

The darkness Kabera is referring to isn’t just literal. A refugee from the Rwandan genocide, his family of six, along with 17 neighbors, had hid for weeks at a time crammed together in a tiny tunnel dug beneath his home until they could escape the country. His family eventually made their way to a refugee camp in the Kalahari.

Kabera says that lampless night in the desert set the path of his career: turning the lights on for those who lack power, and keeping them on in the face of growing climate threats to the power grid such as storms that bring down power lines and flood transformers. “We need to use technology to protect and restore nature in order to bring resilience to the grid,” he says. “If we can do that well, we’ll be able to manage the risks of climate change.”

Kabera and his family eventually moved to Atlanta, Georgia. After graduating from Stanford University in 2011 with a degree in engineering, he started a credit-scoring agency focused on connecting small farmers in Africa to loans for desperately needed fertilizer and irrigation equipment. In partnership with the Obama administration, he worked on a project on improving electricity grids with the goal of bringing energy to rural communities in Africa, where power is often unreliable and sometimes non-existent. By the time that project ended in 2016, Kabera knew he wanted to focus on ways of keeping electricity flowing despite extreme weather events—such as flooding, heat, wildfires and drought—which are becoming more and more frequent as global temperatures rise, due to emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide.

Grid failures are usually an information problem. Although power companies often have the crew, tools and know-how to prevent damage to wires and other equipment from hurricanes, storms and floods, or to reroute power and quickly effect repairs when damage strikes, they often lack knowledge of when and where the damage is likely to hit so they can take action ahead of time.





**“We need to use technology to protect and RESTORE NATURE in order to BRING RESILIENCE to the grid. If we can do that well, we’ll be able to manage the risks of CLIMATE CHANGE.”**

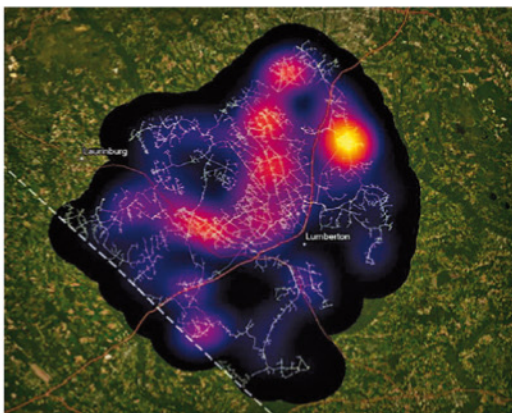
Kabera was convinced that advances in artificial intelligence and machine learning could help. In 2020, he co-founded a “gridtech” company, Sync Energy AI, to develop AI programs that synthesize weather measurement data, government databases that detail the location of trees in and around cities and details of local power grid wires and customer usage patterns. The software cruches all that information and then spits out



predictions of which lines will be at highest risk during a given weather event and which customers will likely be most affected. Armed with those predictions, it’s possible to take actions to avert a crisis before it happens—such as cutting back branches and trees around those wires, reinforcing the wires, rerouting electrical power around the most vulnerable spots, and positioning repair crews at those locations before the damage occurs.

Sync, which has 20 employees, has already deployed its AI software to monitor the tree risks to the power grid in Charlotte, N.C., and is in discussion with other municipalities. It is also developing partnerships with the insurance companies that usually foot the bill for power grid losses from a storm. Kabera says he hopes to employ Sync’s approach to other climate risks over time. In addition to trying to halt and even reverse climate change, society should deploy tools like AI to ensure we can roll with the coming punches. He says: “I call it sustainability AI.”

It’s one step toward bringing light to those who risk losing it. —DF



#### **WATCHING THE GRID:**

Above: Botswana’s Central Kalahari Game Reserve. Left: A heat map of threat zones, from medium to extreme, to the grid, in a case study on the Lumbee River in North Carolina.





**Sophia Kianni** \_\_\_\_\_ FOUNDER, CLIMATE CARDINALS

# SPREADING THE WORD ON CLIMATE CHANGE, 100 WAYS

AT 21, SOPHIA KIANNI HAS ALREADY PACKED IN MORE experiences than many people have in a lifetime, all with a singular goal: to help educate people around the world about climate change.

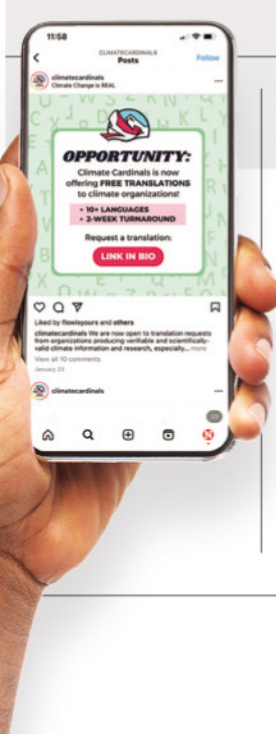
The heart of her work is Climate Cardinals, a non-profit she founded when she was 17 that aims to make information and research about climate change more accessible to people who don't speak English. That work led directly to her appointment in 2020 as a United Nations advisor on climate change—the youngest UN advisor in U.S. history—and this year to her selection for the steering committee of UNESCO's youth-led climate group, YoU-CAN. She's marched alongside Jane Fonda at a climate event she organized in Washington, D.C., given a TED talk (2.3 million views so far) and spoken about climate change at universities from Harvard to Cambridge. Somehow, she also manages to be a college student herself: She's about to start her senior year at Stanford University, in the Science, Technology, and Society program.

Kianni was galvanized to take action against climate change during summers spent in Iran, her parents' native country. In the Middle East, she learned, people were being hospitalized daily because of toxic air pollution, and temperatures were rising more than twice the global average. During one trip to Tehran, she realized she could no longer see the stars because heavy smog from pollution was blocking them.



CLIMATE CARDINALS: TYLER NEWMAN; ATTA KENARE/AFP/GETTY; MICHAEL M. SANTIAGO/GETTY

**“I believe in the power of CLIMATE EDUCATION.”**



When she spoke to her Iranian relatives about what was happening, though, she found that climate change wasn't part of their conversation. “There weren't really any climate resources available in Farsi, their native language,” she says. That led to a lack of understanding about the causes and dangers of global warming. One study she read showed that only 5 percent of Iranian students understood the greenhouse gas effect. And the problem went far beyond the region: While 75 percent of the world doesn't speak English, 80 percent of all climate change articles are written in English.

The net effect, Kianni says, is that even as a global movement was building to address climate change, “We were leaving people like my relatives behind.”

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: PROSTOCK-STUDIO/GETTY AND





In middle school, she began translating articles into Farsi herself, so her family could read them. By high school, she decided to launch a formal organization to translate climate research into other languages: Climate Cardinals, named for the state bird of her home state Virginia and to symbolize information flying around the world. Recruiting young volunteers initially via TikTok and later across other social media platforms, the nonprofit quickly took off; at last count, some 10,000 teenage volunteers from more than 70 countries are involved, who have collectively translated climate change materials into 100 languages. A partnership this year with Google gave Climate Cardinals access to an AI-driven translation tool, which has enabled the organization to add another 40 languages to its roster, including Hausa (spoken mainly in West Africa), Latvian and Maithili (spoken in parts of India and Nepal). The group has also partnered with Translators without Borders to review the translations to ensure accuracy.

"I believe in the power of climate education," Kianni says. "How can you help stop a crisis that you don't even know is happening?"

Despite the many accolades that have come her way, Kianni also has faced criticism for personal choices; on Instagram, some critics point fingers at her frequent air travel and new clothes. To Kianni, assigning



**MAKING AN IMPACT**  
Kianni's environmental awareness was sparked by the heavy smog she observed visiting Iran (top: the view in Tehran). Part of her work now is advising the U.N. on climate change (bottom: the U.N. General Assembly).

show, where she and her sister sneaked into the mosh pit). "I'm only going to be 21 once in my life," she says.

Next up for her is the 776 Fellowship, a program started by Reddit founder Alexis Ohanian that gives \$100,000 grants to young people focused on solving climate change and will give her the resources to double down on environmental projects. Even with her new ventures, it's the Climate Cardinals community that keeps her going. In their most recent call for executive team members, more than 5,000 people showed interest in applying; the application post went viral, reaching over a million people. "And these were all students," Kianni says. "They just want to be part of something. They want to be working towards a better world." —MG

## How can you help STOP A CRISIS that you don't even know is happening?"

individual blame for climate change and the subsequent guilt people feel is one of biggest impediments to taking action. "People reach out to me and say, 'I don't feel like I can talk about climate change, because I'm not vegan, or whatever,'" Kianni says. But she points out, it won't take one person going vegan or even a community taking on a recycling initiative to effect change; it will take a movement of regular people holding the world's biggest polluters to accountability.

Though the urgency of the climate movement takes up the better part of Kianni's days, she also makes time to spend with friends and be a college student. It just takes prioritizing and setting hard stop times with work. She loves rap music and going to concerts (her favorite was Drake's Aubrey & the Three Migos





Conner Ives

DESIGNER

# LUXURIOUS KITSCH

recycling takes four times the labor of a traditional cut and sew business, because the fabric must be repaired and refashioned, but it's central to Ives' brand.

Sustainability has been a priority with Ives ever since he was a 16-year-old intern in New York's garment district, when he saw factories with dumpsters full of discarded fabric. "I started to realize the massive problem our industry has with waste," he says. "It was quite disheartening, especially at a point in my life where everything was so magical, exciting and new."

The clothes in his 2021 collection, "The American Dream," tell stories about female archetypes he saw growing up. For instance, "The LA Crystal Girl" look, which features a beaded, glittery halter-neck dress, embodies the revival of New Age practices in the 21st century. And the "The 9-5 Working Girl" ensemble, a polychrome knit set, exemplifies a

CONNER IVES HAS BEEN INTERESTED IN FASHION since he could speak. "I was always hanging out in my mom's closet, or commenting on what people were wearing," he says. Fame came in 2017, at the age of 21, when supermodel Adwoa Aboah went to the Met Gala wearing a custom dress he had designed—a swanlike ivory gown made of upcycled vintage pieces. Now his work is featured in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute's permanent collection. "As a kid, I would go to the fashion exhibit every summer," he says. "To know I have pieces I made myself in one of the greatest fashion archives in the world? No words."

Ives, now 27, is a leader in the slow fashion movement—a response to the current era of disposable clothes, which often feel made to be worn once for TikTok and then discarded. Although his clothes have an element of American kitsch—Budweiser t-shirts, Florida Gators sweatshirts and dresses patchworked with different patterned fabrics—they are made without the mass production that's become ubiquitous in American fashion. Instead, he designs his clothes to be produced in small batches at high quality and with a luxurious feel—and that are intended to last.

Rather than pushing out several collections throughout the year, Ives's eponymous label issues just one annually. He ensures that 75 percent of his brand's products are made from vintage clothing, fabrics, recycled material and dead-stock fabric. This







**SLOW FASHION:**  
Conner Ives designs clothes to be made in small batches and that are intended to last. Left: Ives' designs at London's Old Selfridges Hotel in February. Below: recent Ives outfits.

matriarchal breadwinner, middle-aged, “probably in therapy.” In 2022, Ives took inspiration from another female archetype, designing a Cruella de Vil style dress that Dua Lipa wore for her cover story in *Vogue* magazine. His latest collection draws from influences like Kate Moss and *The Parent Trap* character Elizabeth James, in a continuation of Ives' preoccupation with American pop culture. “Maybe that is a kind of patriotism, but I see it as a new patriotism that champions everybody.”

Ives is painfully aware of the fashion industry's flaws: the destination shows, the constant production circuit, the relentless need for newer, cooler clothes. “As an active participant in it, I often feel jaded,” he says. The pressure the industry puts on creators churning out 3-to-4 collections a year, which encourage speed and novelty over his style of thought-out, high-quality pieces, can sometimes feel insulting to his craft. He believes real luxury doesn't come from swapping out clothes every few months but valuing fewer, timeless pieces. He'd hoped that after the disruption of the pandemic, the fashion world would slow its pace. “Yet here we all are again, doing the same thing we were doing before all of this,” he says. Still, he is hopeful that people will eventually come to appreciate the value of their clothing and see the beauty in mending, re-wearing and recycling.

What sustains Ives through the troubles of the fashion industry and a world of rising temperatures



**“There is something so MAGICAL about making an idea a reality.”**

is the inspiration he draws from the process of creating. “I truly would go mad without it,” he says. “There is something so magical about making an idea a reality.” (His latest ideas will be on display in September, when he shows his Spring/Summer 2024 collection for the first time.) He always tries to keep uppermost in mind the memory of his 10-year-old self, flipping through glossy magazines and dreaming about a life making clothes. —MC

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: IK ALDAMA; JORDAN PETTIT/GETTY; IK ALDAMA (3)





LAST YEAR HANNAH ROTHSTEIN WAS SITTING IN A lobby when she noticed a wall decorated with '60s psychedelic rock posters. Naturally, the display immediately brought climate change to mind.

It's not as big a leap as it might seem. Rothstein is an artist who in recent years has focused on climate-change-themed visual art. Those rock posters ended up serving as a muse for her latest project, a series of posters that use the groovy, swirly vibe of the iconic images that once graced the covers of Jefferson Airplane or Cream LPs to glamorize solutions to the climate conundrum.

Rothstein has riffed on pop themes before—she's done coloring books and illustrations of food that have gone viral. In 2017 she decided to turn her method to attracting attention to climate change. "Any big change in how people think needs art, whether it's theater, music or visual," she says. "I wanted to use visuals to drive the climate-change movement forward."

She took a cue for her first project from another iconic set of posters: those illustrating the U.S. National Parks, created in the 1930s under the federal government's Works Progress Administration, or WPA. Rothstein's versions recreated the original ones, with a major twist: she depicted the parks as having

**"When you describe THE SCIENCE  
people's eyes**

been devastated by three decades of extreme weather. Her series, "National Parks 2050," include posters of a fizzled-out version of Yellowstone's Old Faithful, a lakeless Crater Lake, a Great Smoky Mountains consumed by fire, a lifeless Everglades and more.

The goal was to force people to confront a disaster in the making that, to many people, has so far been too easy to ignore. "Humans tend to not worry about even big problems until they're right in front of them," says Rothstein. "To change that you have make something that's distant and abstract feel more concrete and immediate. It's about bringing the future to the now."

The posters are intended to do that by delivering climate-change messages to a different part of the brain, she says. "When you describe the science behind climate change with words and numbers,

COURTESY OF HANNAH ROTHSTEIN (3)



**Hannah Rothstein** ARTIST

# A PSYCHEDELIC VIEW OF CLIMATE CHANGE

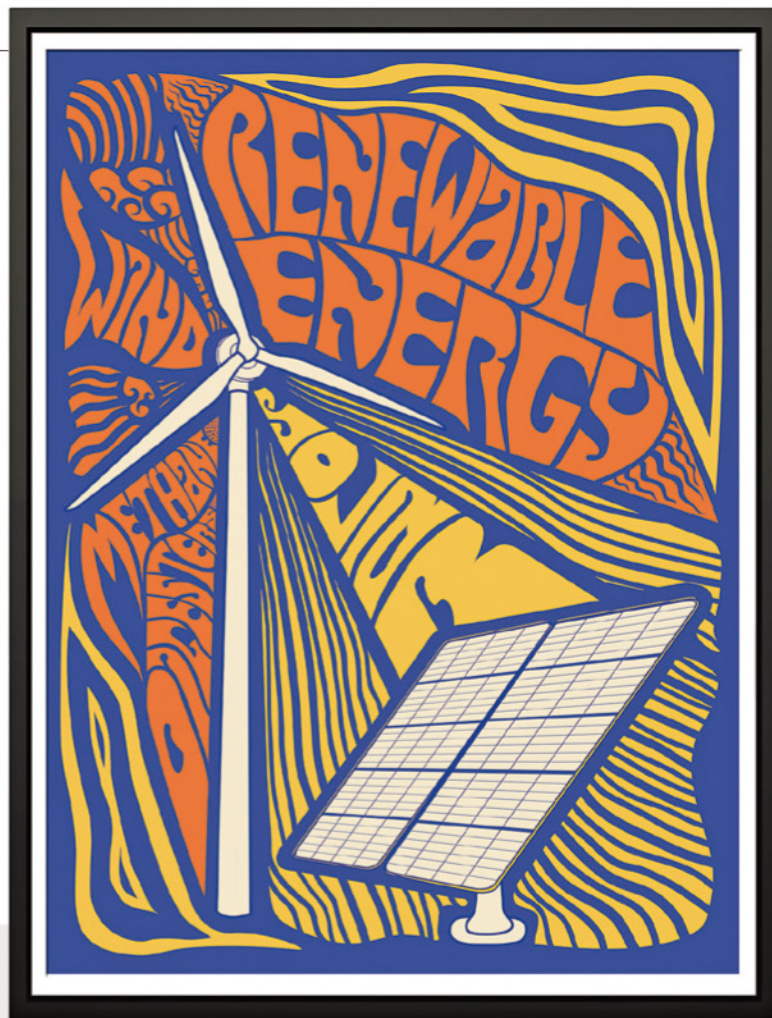


people's eyes tend to glaze over," she says. "By making it visual, you can grab immediate attention."

Rothstein followed the Parks project up with "50 States of Change," a series of prints that depict postcards resembling the classic tourist cards of each of the U.S. states—except standard scenes are replaced by climate-change ravaged versions. Alaska's card shows a house sinking into mud, the Arizona desert is a burned-out wasteland, Texas is underwater and so forth.

Both projects went viral and have become almost as iconic as the originals. Having done a superb job of hitting viewers with disturbing images of a terrible future to come, Rothstein recently took a different tack with a rock-poster-themed project. "I had started by focusing on what's in store for us if we don't fix things," she says. "Now I wanted to focus on positive change that can combat climate change."

The result was "Goodstock"—a play on Woodstock, in keeping with the '60s rock theme. The distorted, swooping typography espouses various slogans that exhort climate-friendly behaviors, including "Protect our forests," "Eliminate food waste," and "Invest in public transit." While Rothstein is not under the illusion that reading her advisory phrases will move everyone who sees them into action, she thinks the



**behind climate change with words and numbers, tend to GLAZE OVER. By making it visual, you can grab IMMEDIATE ATTENTION."**



**POP CLIMATE:** Hannah Rothstein's "50 States of Change, California" (above) and "Goodstock, Renewable Energy" (top).

simplicity of the messages is a virtue. "There's a lot of information out there about how to solve the problem, and it can feel overwhelming," she says. "I think it's better to distill them down into manageable packets that people can understand at a glance."

Rothstein is already thinking about her next project, which might engage viewers with unusual aspects of living creatures. Two possibilities she's playing with for characters: the nudibranch, a bizarrely colorful sea-slug, and the Redwood tree. "The Redwood actually has salmon DNA in it," she says. "I'd like to show how amazing these sorts of details from nature are."

While the means of engaging viewers changes through the different projects, the goal remains sparking interest in climate change. "I'm trying to make art that helps," she says. —DF



# Oman - Paving the Way for Growth and Investment with a Diversified Economy

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Oman's GDP experienced a notable 4.2% growth in 2022, a testament to its diversified economy's ability to withstand global crises. Since His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq ascended to the throne in January 2020, he has been a strong advocate of a 'Renewed Renaissance,' vowing to steer away from short-term pandemic-focused governance and instead pursue a long-term vision of fiscal sustainability. This vision places the private sector as the backbone of the economy while maintaining Oman's commitment to open global trade. As he declared in his anniversary speech on January 11, 2022: "All sectors of the State and the private sector will play the role expected of them. We are resolved to lend them our support and encourage entrepreneurship. We will offer necessary support and incentives to small and medium enterprises."

Echoing the late Sultan Qaboos' focus on social development, Sultan Haitham aims to raise living standards and tap into the significant potential of the country's sizable youth population. Recently, he unveiled plans for a state-of-the-art city to be constructed on the outskirts of Muscat, accommodating up to 100,000 residents across an expansive 14.8 million square meters. Geared towards low-income families, this city offers a substantial investment opportunity with the inclusion of schools, places of worship, hospitals, shopping centres, transportation infrastructure, and a dedicated university.

Sultan Haitham's ambitions for diversification, as outlined in the flagship Oman Vision 2040 strategy, are being impressively realised. In the first quarter of this year, Oman's economy experienced an astounding 7.4% growth, with the non-oil sector playing a pivotal role, contributing 6.5% more to the GDP than in Q1 2022, as reported by the Government Statistics Centre. Particularly noteworthy was the remarkable performance of the agriculture, forestry, and fishing sector, which exhibited an 8.4% year-on-year growth in its contribution to Oman's GDP. Moreover, in the preceding year, Oman recorded a fiscal surplus of USD 2.9 billion over the first nine months, enabling the government to increase public spending by 12.5%. This trend continued this year with a fiscal surplus of USD 1.35 billion between January and April.

These sound public finances and the country's increasingly diverse economy present a wealth of new opportunities for foreign investors. The government has actively supported Oman's openness to trade through an array of pro-business reforms and incentives. Notably, foreign investors in 'Oman Vision 2040' target sectors such as tourism, healthcare, education, and information technology (IT) can now avail themselves of a 10-year renewable residency visa, starting from September 2021.

Oman also holds immense potential as a logistics hub due to its strategic location and significant government investments. With five international airports, an extensive road and



His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, the Sultan of Oman

railway network, and three major ports beyond the Strait of Hormuz, the country offers excellent connectivity. Notably, the recently opened Port of Duqm, overlooking the Indian Ocean, adds to its impressive infrastructure within the renowned Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD), a 2,000 square kilometer area that links businesses to the rapidly expanding markets in the Middle East, South Asia, and East Africa.

The SEZAD operates under the supervision of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ). OPAZ also takes charge of three other Free Zones: the Al Mazunah Free Zone, serving as a commercial, service, and industrial hub with access to Yemen and East Africa; the Salalah Free Zone, acting as a launchpad to the Middle East, Africa, Southern Europe, and Asia; and the Solar Free Zone, strategically positioned as a deep-water port.

Oman's Free Zones present investors with some of the most attractive pro-business policies in the region, including tax exemptions,

streamlined business registration processes, the freedom to commence operations without a local Omani agent, and exemption from import and export duties. Other advantages have also been embedded in Oman's wider investment framework, such as the Foreign Capital Investment Law (FCIL), which permits foreign investors 100% business ownership in most sectors, eliminating the minimal capital requirement for doing business.

Moving forward, foreign investors can anticipate additional incentives and reforms, as Sultan Haitham has clearly conveyed his message: "We have lucrative investment opportunities at hand in all fields, and we look forward to seeing our country as a destination for pioneering investments. Oman boasts a wide range of competitive industries, great potential, and promising opportunities that need to be utilised. The government will unleash all its efforts and capacities to foster cooperation and integration."



# Ooredoo Oman - Pioneering Connectivity and Digital Advancements in Oman's Thriving Economy

Following an era of rapid socio-economic development, Oman is actively pursuing diversification and private sector-led growth to secure its future. Two years ago, the Sultanate unveiled its flagship initiative 'Vision 2040,' resulting in strong growth in non-oil sectors and a significant rise in foreign direct investment (FDI).

Equal access to connectivity plays a vital role in Oman's private sector success. In 2016, the Telecommunications Authority of the Sultanate of Oman (TRA) opened up the telecommunications sector in order to bring in new investment and resellers, and with the future prospect of further operator licenses. This led to intense competition and continuous innovation to meet growing customer demands.

Leading the way with a unique, digital-first customer experience is Ooredoo Oman, part of the global Ooredoo Group, now the Sultanate's second-largest full service operator and a digital innovation leader. With about 3 million customers, including SMEs and large enterprises, Ooredoo Oman provides reliability, super-fast connectivity with countrywide 5G, and a seamless end-to-end customer journey.

"Ooredoo Group may be an international entity, but our services are tailored to the local community. Understanding our customers' needs is crucial, and our range of products and services reflects that," says Ooredoo Oman's CEO, Mr. Bassam Yousef



Bassam Yousef Al Ibrahim  
CEO

Al Ibrahim, pointing out Ooredoo's 'office in a box' ready-made service for businesses as one example.

Having previously steered the success of Ooredoo Algeria, Al Ibrahim sees Oman as the most significant opportunity. "The telecom sector here is the most advanced I've experienced, and we're now leading the way in digital services." Ooredoo's achievements include winning Bronze in the Stevie Awards Middle East's "Excellence in Innovation in Technology Industries" category and the Telecom Review's "Best Middle East Digital Customer Experience Award" last year.

Digitalisation is a central pillar of Vision 2040,

and Ooredoo is strategically investing to cater to the growing and diversifying needs of its customers. In a tight market like Oman's, even small differences can yield significant rewards. "While all providers essentially offer the same technology, our customer service sets us apart. Customer feedback is crucial to us and forms the core of our strategy moving forward. We understand the value our services bring to people," says Al Ibrahim.

Ooredoo's mission is to digitally enrich communities and businesses and building relationships is also vital in expanding Oman's network. Al Ibrahim added, "We're currently pursuing partnerships in the B2B space, with global companies such as Amazon or Google. Oman could easily be a preferred destination for such hyperscalers, and we could be their hub with the connectivity and technology we have."

Oman's future lies in being a digitally advanced and knowledge-based economy, and Ooredoo is working at the cutting edge of its transformation. "Oman's telecom market is experiencing rapid growth and Vision 2040 is creating exciting new opportunities, with projects like The Sustainability City in Yiti. Indeed, the government is fully committed to supporting the economy through local and foreign investment, in order to fully realise the plans it has in place," says Al Ibrahim.



## Al Madina Group Driving Oman's Digital Transformation

Oman has made "decisive strides" in delivering its structural agenda under Vision 2040, according to a recent report by the IMF. The country's forward-looking approach to governance has supported the development of its public IT infrastructure and services. In the UN's 2020 e-government survey, the Sultanate ranked second in the Arab World.

Al Madina Group, a leader in digitalisation, holds the distinction of being the oldest privately owned security printing press in the Gulf Cooperation Council member states. According to Sheila Hopper Jamal, CEO of Al Madina Group, "We have been in digital transformation for over 20 years now. We have been instrumental in driving the digital transformation, improving governance, and enhancing public services, thus promoting government efficiency and transparency."

Al Madina Group is strongly committed to supporting Oman's government and the delivery of the Oman Vision 2040, which outlines a roadmap for economic and social development and the creation of a knowledge-based society. The company aims to overcome challenges, adapt to global changes, seize opportunities to enhance economic competitiveness and social well-



Sheila H. Jamal  
CEO

being, stimulate growth, and "build confidence in all economic, social, and developmental relations nationwide." Embracing digital transformation, particularly in e-government services, is a key component of this strategy.

With a 39-year track record of successful projects in IT and e-government solutions, Al Madina Group has emerged as a go-to partner for eServices and secure printing

solutions for e-passports, national IDs, and other sensitive materials. Their clientele spans the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and the Americas. Building on its achievements in Oman, the company has expanded its operations into other markets, notably in Africa.

"Al Madina Group caters to both B2B and B2G businesses, serving as a preferred partner for top companies and governments. Its private ownership is a significant competitive advantage, providing the flexibility and independence required for successful collaborations with governments worldwide. In Oman, the company serves clients that include the Ministries and top ten banks. Overseas, their initial contract for government services related to driving licenses and vehicle registration were so successful that Al Madina now provides solutions for national IDs, work permits, e-passports and e-visas. The company maintains an unwavering commitment to delivering quality services both in its home market and overseas.

Jamal emphasises the significance of digital transformation in Oman's Vision 2040, stating, "Digital transformation is one of the key pillars of Oman 2040, which will bring a lot of development to Oman and create a lot of long-term jobs."





# Oman Data Park



## Powering Oman's Digital Transformation and Economic Growth

Following Oman's highly successful post-pandemic economic recovery, the International Monetary Fund projects "higher growth over the medium term." This optimistic outlook is owed to several factors: soaring oil prices, continued fiscal consolidation, and low government debt. Moreover, Fitch Ratings reaffirmed Oman's credit rating as 'Positive,' citing the impressive turnaround of Oman's fiscal deficit into a surplus of 3.4% of its GDP over the past year. Additionally, the reduction of government debt as a percentage of GDP from 61% at the end of 2021 to 40% further solidifies the positive trajectory.

Looking ahead, Oman's ambitious socio-economic initiative, Oman Vision 2040, promises sustainable growth driven by the non-oil sector. A key driver of this vision is the expansion of Oman's digital economy and the widespread adoption of cutting-edge technologies such as big data and artificial intelligence (AI). Positioned strategically overlooking the Indian Ocean and bolstered by its submarine cable connections to Asia, Africa, and Oceania, Oman has transformed into a thriving data centre hub. According to Statista, revenue from Oman's data centres is projected to reach USD 61.5 million this year, attracting the attention of some of the world's largest hyperscalers. This trend positions the sector to potentially double in size by the end of the decade.

At the forefront of Oman's data centre market, capturing an impressive 70% market share is Oman Data Park (ODP). Recognised for its excellence, ODP offers award-winning managed cloud, cybersecurity, and AI services, as well as software products. Its clientele ranges from private and public enterprises to renowned hyperscalers like Amazon Web Services (AWS). By partnering with ODP, businesses gain the flexibility and security required to stay competitive in today's fast-paced digital landscape.

Maqbool Al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Data Park, explains the company's inception was driven by two crucial government mandates. The first mandate focused on data localisation, while the second aimed to maximise the contribution of data centre services to Oman's GDP. ODP's journey began in 2013 by providing data centre services to Oman's banking sector, starting with Bank Nizwa. Today, nearly all banks in Oman entrust their data to ODP, cementing its position as a trusted partner within the banking industry. Al Wahaibi asserts, "Our primary sector is banking. Given the sectors' regulations, our involvement in the banking sector has provided us invaluable risk and compliance experience."

ODP's influence extends to the oil and gas sector, where it offers companies flexible digitalisation plans, leveraging tools such as Microsoft Azure, resulting in up to 25% reductions in total cost of ownership (TCO). Recently, ODP inked a significant agreement with Schlumberger,



the world's largest offshore drilling company, to automate parts of its oil drilling process.

In addition to its prowess in banking and oil & gas, ODP provides tailor-made Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS) products for the telecommunications sector. Oman's early adoption of 5G technology has been supported by ODP, assisting the government in achieving its network targets. The company currently collaborates with industry giant Vodafone, playing a pivotal role in the launch of their services in Oman. Al Wahaibi proudly states, "All Vodafone infrastructure is now cloudified in our data centres and managed by our Oman Data Park team. It's one of the most sophisticated projects of its kind in Oman."

Innovation lies at the core of Oman Data Park's DNA, exemplified by its pioneering achievements. The company has introduced two Omani firsts: an AI-enabled IaaS system in collaboration with Nvidia, and the creation of the Nebula system, the first virtual data centre. Nebula revolutionises the traditional data centre model, reducing TCO by up to 55% and enabling businesses to be up and running within hours, a fraction of the time typically

required for a traditional data centre setup.

Al Wahaibi envisions ODP as one of the world's top 10 managed service providers (MSPs) by 2025, emphasising the importance of international partnerships in achieving this goal. With esteemed partnerships that include hyperscalers such as AWS, Oracle, Dell, and Cisco, Al Wahaibi aims to leverage these alliances to expand into new markets. Saudi Arabia is a primary focus, with ongoing discussions with internet providers, while East Africa, particularly Tanzania, presents exciting opportunities. ODP has already committed to establishing a data centre in Zanzibar as part of the recent Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between Oman and Zanzibar. Additionally, the data centre in Duqm is being prepared to welcome GCC and international investors. Al Wahaibi also expresses interest in collaborating with US-based robotics and AI companies, while exploring opportunities in Europe.

ODP's unrivalled reliability and exceptional customer care standards make it an ideal partner for prospective clients. With a remarkable uptime guarantee of 99.9825% and round-the-clock monitoring, coupled with military-grade cybersecurity, ODP ensures the utmost security and uninterrupted service. Al Wahaibi emphasises, "Service management is about building capacities and skills. We provide expert support from proven industry leaders who know how to take care of our partners. We have solutions architects and technical specialists—everything hyperscalers need."

As Oman actively pursues diversification, Oman Data Park embodies the transformative economic landscape. In addition to supporting SMEs and start-ups with three years of free cloud storage, ODP is steadfast in its mission to fully cloudify Oman's public and private sectors. Al Wahaibi reveals plans to establish a strategic enablement body, working in tandem with the government to expedite digitalisation plans. Furthermore, ODP is poised to offer e-procurement products and collaborative software from Cisco. Al Wahaibi concludes, "Oman is strongly focused on building its capacity to provide professional services, and for investors, the resources here are far more cost-effective than in the USA or Europe."



# Muscat Pharmacy and Stores

## Half a Century of healthcare excellence

Since announcing Oman Vision 2040, the Sultanate's government has embarked on legislative reforms to ready its investment climate for increased FDI, diversification, and private-sector-led growth. These include tax incentives, increased access to capital, and offers of long-term residency to expatriates with work visas.

One of Oman's greatest achievements is its world-class healthcare sector. Oman had just two hospitals and 13 physicians in 1958, and when His Majesty Sultan Qaboos started his reign in 1970, life expectancy in the Sultanate stood at 49.3. In 2021, that number rose to 73.8, and today Omani nationals enjoy free and easy access to 70 hospitals and specialist clinics.

Founded in 1968 by HE Dr. Asim Al Jamali and the late HE Qais bin Abdulmunim Al Zawawi, Muscat Pharmacy and Stores has grown to become one of Oman's most successful and trusted healthcare leaders. Muscat Pharmacy and Stores operates a record 62 outlets across Oman, including perfume and cosmetics stores, and is a multi-award-winning distributor for global brands like Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, AstraZeneca, and Bristol-Myers Squibb.

As Oman's healthcare sector rapidly expanded, Muscat Pharmacy collaborated



Bakul Mehta  
Managing Director

Dilip Mehta  
Deputy Managing Director

with the government to ensure pharmaceutical supplies reached new hospitals and covered all regions. "Today, when we open new outlets, we look at patient requirements and local medical needs, which is why we've opened many in remote areas to ensure all Omani citizens have access to the medical supplies they need," says Muscat Pharmacy's Managing Director, Bakul Mehta.

Mehta cites the success of Muscat Pharmacy's outlets to the company's progressive ethos of decentralised responsibility, which he believes gives its pharmacists the power to

respond swiftly to local patient needs.

Mehta also believes international partnerships will be key to securing the company's continued expansion and is particularly interested in working with biopharmaceutical companies or firms with novel treatments.

Muscat Pharmacy has one of the strongest logistics and distribution networks of any pharmaceutical company in Oman, comprising eight GDP-compliant warehouses totalling 14,000 square metres of temperature-controlled storage space and a 120-strong fleet of commercial delivery vehicles.

"It's crucial for international companies entering Oman to have a local partner," highlights Mehta. "Understanding local legal systems and regulations, particularly in sectors like pharmaceuticals, is vital. We are committed to assisting both local companies and international players in navigating these requirements."

Mehta expresses confidence in the government's approach. "We have several specialised hospitals, including one dedicated to cancer treatment and research centres looking into our higher cancer rates. We have some of the best facilities in the world."



# Target LLC

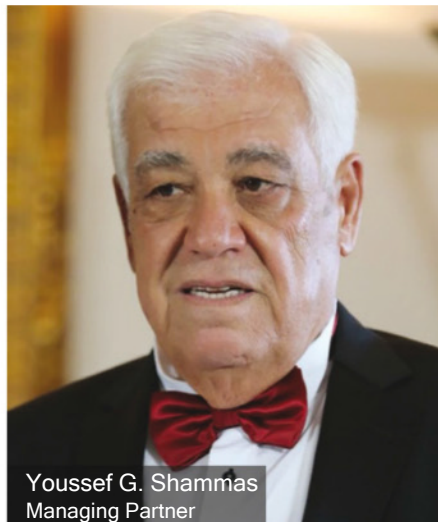
## - Driving the Future of Oman through Infrastructure Development

Over the past decades, fueled by its hydrocarbon resources, Oman has achieved extraordinary growth and development. The Sultanate has also begun to diversify, liberalise, and 'greenify' its economy. This is one of the key objectives of the Oman Vision 2040 flagship program, which promises enhanced market flexibility, structural reforms, and increased investment in non-hydrocarbon sectors such as tourism, logistics, and renewables.

Strengthening Oman's inherent transport and logistics potential also forms a central part of Oman Vision 2040, with the Sultanate strategically located at the entrance to the Gulf. Looking ahead, Oman's recently improved public-private partnerships (PPPs) law and investment plans for its industrial, energy, and infrastructure projects present many opportunities for international businesses.

Founded in 1976, Target LLC is one of Oman's leading contractors and has played an integral role in several development projects over the years. Target specialises in civil construction related to water and wastewater infrastructure, energy, earthworks, and developments. The company also provides electromechanical, metal fabrication, and joinery works.

Target is selective in its projects and primarily works with Oman's government and top-tier organisations, such as various ministries and semi-governmental entities, utility providers, and energy companies. These include the Diwan of Royal Court, the Ministry of Defence, Nama Water Services, Petroleum Development Oman,



Youssef G. Shammass  
Managing Partner

Petrofac, and OQ. More recently, Target has been involved in water infrastructure projects of strategic importance, such as a major project comprising water reservoirs, pump stations, and pipelines for the populous Batinah region.

Target has cemented its position as a market leader by consistently delivering superior, results-driven services to its clients. "One of our biggest achievements was the Jebel Akhdar Water Supply Project, which had run into severe delays as the

previous contractor only completed 10% of the project after seven years. We were subsequently tasked with the remainder of the project, and we finished it within one and a half years," says Target's Managing Partner, Youssef Shammass.

As Oman's demand for infrastructure continues to rise, Shammass anticipates significant expansion opportunities for the company. Moreover, with his four sons actively involved in the operations, Shammass has instilled in the next generation the importance of upholding his values, a respectful business approach, and ensuring the continuity of the company and its employees.

Shammass also aims to further reinforce Target's value proposition by increasing its service lines and forming constructive partnerships. "We're currently seeking partners for promising infrastructure projects, such as dams, and others as well, particularly in the northern region of Oman. Transparency, commitment, and honesty are crucial to me. I have a strong ethical foundation, and I'm looking for partners who share my values."

Target has a deep knowledge of Oman's market and underlying infrastructure demands. It has an excellent reputation with its clients and has earned their trust. Being an owner-managed company, coupled with its strong track record, make it the ideal local partner for businesses looking to tap into this high-potential sector. "In general, the construction industry in Oman focuses on meeting people's needs. Whenever there is a requirement, there is a project," says Shammass.





AMERICA'S BEST

# PHYSICAL REHABILITATION CENTERS

2023

EACH YEAR MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE PRESCRIBED physical therapy while recovering from surgery, treating chronic conditions or healing from illnesses or injuries. Inpatient physical rehabilitation facilities are often used for patients recuperating from the most severe illnesses or injuries. These centers provide intensive therapy with multidisciplinary teams of medical professionals. Research shows that physical therapy following surgery reduces recovery time. Additionally, patients treated with physical therapy reduced pain and improved mobility, which results in better function.

There are more than 1,000 inpatient physical rehabilitation centers in the United States, giving us more choices than ever before. *Newsweek* and the global market research and consumer data firm Statista are proud to announce our ranking of America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers for the fourth year.

This award recognizes 280 leading inpatient rehabilitation facilities in the U.S. based on a survey of experts, quality metrics and accreditation data. Survey participants were also given an opportunity to specify standout programs in areas like rehabilitation for amputation, brain injury, cancer, spinal cord injury or stroke. We hope this ranking is useful in your search for the best care options available. ▶ **Nancy Cooper**, *Global Editor in Chief*







DOUGAL WATERS/GETTY



## METHODOLOGY

### The America's Best Physical Rehabilitation Centers 2023

ranking awards the leading inpatient physical rehabilitation facilities in the U.S. The centers were identified according to the definition of inpatient rehabilitation facilities (IRFs) by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS). IRFs are freestanding rehabilitation hospitals and rehabilitation units in acute care hospitals. Centers which offer outpatient physical rehabilitation services only were excluded. A few facilities which provide inpatient rehabilitation services but are not included in the CMS IRF data were also considered.

Physical rehabilitation centers from the 25 states with the highest number of centers were included in the survey: AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, FL, GA, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MI, MO, NC, NY, OH, OK, PA, SC, TN, TX, VA, WA, WI. All remaining states were divided into four regions for the survey:

**Northeast** ..... CT, MA, ME, NH, NJ, RI, VT  
**Midwest** ..... IA, MN, ND, NE, SD  
**West** ..... AK, HI, ID, MT, NM, NV, OR, UT, WY  
**South** ..... DC, DE, MD, MS, WV

### Ranking

**1. National online survey:** From April to May 2023, an online survey among experts with knowledge of physical rehabilitation centers (physicians, physiotherapists, doctors, clinic managers and other health care professionals) was conducted in cooperation with *Newsweek*.

Participants were asked to recommend the top 10 physical rehabilitation centers from their respective states. Recommendations for their own employers were not allowed.

For each recommended physical rehabilitation facility, participants also were asked to assess the quality of care (treatments/therapies, consultation with doctor/therapist), service (meals, leisure activities), follow-up care (outpatient therapies) and accommodations and amenities (size of room, quality of furnishing).

Participants were also able to specify a standout program (amputation, brain injury, cancer rehabilitation, spinal cord injury, stroke) for the recommended physical rehabilitation center. Rehabilitation centers that received several recommendations for one of the standout programs receive this additional designation.

**2. Quality metrics data** for IRFs published by CMS.

**3. Accreditation data** on physical rehabilitation centers provided by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) and the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center (MSKTC)

### Scoring

A total score was calculated for each physical rehabilitation center. The total score was composed of:

45%	Reputation Score
45%	Quality Metrics Score
5%	Accreditation Score
5%	Model Systems Score

#### REPUTATION SCORE (45%)

80 percent of the reputation score is based on expert recommendations in the survey. Recommendations that stated a facility was the best in a state received a 33 percent higher weight than recommendations for the fifth best. Additionally, the professional experience of the participant was taken into account. A score was assigned to each facility based on the number of weighted recommendations.

The quality score is based on assessments given by the medical experts in the survey and constitutes 20 percent of the reputation score.

For each recommended physical rehabilitation facility, participants were asked to assess the quality of:

- ▶ **Care** (e.g., treatments/therapies, consultation with doctor/therapist)
- ▶ **Service** (e.g., meals, leisure activities)
- ▶ **Follow-up care** (e.g., outpatient therapies)
- ▶ **Accommodations & amenities** (e.g., size of rooms, quality of furnishings)

#### QUALITY METRICS SCORE (45%)

Quality metrics data is published by CMS. These quality metrics are risk-standardized quality measures, allowing for a comparison of facilities regarding quality of treatment and medical conditions, even if the patient groups are varying. For each of the 16 quality metrics reported by CMS, a sub-score was calculated.

The facility which achieved



the best result in one individual measure (e.g., lowest infection rate or highest influenza vaccination coverage among health care personnel) received 100 percent for the respective sub-score.

The weighted sub-scores were used to calculate the total quality metrics score.

#### ACCREDITATIONS SCORE (5%)

CARF International is a nonprofit organization assigning voluntary accreditation for U.S. IRFs. To receive accreditation, facilities must commit to quality improvement, focus on the unique needs of each person the provider serves and monitor service outcomes.

The following specialty programs were included in the scoring model: amputation, brain injury, cancer rehabilitation, spinal cord injury and stroke. Facilities receive a 2.5 percent bonus to their score if they have CARF accreditation and 0.5 percent for each specialty program (maximum 2.5 percent).

#### MODEL SYSTEMS SCORE (5%)

Model Systems are funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). These specialized programs of care are available in the areas of spinal cord injury (SCI), traumatic brain injury (TBI) and burn injury.

The aim is to provide high quality research and patient care to improve the health and overall quality of life of people with TBI, SCI and burn injuries. Facilities receive a 5 percent bonus if they have one or more model system designations awarded by NIDILRR.

The rankings are comprised exclusively of physical rehabilitation centers that are eligible regarding the scope described here. A mention in the ranking is a positive recognition based on peer recommendations. The ranking is the result of an elaborate process which, due to the interval of data collection and analysis, reflects the last 12 months only. Furthermore, any events preceding and following the period June 15, 2022 – June 15, 2023, and/or pertaining to individual persons affiliated/associated to the facilities were not considered in the metrics. As such, the results of this ranking should not be used as the sole source of information for future deliberations.

The information provided in this ranking should be considered in conjunction with other available information about physical rehabilitation centers or, if possible, accompanied by a visit to the facility. The quality of physical rehabilitation centers that are not included in the rankings is not disputed.





STANDOUT PROGRAM > ● = Stroke ● = Spinal Cord Injury ● = Brain Injury ● = Cancer ● = Amputee

## ALABAMA

- 1 **82.12** Encompass Health - Lakeshore Rehabilitation Hospital  
BIRMINGHAM
- 2 **77.37** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of North Alabama  
HUNTSVILLE
- 3 **76.76** Springhill Medical Center  
MOBILE
- 4 **76.58** Northport Medical Center  
NORTHPORT
- 5 **76.06** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital Gadsden  
GADSDEN

## ARIZONA

- 1 **78.39** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Scottsdale  
SCOTTSDALE
- 2 **76.44** Dignity Health East Valley Rehabilitation Hospital  
CHANDLER

## ARKANSAS

- 1 **78.19** Baptist Health - Rehabilitation Institute Little Rock  
LITTLE ROCK
- 2 **76.76** Mercy Hospital Northwest Arkansas  
ROGERS
- 3 **76.06** Baptist Health - Rehabilitation Institute North Little Rock  
NORTH LITTLE ROCK

- 4 **75.67** Mercy Rehabilitation Hospital  
FORT SMITH
- 5 **75.37** Encompass Health - CHI St. Vincent Hot Springs Rehabilitation Hospital  
HOT SPRINGS
- 6 **75.05** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Smith  
FORT SMITH

## CALIFORNIA

- 1 **93.03** Ronald Reagan UCLA Medical Center ● ●  
LOS ANGELES
- 2 **82.99** Sutter Health - California Pacific Regional Rehabilitation Center  
SAN FRANCISCO
- 3 **82.85** California Rehabilitation Institute ● ● ●  
LOS ANGELES

- 4 **81.81** PIH Health Good Samaritan Hospital  
LOS ANGELES
- 5 **81.45** Loma Linda University Medical Center  
LOMA LINDA
- 6 **81.24** Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center ● ●  
DOWNEY
- 7 **81.23** Keck Hospital of USC  
LOS ANGELES
- 8 **80.32** Kaiser Foundation Rehabilitation Center ●  
VALLEJO
- 9 **80.08** Sutter Health - Alta Bates Summit Medical Center  
OAKLAND
- 10 **79.66** UCI Medical Center  
ORANGE
- 11 **79.38** El Camino Health - El Camino Hospital of Los Gatos  
LOS GATOS
- 12 **79.26** Alhambra Hospital Medical Center  
ALHAMBRA
- 13 **77.89** UC Davis Medical Center  
SACRAMENTO
- 14 **77.63** Cottage Rehabilitation Hospital  
SANTA BARBARA
- 15 **77.56** Sutter Health - Roseville Medical Center  
ROSEVILLE
- 16 **76.82** The Rehabilitation Center at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center  
SAN JOSE
- 17 **76.65** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Murrieta  
MURRIETA
- 18 **76.38** Casa Colina Hospital for Rehab Medicine  
POMONA



19 **75.39** Sharp Memorial Rehabilitation Center  
SAN DIEGO ●

20 **75.24** Adventist Health Glendale  
GLENDALE

## COLORADO

1 **80.33** Spalding Rehabilitation Hospital  
AURORA

2 **79.66** UCHealth - University of Colorado Hospital  
AURORA

3 **79.24** Reunion Rehabilitation Hospital Denver  
DENVER

4 **78.56** UCHealth Memorial Hospital Central  
COLORADO SPRINGS

5 **78.11** Swedish Medical Center - General Rehabilitation  
ENGLEWOOD

6 **77.92** Centura Health - St. Anthony Hospital  
LAKEWOOD

7 **77.77** Craig Hospital  
ENGLEWOOD

8 **76.81** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Littleton  
LITTLETON

## FLORIDA

1 **80.18** Jackson Memorial Hospital - Christine E. Lynn Rehabilitation Center  
MIAMI ●

2 **79.14** Brooks Rehabilitation Hospital  
JACKSONVILLE

3 **78.74** Advent Health - Daytona Beach  
DAYTONA BEACH

4 **78.55** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Miami  
MIAMI

5 **78.03** AdventHealth - Orlando  
ORLANDO

6 **77.91** Memorial Regional Hospital South  
HOLLYWOOD

7 **77.43** Mount Sinai Medical Center  
MIAMI BEACH

8 **77.37** Bayfront Health St. Petersburg  
ST. PETERSBURG

9 **76.41** UF Health Rehab Hospital  
GAINESVILLE

10 **76.24** Kindred Hospital Bay Area - Tampa  
TAMPA

11 **76.18** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Largo  
LARGO

12 **75.98** Rehabilitation Hospital at Lee Memorial Hospital  
FORT MYERS

13 **75.97** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Spring Hill  
BROOKSVILLE

14 **75.94** Orlando Health Advanced Rehabilitation Institute  
ORLANDO

15 **75.92** Kindred Hospital South Florida - Ft. Lauderdale  
FORT LAUDERDALE

16 **75.69** HCA Florida Lake Monroe Hospital  
SANFORD

17 **75.56** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Sarasota  
SARASOTA

18 **75.54** Holy Cross Hospital  
FORT LAUDERDALE

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## GEORGIA

- 78.39** Emory Healthcare - Rehabilitation Hospital  
ATLANTA
- 76.80** Piedmont Macon Rehabilitation  
MACON
- 75.50** Shepherd Center  
ATLANTA
- 74.79** Emory Healthcare - Decatur Hospital  
DECATUR
- 74.52** St. Mary's Center for Rehabilitative Medicine  
ATHENS
- 74.10** Encompass Health Rehab Hospital of Savannah  
SAVANNAH
- 73.82** Doctors Hospital of Augusta  
AUGUSTA

## ILLINOIS

- 85.70** Shirley Ryan AbilityLab  
CHICAGO
- 78.88** Ascension Alexian Brothers  
ELK GROVE VILLAGE
- 78.27** Rush Copley's Inpatient Rehabilitation Center  
AURORA
- 78.12** Northwest Community Hospital  
ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
- 77.91** Advocate Health - Illinois Masonic Medical Center  
CHICAGO
- 77.78** University Of Illinois Medical Center At Chicago  
CHICAGO
- 77.57** Advocate Lutheran General Hospital  
PARK RIDGE

- 76.99** Advocate Health - Christ Medical Center  
OAK LAWN

- 76.22** Sinai Health System - Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital  
CHICAGO

- 75.78** Marianjoy Rehabilitation Hospital  
WHEATON

## INDIANA

- 82.11** Community Health Network - Community Rehabilitation Hospital North  
INDIANAPOLIS
- 78.67** Community Stroke & Rehabilitation Center  
CROWN POINT
- 78.51** Indianapolis Rehabilitation Hospital at Carmel  
CARMEL
- 77.39** Community Health Network - Community Rehabilitation Hospital South  
GREENWOOD

- 77.22** Rehabilitation Hospital of Indiana  
INDIANAPOLIS

- 76.70** Encompass Health Deaconess Rehabilitation Hospital  
NEWBURGH

- 75.30** Franciscan Health Indianapolis  
INDIANAPOLIS

## KANSAS

- 81.94** Menorah Medical Center  
OVERLAND PARK

- 79.56** Kansas Rehabilitation Hospital  
TOPEKA

- 79.55** University of Kansas Hospital  
KANSAS CITY

- 76.14** Saint Luke's South Hospital  
OVERLAND PARK

- 75.57** Post Acute Medical - Rehabilitation Hospital Of Overland Park  
OVERLAND PARK

## KENTUCKY

- 80.81** Encompass Health - Cardinal Hill Rehabilitation Hospital  
LEXINGTON
- 76.92** UofL Health - Frazier Rehabilitation Institute  
LOUISVILLE
- 76.49** Owensboro Health Regional Hospital  
OWENSBORO
- 76.48** Gateway Rehabilitation Hospital  
FLORENCE
- 76.05** Baptist Health Louisville  
LOUISVILLE

## LOUISIANA

- 78.75** Baton Rouge Rehab Hospital  
BATON ROUGE
- 78.66** Ochsner Rehabilitation Hospital  
JEFFERSON
- 78.57** Tulane Medical Center  
NEW ORLEANS
- 78.30** LCMC Health - Touro Rehabilitation Center  
NEW ORLEANS
- 77.72** Rehabilitation Center at Our Lady of the Lake  
BATON ROUGE
- 75.69** CHRISTUS St. Frances Cabrini Hospital  
ALEXANDRIA
- 74.72** Iberia Medical Center  
NEW IBERIA



8	74.21	Our Lady of Lourdes Regional Medical Center LAFAYETTE	
9	74.05	PAM Health - Specialty and Rehabilitation Hospital NEW ORLEANS	
MICHIGAN			
1	80.99	Beaumont Hospital ROYAL OAK	●
2	80.82	Michigan Medicine - Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation ANN ARBOR	●
3	80.19	Mary Free Bed Rehabilitation Hospital GRAND RAPIDS	
4	79.03	Henry Ford Health System - Macomb Hospital CLINTON TOWNSHIP	
5	77.84	DMC Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan DETROIT	
6	77.31	Spectrum Health - Rehabilitation Center at Blodgett Hospital GRAND RAPIDS	●

7	76.05	Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital ROCHESTER	
8	75.71	Ascension Macomb-Oakland Hospital, Warren Campus WARREN	
9	75.69	Henry Ford Health System - Wyandotte Hospital WYANDOTTE	
10	75.55	McLaren Northern Michigan PETOSKEY	
11	75.45	Beaumont Hospital - Farmington Hills FARMINGTON HILLS	
MIDWEST REGION			
1	81.02	Regions Hospital Rehabilitation - Hospital Campus SAINT PAUL, MN	
2	80.76	Fairview Health - Acute Rehabilitation Center MINNEAPOLIS	
3	80.73	University of Iowa Health Network Rehabilitation Hospital CORALVILLE, IA	

4	79.78	Mayo Clinic Hospital, Saint Marys Campus ROCHESTER, MN	● ●
5	78.42	Bryan Medical Center - West Campus LINCOLN, NE	●
6	78.09	Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals - Omaha Campus OMAHA, NE	
7	77.99	Abbott Northwestern Hospital MINNEAPOLIS	
8	77.21	Immanuel Rehabilitation Institute OMAHA, NE	
9	77.08	CHI Health Good Samaritan KEARNEY, NE	
10	76.61	Sanford USD Medical Center SIOUX FALLS, SD	
MISSOURI			
1	80.35	Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital St. Louis CHESTERFIELD	
2	79.51	Cameron Regional Medical Center CAMERON	
3	78.65	Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital Springfield SPRINGFIELD	
4	78.57	RUSK Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBIA	
5	78.53	Encompass Health - The Rehabilitation Institute of St. Louis ST. LOUIS	
6	75.21	Missouri Baptist Medical Center ST. LOUIS	
7	74.82	Boone Hospital Center COLUMBIA	





## NEW YORK

1	85.15	<b>NYU Langone Health - Rusk Rehabilitation</b> NEW YORK CITY	●●
2	80.32	<b>Mount Sinai - Rehabilitation Center</b> NEW YORK CITY	●
3	77.75	<b>NewYork-Presbyterian - William Randolph Hearst Inpatient Rehabilitation</b> NEW YORK CITY	
4	76.41	<b>NYC Health + Hospitals - Bellevue Hospital Center</b> NEW YORK CITY	
5	75.62	<b>Mount Sinai - Morningside Rehabilitation Center</b> NEW YORK CITY	
6	75.58	<b>NewYork-Presbyterian Brooklyn Methodist Hospital</b> BROOKLYN	
7	75.48	<b>Northwell Health - Glen Cove Hospital</b> GLEN COVE	
8	74.99	<b>Montefiore Medical Center</b> BRONX	
9	74.87	<b>Mercy Hospital of Buffalo - Medical Rehabilitation Unit</b> BUFFALO	
10	73.99	<b>University of Rochester Medical Center</b> ROCHESTER	
11	73.09	<b>Albany Medical Center</b> ALBANY	

## NORTH CAROLINA

1	80.20	<b>Encompass Health - Novant Health Rehabilitation Hospital</b> WINSTON-SALEM	
2	79.42	<b>WakeMed Rehabilitation Hospital</b> RALEIGH	●

3	79.05	<b>Atrium Health - Carolinas Rehabilitation</b> CHARLOTTE	
4	77.49	<b>Mission Health - CarePartners Rehabilitation Hospital</b> ASHEVILLE	
5	77.18	<b>Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center</b> WINSTON-SALEM	
6	75.78	<b>CarolinaEast Rehabilitation Hospital</b> NEW BERN	●
7	75.18	<b>NHRMC Rehabilitation Hospital</b> WILMINGTON	
8	74.79	<b>UNC Hospitals Inpatient Rehab</b> CHAPEL HILL	

## NORTHEAST REGION

1	80.14	<b>Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation - West Orange</b> WEST ORANGE, NJ	
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2	76.01	<b>Atlantic Rehabilitation Institute</b> MADISON, NJ	
3	75.61	<b>New England Rehabilitation Hospital</b> PORTLAND, ME	
4	75.47	<b>Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus</b> MILFORD, CT	
5	75.27	<b>Danbury Hospital</b> DANBURY, CT	
6	75.26	<b>Spaulding Rehabilitation Hospital</b> BOSTON	●
7	75.23	<b>Princeton Medical Center</b> PLAINSBORO, NJ	
8	74.90	<b>Berkshire Medical Center</b> PITTSFIELD, MA	
9	74.89	<b>Hartford Hospital</b> HARTFORD, CT	





## OHIO

1	84.17	Ohio State University - Dodd Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBUS	●
2	83.25	Cleveland Clinic Rehabilitation Hospital AVON	●
3	80.58	MetroHealth Rehabilitation Institute CLEVELAND	●
4	79.92	University Hospitals - Avon Rehabilitation Hospital AVON	
5	79.25	University Hospitals - Rehabilitation Hospital BEACHWOOD	
6	79.22	Rehabilitation Hospital of Northwest Ohio TOLEDO	
7	78.14	Summa Health - Summa Rehab Hospital AKRON	
8	78.10	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Cincinnati CINCINNATI	
9	76.67	The Rehabilitation Institute of Ohio DAYTON	
10	76.39	OhioHealth - Rehabilitation Hospital COLUMBUS	
11	76.06	Kettering Health Main Campus KETTERING	

## OKLAHOMA

1	79.57	Hillcrest Medical Center - Kaiser Rehabilitation Center TULSA	
2	77.91	Mercy - Rehabilitation Hospital Oklahoma City OKLAHOMA CITY	

3	76.48	Integris Jim Thorpe Rehabilitation OKLAHOMA CITY	
4	76.02	Saint Francis Hospital TULSA	
5	74.97	St. Anthony Rehabilitation Center OKLAHOMA CITY	

## PENNSYLVANIA

1	83.10	Penn Medicine - Lancaster Rehabilitation Hospital LANCASTER	
2	81.73	University of Pennsylvania - Penn Institute for Rehabilitation Medicine PHILADELPHIA	●
3	81.22	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute PITTSBURGH	
4	81.03	MossRehab ELKINS PARK	
5	80.31	Jefferson Health - Magee Rehabilitation Hospital PHILADELPHIA	
6	80.05	Jefferson Abington Hospital ABINGTON	
7	80.03	Main Line Health - Bryn Mawr Rehab Hospital MALVERN	
8	78.97	Allied Services - Scranton Rehab Hospital SCRANTON	
9	78.95	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Reading READING	

10	78.79	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Cedar Crest ALLENTOWN	
11	78.52	PennState Health - Rehabilitation Hospital HUMMELSTOWN	



12	78.32	Lehigh Valley Hospital - Pocono EAST STROUDSBURG	
13	78.12	Commonwealth Health - Center for Advanced Rehabilitation WILKES-BARRE	
14	78.11	Allied Services Wilkes-Barre Rehab Hospital WILKES-BARRE TOWNSHIP	
15	78.09	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute PITTSBURGH	
16	78.04	Good Shepherd Rehabilitation ALLENTOWN	
17	78.01	UPMC Rehabilitation Institute NEW CASTLE	
18	77.97	Geisinger Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital DANVILLE	
19	77.94	UPMC - St. Margaret Inpatient Rehabilitation Facility PITTSBURGH	

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## SOUTH CAROLINA

1	80.20	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Columbia	COLUMBIA
2	77.96	Roper Rehabilitation Hospital	CHARLESTON
3	76.88	East Cooper Medical Center	MOUNT PLEASANT
4	76.55	MUSC Health Rehabilitation Hospital	NORTH CHARLESTON
5	76.41	AnMed Health Rehabilitation Hospital	ANDERSON
6	76.27	Trident Medical Center	CHARLESTON
7	76.18	Roger C. Peace Rehabilitation - Prisma Health	GREENVILLE

## SOUTH REGION

1	81.91	The Johns Hopkins Hospital	BALTIMORE ●
2	81.13	The George Washington University Hospital	WASHINGTON, D.C.
3	80.71	Adventist HealthCare Rehabilitation	ROCKVILLE, MD
4	80.52	MedStar National Rehabilitation Hospital	WASHINGTON, D.C. ●
5	76.41	ChristianaCare Center for Rehabilitation at Wilmington Hospital	WILMINGTON, DE
6	75.59	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Middletown	MIDDLETOWN, DE

## TENNESSEE

1	76.51	Baptist Memorial Rehabilitation Hospital	GERMANTOWN
2	74.36	Encompass Health - Vanderbilt Stallworth Rehabilitation Hospital	NASHVILLE
3	74.35	Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital Of Franklin	FRANKLIN
4	74.16	Quillen Rehabilitation Hospital	JOHNSON CITY
5	73.81	Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital West	NASHVILLE

6	73.73	Siskin Hospital for Physical Rehabilitation	CHATTANOOGA
7	73.62	TriStar Skyline Medical Center	NASHVILLE

## TEXAS

1	88.43	Baylor Scott & White Institute for Rehabilitation - Dallas	DALLAS ● ● ● ●
2	82.91	Methodist Rehabilitation Hospital	DALLAS
3	81.34	Houston Methodist Rehabilitation Center	HOUSTON ● ●
4	81.27	TIRR Memorial Hermann	HOUSTON ●
5	80.74	Baylor Scott & White Institute for Rehabilitation - Irving Rehabilitation Unit	IRVING
6	80.57	UT Southwestern - Zale Lipshy Pavilion - William P. Clements Jr. University Hospital	DALLAS ● ● ● ●
7	80.47	St. David's HealthCare - St. David's Medical Center	AUSTIN
8	79.99	Central Texas Rehabilitation Hospital	AUSTIN
9	79.66	St. David's North Austin Medical Center	AUSTIN
10	79.34	Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Sugar Land	SUGAR LAND

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**11** **78.50** Texas Health - Presbyterian Hospital  
DALLAS

**12** **78.40** Kindred Hospital Houston Medical Center  
HOUSTON

**13** **78.32** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Plano  
PLANO

**14** **78.30** Medical City Dallas  
DALLAS

**15** **78.21** Methodist Hospital Stone Oak Rehabilitation Center  
SAN ANTONIO

**16** **78.20** Texas Rehabilitation Hospital of Fort Worth  
FORT WORTH

**17** **78.17** Baptist Inpatient Rehabilitation Center - St. Luke's  
SAN ANTONIO

**18** **78.16** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Dallas  
DALLAS

**19** **78.14** Baylor Scott & White Institute for Rehabilitation - Fort Worth  
FORT WORTH

**20** **78.03** Memorial Hermann Southwest Hospital  
HOUSTON

**21** **77.69** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Pearland  
PEARLAND

**22** **77.32** Cornerstone Specialty Hospitals Austin  
AUSTIN

**23** **77.30** St. Luke's Health - The Woodlands Hospital  
THE WOODLANDS

**24** **77.27** Baylor Scott & White - Institute for Rehabilitation  
GRAPEVINE

**25** **76.99** Baylor Scott & White - Institute for Rehabilitation at Frisco  
FRISCO

**26** **76.98** Accel Rehab Hospital of Plano  
PLANO

**27** **76.94** Memorial Hermann Rehabilitation Hospital Katy  
KATY

**28** **76.93** Warm Springs Rehabilitation Hospital of San Antonio  
SAN ANTONIO

**29** **76.91** Ernest Health - Trustpoint Rehab Hospital Of Lubbock  
LUBBOCK

**30** **76.89** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Austin  
AUSTIN

**31** **76.88** Kindred Hospital Sugar Land  
SUGAR LAND

## VIRGINIA

**1** **80.88** UVA Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital  
CHARLOTTESVILLE

**2** **79.04** Inova Rehabilitation Center - Mount Vernon  
ALEXANDRIA

**3** **77.53** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Richmond  
RICHMOND

**4** **77.44** HCA Virginia - Johnston-Willis Hospital  
RICHMOND

**5** **77.37** Inova Fairfax Medical Campus  
FAIRFAX

**6** **76.98** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Northern Virginia  
ALDIE

**7** **75.88** Sentara - Rehabilitation Virginia Beach General  
VIRGINIA BEACH

## WASHINGTON

- 1 **78.69** CHI Franciscan Rehabilitation Hospital  
TACOMA
- 2 **78.23** UW Medical Center – Montlake  
SEATTLE
- 3 **76.82** Swedish Cherry Hill Campus  
SEATTLE
- 4 **75.49** EvergreenHealth Rehabilitation Medicine Clinic  
KIRKLAND
- 5 **74.89** PeaceHealth Medical Group - United General Medical Center  
SEDRO-WOOLLEY
- 6 **74.84** Providence St. Luke's Rehabilitation Medical Center  
SPOKANE

## WEST REGION

- 1 **78.45** Elkhorn Valley - Rehabilitation Hospital  
CASPER, WY
- 2 **76.98** Northern Utah Rehabilitation Hospital  
SOUTH OGDEN, UT
- 3 **76.27** Rehabilitation Hospital of Southern New Mexico  
LAS CRUCES, NM
- 4 **75.65** Craig H. Neilsen Rehabilitation Hospital  
SALT LAKE CITY
- 5 **75.16** Oregon Rehabilitation Center  
EUGENE, OR
- 6 **75.15** The Rehabilitation Hospital of Montana  
BILLINGS, MT
- 7 **75.03** REHAB Hospital of the Pacific  
HONOLULU
- 8 **74.61** Intermountain - Neuro Specialty Rehabilitation Center  
MURRAY, UT

- 9 **74.42** Encompass Health - Rehabilitation Hospital of Utah  
SANDY, UT
- 10 **73.99** MountainView Hospital  
LAS VEGAS
- 11 **73.97** Alaska Regional Hospital  
ANCHORAGE, AK
- 12 **73.92** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Las Vegas  
LAS VEGAS
- 13 **73.86** Legacy Good Samaritan Medical Center  
PORTLAND, OR
- 14 **73.69** Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital of Desert Canyon  
LAS VEGAS

## WISCONSIN

- 1 **77.78** Aurora Medical Center  
SUMMIT
- 2 **77.00** Rehabilitation Hospital of Wisconsin  
WAUKESHA
- 3 **76.78** UW Health Rehabilitation Hospital  
MADISON
- 4 **76.03** Aurora St. Luke's Medical Center  
MILWAUKEE
- 5 **75.80** Ascension Sacred Heart Rehabilitation Hospital  
MEQUON
- 6 **75.32** Froedtert Memorial Lutheran Hospital  
WAUWATOSA





# Nazira Beishenalieva

## Helping investors excel in Kyrgyzstan

Kyrgyzstan's transition from a centrally planned to a socially-orientated free market economy in the 1990s, underpinned by democratic principles and a harmonised legal system, is one of Central Asia's biggest achievements. Last year, showing exceptional resilience to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan's GDP grew an astonishing 7%, according to the Asian Development Bank, its SME-dominated economy benefiting enormously from the country's robust transportation and trade links to Central Asia, the Caucasus, the EU, West China, and the Middle East.

In recent years, Kyrgyzstan has made significant progress in enhancing its overall business environment, and its government has sought closer engagement with foreign investors to attract diversified inward FDI. For example, the investment threshold for any foreign business looking to negotiate an investment agreement directly with the government has been reduced from USD 50 million to USD 10 million. Additionally, changes to Kyrgyzstan's public-private partnerships (PPPs) legislation have made it easier for foreign investors to access new opportunities.

Nazira Beishenalieva has spent decades championing her home country's presence on the world stage and, through her various initiatives and leadership roles, has consulted on and brokered some of the most important foreign investments in the country. For over 20 years, Beishenalieva has been a shareholder and the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of one of Kyrgyzstan's most successful commercial banks - the Bank of Asia -, and she also leads the Board of Directors of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Kyrgyz Republic (AmCham).

Beishenalieva's success story is a shining example of modern entrepreneurship and Kyrgyzstan's embrace of Western business practices- Beishenalieva is an alumna of the prestigious Harvard Business School AMP program and has used her background to bring a modern management philosophy to her work. She is also part of a new generation of business leaders, placing fair competition, global cooperation, sustainable development, and innovation at the centre of her involvement in Kyrgyzstan's economic expansion.

Beishenalieva has used her platform in managing a large-scale commercial bank and at AmCham to facilitate collaboration with other business leaders and dialogue between the government and the business community.



Nazira Beishenalieva

On a wider scale, Beishenalieva has set a precedent for consolidating the regional investment environment across Central Asia by utilising her AmCham leadership in Kyrgyzstan to strengthen economic relations with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Inspired by her attendance at the 2019 ASEAN Model Workshop in Singapore, led by former and current foreign ministers from the region, Beishenalieva believes Central Asia is well-positioned to replicate ASEAN's success by following its approach to equal partnerships, proactive cooperation, and enhanced cross-border dialogue. As such, Beishenalieva has used her contacts in financial institutions and the business sector to collaborate with the Astana International Financial Centre (AIFC), based in Kazakhstan, where she was appointed the official representative of the AIFC in the

Kyrgyz Republic and the Senior Advisor to the Office of the Chairman of the Management Board. As part of this role, she has organised key meetings between AIFC and government bodies, including a delegation of representatives from the private and public sectors to Kazakhstan. The visit resulted in an important agreement between the AIFC and the Union of Banks of Kyrgyz Republic, AmCham, the International Business Council, and the Russian Kyrgyz Development Fund. Additionally, a USD 1 million investment agreement was signed between MOST Ventures - the angel investor for AIFC - and the Kyrgyz company Namba One, whilst, in spring of last year, the Green Finance Center in Bishkek was jointly established by the AIFC Green Finance Center, the Kyrgyz Stock Exchange, OJSC Aiyl Bank, and the Union of Banks of the Kyrgyz Republic.

Kyrgyzstan's president, Sadyr Japarov, even highlighted the AIFC's efforts, stating in his official address that financial cooperation between Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan was a priority for his government. Beishenalieva was then invited by President Sadyr Japarov and Prime Minister Akybek Japarov to discuss Kyrgyzstan's financial markets and ways to strengthen its investment attractiveness. Beishenalieva laid out her vision for transforming Bishkek - Kyrgyzstan's capital - into a financial and investment hub to attract global investments and high-quality human capital to Kyrgyzstan.

Beishenalieva also recognises the importance of economic rights and freedoms in gaining the confidence of foreign investors and has used her standing to emphasise the importance of private property rights to Kyrgyzstan's government. With the support of the General Prosecutor's Office, Beishenalieva established the Advisory Council for Entrepreneurial Rights, an organisation focused on systematically improving the integrity

of Kyrgyzstan's business ecosystem.

"I pay great attention not only to creating a conducive business environment but also to developing promising industries in Kyrgyzstan. Having lived in some of the world's most advanced countries, such as South Korea and the UAE, I've established business contacts with key industry leaders, and experienced first-hand how Kyrgyzstan could benefit from the dynamics of a post-industrial economy, says Beishenalieva. "I formed a team with like-minded individuals from the creative class, and together we were the first to relay the creative economy's potential to government institutions. Three years on, I'm delighted to say there is now a legal framework to support and stimulate the creative industries."

Meanwhile, recognising the importance of human capital to the creative economy, Beishenalieva has focused on nurturing the next generation of talent. Her initiative, ProKG Leadership Program, for example, equips young people across Kyrgyzstan with the skills and professional leadership qualities to succeed in the international labour market. Today, more than 250 young graduates have graduated from the program, and many have since established their own organisations in the country.

Beishenalieva is also passionate about empowering the next generation of female leaders and has used her role at the Bank of Asia - where more than half of its employees and shareholders are women - to help female entrepreneurs overcome the same challenges she faced in accessing funding. One of her most prominent initiatives has been the introduction of gender bonds, which the bank launched on November 18, 2022 - Women's Entrepreneurship



Kyrgyz businesswomen delegation visit to the UAE

Day - and provides capital to projects that empower female entrepreneurs, create opportunities for women in the workforce, and address gender-based inequalities. "As a woman who has been in business for 20 years, I know how difficult it can be to get funding. I have faced it myself, so this is personal to me. I'm not doing this because it is suddenly trending to talk about female empowerment," says Beishenalieva.

Beishenalieva is also committed to levelling the digital playing field in Kyrgyzstan for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). Together with the Vice President of Dordoi Bazaar, Zhumabek Salymbekov, she founded the fintech company New Market Technologies, which developed a ground-breaking business platform - Dordoi TW ScoreX - to empower businesses in the Dordoi Market - one of the world's top ten largest wholesale and retail markets - affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. Through advanced digital payment technologies, the ScoreX platform has revolutionised

Kyrgyzstan's business landscape and enabled over 60,000 retailers to transition their operations online seamlessly. Her and Salymbekov's vision goes even further: to automate and streamline the delivery of tax documents. Technical support for the project was provided by the Kazakh IT company TrafficWaveScore. The project was supported by the Visa International Payment System. Building a digital ecosystem of Dordoi will make it possible to bring the largest market of Kyrgyzstan to the e-commerce leaders and create an effective tax environment for trade.

As global trends like digitisation and e-commerce reshape global economic connections, Beishenalieva is working to unify Central Asia and the Middle East. Currently, Beishenalieva and her team are managing business proposals from investment corporations in the UAE, which view Central Asia as holding untapped potential for the global economy, looking to invest in Kyrgyzstan. For her, Kyrgyzstan's biggest assets are its government's democratic approach, abundant natural resources, and its ability to fast-track foreign initiatives, given the absence of intense competition. Ultimately, Beishenalieva believes that Kyrgyzstan constitutes the ideal market to replicate successful projects from other nations.

A trailblazing entrepreneur and visionary, Beishenalieva's work forging stronger ties between Kyrgyzstan and the Middle East encompasses her broader mission to help Kyrgyzstan realise its economic potential. Her efforts and progressive initiatives have opened new possibilities for economic development over the past few decades, attracting investments and fostering mutually beneficial partnerships between regions. Above all, through her confident, strong approach, Beishenalieva has demonstrated that Kyrgyzstan is ready to occupy a well-deserved place on the global economic stage and become a reliable partner for foreign investors worldwide.



Kyrgyz Investment Forum held in London



# Toyboss - Ready to lead Kyrgyzstan meat processing

According to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), Kyrgyzstan's economy will grow 7% in 2023 and 7.2% in 2024. Upcoming major energy and infrastructure projects will primarily drive its strong growth, said the Bank, with a tailwind provided by businesses diversifying away from Russia.

Kyrgyzstan's abundant natural resources, arable land, and rich pastures have given rise to a strong, quality-orientated processed meat industry. According to Statista, the industry's revenue will hit USD 340 million this year and grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.2% until 2028.

Founded in 2009, Toyboss is an award-winning family-owned business specialising in halal sausages, semi-smoked sausages, and sandwiches.

"We started with sandwiches and snacks, and as we grew, we made the decision to produce our own sausages as they were the most expensive ingredient," says Toyboss' co-founder and director, Orumbaev Myrzabek Turganbaevich.

Toyboss launched its first factory in 2012 before moving to larger operations in 2014 and 2017 to keep up with demand. Its current factory is capable of producing 20 times as many tons of sausage meat per



day as when the company started. More recently, in 2020, as sales continued to jump 100% per year, Myrzabek decided to build Toyboss' own poultry farm, which is now joined to an advanced slaughterhouse with a 22-ton live weight capacity per shift.

Last year, Toyboss concluded the year with a group of companies united under a consolidated structure, achieving a net profit of nearly 9 million US dollars. With potential for further development, Myrzabek believes that by 2025, Toyboss will become a leading agro-industrial company in Kyrgyzstan. His ultimate goal is to transform it into one of the top three companies in the industry in Central Asia by 2030. "It's an ambitious task, but we are confident that

we can achieve it even earlier. Within our organization, we have four companies, and each of them has clear growth opportunities."

Myrzabek is now seeking partnership opportunities and wants to expand the business overseas. The company currently exports about 10% of its annual production, or 660 tons of sausages per year, and that number is constantly rising. Toyboss' products mainly go to countries with a shared culture and similar set of taste preferences, like Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, and Russia. Moving forward, Myrzabek wants to add the USA to that list. "On a recent visit, I saw high demand for sausages from Russia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan. The opportunity is certainly there," he says. Toyboss has also struck a deal with vendors in the UAE, specifically in Dubai.

Toyboss is one of a new generation of Kyrgyzstani businesses, succeeding through sheer hard work and smart reinvestment. "The country's mindset has shifted towards a Western approach to doing business, and that applies to local and foreign investors," says Myrzabek, adding, "our government is responsive and open to working together with businesses to find solutions."



Bishkek

## NEWSMAKERS

## Talking Points



**"IT IS A TRAGEDY  
BEYOND  
TRAGEDIES."**

—Hawaii Governor Josh Green  
on the Maui wildfires

**WIRED**

**"I would like  
to move to Mars. But I  
have to wait till  
my kids are good. Like 25."**

—MUSICIAN GRIMES ON HOPING "TO DIE IN SPACE"



GRIMES



**"We are confident  
that this is  
an isolated issue."**

NESTLÉ, ON RECALLING  
"BREAK AND BAKE" CHOCOLATE  
CHIP COOKIE DOUGH BARS  
DUE TO REPORTS OF WOOD CHIPS

**VARIETY**

**"I never  
really cared  
much about  
the legal  
system as a  
whole until I  
got exposed  
to it myself."**

—EX-CON AND FRAUDSTER ANNA  
DELVEY, WHILE UNDER HOUSE  
ARREST FIGHTING DEPORTATION



ANNA DELVEY



**"YOU BROUGHT JOY  
TO EVERY HUDDLE. KEEP  
DANCIN' IN HEAVEN!"**

—Russell Wilson about former NFL  
teammate, 28-year-old Alex Collins,  
after his fatal motorcycle accident



RUSSELL WILSON

**POLITICO**

**"We cannot afford that  
kind of backpedaling on  
a national scale."**

—Education Secretary Miguel Cardona on the  
Biden administration's new guidance to help  
colleges navigate admitting diverse students



**"I AM A DULY ELECTED  
STATE ATTORNEY...  
NOTHING DONE BY A  
WEAK DICTATOR CAN  
CHANGE THAT."**

—Monique Worrell, Florida's only Black  
female state attorney, after being  
suspended by Governor Ron DeSantis



# International Bank of Tajikistan

## Helping investors unlock Tajikistan's future

Tajikistan's favourable demographics and strong trade links to Asia - China accounts for more than half of all foreign direct investment (FDI) into the country - have made it a hotspot for seasoned investors with knowledge of the region. Today, the Government of Tajikistan is pursuing greater public sector efficiency and structural reforms to open the country to a new generation of global investors. Alongside access to a network of free economic zones, investors in Tajikistan benefit from some of Central Asia's most competitive tax policies. At the lower end, businesses investing up to USD 500 thousand will receive a two-year exemption on any tax on profits, or three years for investments between USD 500 thousand and USD 2 million, whilst investments exceeding USD 5 million will net businesses five years of tax exemption.

Over the past decade, Tajikistan's banking sector has been crucial in promoting economic growth, international investment, and long-term social prosperity. As of March 2023, Tajikistan had 64 credit organisations, 15 commercial banks, 23 microfinance organisations, and 26 microfinance funds. Most importantly, they are all looking to diversify the range of financial services they offer. Currently, these include the ability for citizens and businesses to charge foreign Visa cards, access foreign currencies, and easily send and receive money abroad. Last year, Tajikistan joined more than 30 other countries in launching a National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2022-2026) to help facilitate access to financial services for individuals and small businesses, accelerate digitisation and diversification, and promote financial literacy. The strategy highlights the importance of Tajikistan's banking sector in the future of the country's development and its role in upholding the confidence of domestic and foreign businesses.

Initially founded as 'Standard Finance' in 2014 to help finance micro and small enterprises, the International Bank of Tajikistan (IBT) received its banking licence in 2016 and now has 15 branches and 12 banking service centres across Tajikistan. IBT's services include loans,



deposits, money transfers, cash and non-cash payments, foreign exchange transactions, and mobile banking.

"Our strategy has been clear from the beginning," says IBT's chairman, Mr. Iskandar Rajabov, "rather than offering loans to big business or investing in real estate, we offer payment and cash management services instead." This is because, Mr. Rajabov explains, big

businesses generally have smaller margins and secure their loans against non-liquid, hard-to-sell assets - like land or real estate - which means banks that do loan to them receive little reward for what is a relatively high-risk venture. "When it comes to serving our bigger corporate clients, we offer retail credit financing - which uses their money - so whilst the risk remains low, the margin for us is far higher." IBT only loans to low-risk projects, and its conservative approach has resulted in the lowest percentage (<1%) of nonperforming loans (NPLs) - where the borrower is 90 days past due - of any bank in Tajikistan.

Since its founding, IBT has always been professionally audited by one of the Big Six. "We change auditors every three years, as required by law, and this year it is RSM. We already have a rating from Microfinanza, an Italian rating agency, and we are now seeking confirmation from the Big Three," says Mr. Rajabov.

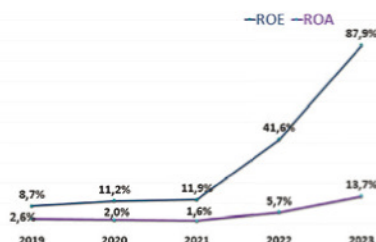
Meanwhile, about half of the Chinese companies currently invested in Tajikistan are clients of IBT, using it as their main service bank. "This means we've passed compliance with their head offices in terms of transparency, reliability, and international standards."

When it comes to innovation, IBT remains ahead of the competition. IBT was the first bank in Tajikistan to

## TOTAL ASSETS DYNAMICS OF GROWTH



## KEY FINANCIAL INDICATORS



## TOTAL CAPITAL DYNAMIC OF GROWTH



implement HCE (Host Card Emulation) for UnionPay and VTS (Visa Token Service) for Visa cards - enabling customers to pay via its mobile app using NFC (Near Field Communication) - and the first to offer e-commerce for national cards. Soon, IBT is going to launch the first digital Visa cards in Tajikistan, having just launched IBT24 - a Visa Direct mobile banking service. Eventually, IBT aims to develop a framework for self-service banking, where customers can access all its services without entering a branch or contacting it directly. "We see online banking as just an interim stage; the next stage is self-service banking. It saves the client time and reduces our expenditure," says Mr. Rajabov. IBT is now looking to invest in developing self-service systems.

In the first quarter of 2023, IBT became Tajikistan's most profitable bank. But profit is not its primary motive, emphasises Mr. Rajabov, rather a tool to help it achieve its overarching mission: to positively impact society and spread financial well-being across the country. "To achieve long-term success, you have to reinvest in society. Any business whose interest is pure profit will have little chance of long-term success. It has to be committed to solving issues; if you do that, people will always need you. So, we decided from the beginning that profit would not be our main goal. We're always focused on solving social issues. We want to help people make their lives better."

IBT currently provides low-interest loans designed to support the agriculture sector and entrepreneurs - such as artisans engaged in 'folk craftsmanship' - and is committed to financially supporting infrastructure development nationwide. Additionally, as the only Tajik bank issuing Visa credit cards, IBT has launched the Visa INSOF card, which allows customers to make purchases through instalments with 0% interest for 30 days.

The customer, as Mr. Rajabov remarks, is IBT's "polestar," and the bank wants all its customers to feel financially confident, whether by utilising

its 24/7 services and short-term loans or through IBT's pioneering approach to simple banking. "I believe the bank has just one task: to transfer money from person A to person B. Once we simplify our services, everything will come down to connecting two people who don't know each other but place their trust equally in us," says Mr. Rajabov.

People, not funds, are IBT's main asset, and Mr. Rajabov sees its progressive management philosophy as the key to fulfilling its social mission and building trust within the bank. "Let's say an employee mistakenly transferred funds to the wrong address. Other companies might blame that employee; we look into why it happened and how we can readjust our management and control system to prevent it from reoccurring. It must be easy for people to do right and difficult to do wrong - that's our motto." Additionally, IBT encourages its employees to participate in social programs and charity work. "Whilst we cannot make our employees donate to charity, we can encourage them to become better societal role models. We believe our employees become kinder, more compassionate, and more responsible through working with us."

IBT is committed to bringing the best out of its employees - whose onboarding includes various upskilling programs - and Mr. Rajabov hopes for them to adopt the same attitude towards society as a whole. "Whilst we cannot make our employees donate to charity, we can push them to become better societal role models. We believe our employees become kinder, more compassionate, and more responsible through working with us. Overall, it certainly has a positive effect on our business," says Mr. Rajabov.

IBT's wealth of human resources makes it the ideal partner, and the bank has a proven track record of collaboration with other financial institutions. The bank currently has a share in a Visa and Mastercard PCI/PSS-certified processing company, created in partnership with

several other banks to make transactions cheaper. "We've upgraded its software to be the most advanced, and quite a few banks are now ready to be served by it," says Mr. Rajabov. IBT is now looking for similar opportunities. "We're keen on foreign partnerships, especially new expertise and ideas."

Besides partnering directly with IBT, the bank welcomes partnerships with its leasing company and early-stage insurance company. Beyond that, IBT is always looking for untapped M&A-led growth opportunities. "One of our key activities is investing in other companies. We have a growing portfolio of subsidiaries, and last year we acquired a Kazakh bank in Tajikistan, which is now our subsidiary bank. We saw their potential, and we're developing it," says Mr. Rajabov. IBT also offers experienced legal assistance to help foreign businesses navigate Tajikistan's public and private sectors and its tax code when registering or opening a branch in the country.

As Tajikistan develops economically, investors worldwide are awakening to its enormous, untapped potential. According to the Asian Development Bank, Tajikistan's GDP will grow at 5.5% in 2023 and 6.5% in 2024, and the country's abundant natural resources - particularly in minerals and rare metals - and rapidly growing young population make it an unmissable investment opportunity. Additionally, thanks to government investments to build a flagship hydroelectric power station, Tajikistan's energy sector is now almost 100% green, meaning foreign manufacturers in the country can easily mark their products as green-certified. Going forward, IBT will continue to serve as the gateway for countless investors in Tajikistan, and it is thanks to institutions like it that doing business in the country has never been more straightforward.





## PARTING SHOT

# Xolo Maridueña

**COBRA KAI'S XOLO MARIDUEÑA IS GOING FROM KICKING BUTT ON EARTH** to doing so in the multiverse in the latest DC Comics film *Blue Beetle* (August 18). "I'm so excited about people meeting this character for the first time." The film is not only the young actor's big screen debut, but also the first DC Comics movie to focus solely on a Latin superhero. "I really feel like it's taken all 22 years of my life so far to be ready for this moment." Despite the movie's groundbreaking progress and diversity, Maridueña wants people to see it for more than just that. "I hope people, with this movie, can start to marinate on the fact that this is a movie, that Latino is not the genre, that superhero was the genre, and the characters happened to be Latino." He also wants *Blue Beetle* to open doors for other superhero stories we've yet to see. "I hope that in success, it offers the opportunity for others to tell their most authentic stories. It may be the first time that a Latino is hitting the big screen in a lead [superhero] role, but it can't be the last."



**"I'm so excited for kids to see someone who looks like them kicking butt."**

## Is it exciting to be the Blue Beetle?

It's indescribable. I think as an actor, being a superhero is something unfathomable, so I'm grateful and so appreciative. It was a really big step for me, career wise. I'd never worked on a movie before.

## A superhero franchise is a big jump forward. Do you feel prepared?

Honestly, I do. The thing that I'm most excited about is not for myself to become the biggest star, it's really for people to feel represented. I'm so excited for all the kids who are going to see someone who looks like them kicking butt. That's what I'm excited about.

## What was it like preparing to play this character?

*Cobra Kai* really helped prepare me. But I gotta be honest, a lot of the stunts in this movie are ones that I wasn't familiar with on *Cobra Kai*. [There] we are on the ground most of the time, but with *Blue Beetle* there is an otherworldly aspect to them and that was so exciting.

## Family is at the core of this story. Why is that so important?

I truly feel like no superhero movie to date has really been able to capture, at the level that we have, this intimate family experience. Jamie is getting his powers for the first time in front of his family. I think that that keeps the story so honest and so grounded from day one because there is no hiding from mom and dad that I'm Blue Beetle. —H. Alan Scott

► **Note:** This conversation took place before the Screen Actors Guild strike was announced ► Visit [Newsweek.com](https://www.newsweek.com) for the full interview.

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