

P11

KIPYEGON AND GIRMA STAR IN NIGHT OF WORLD RECORDS IN PARIS



P13

MSX MARKET VALUE CLIMBS TO RO 23.7 BILLION



P20

EXPERIENCE REAL BEDOUIN LIFESTYLE WITH UMM SAID



MUSCAT

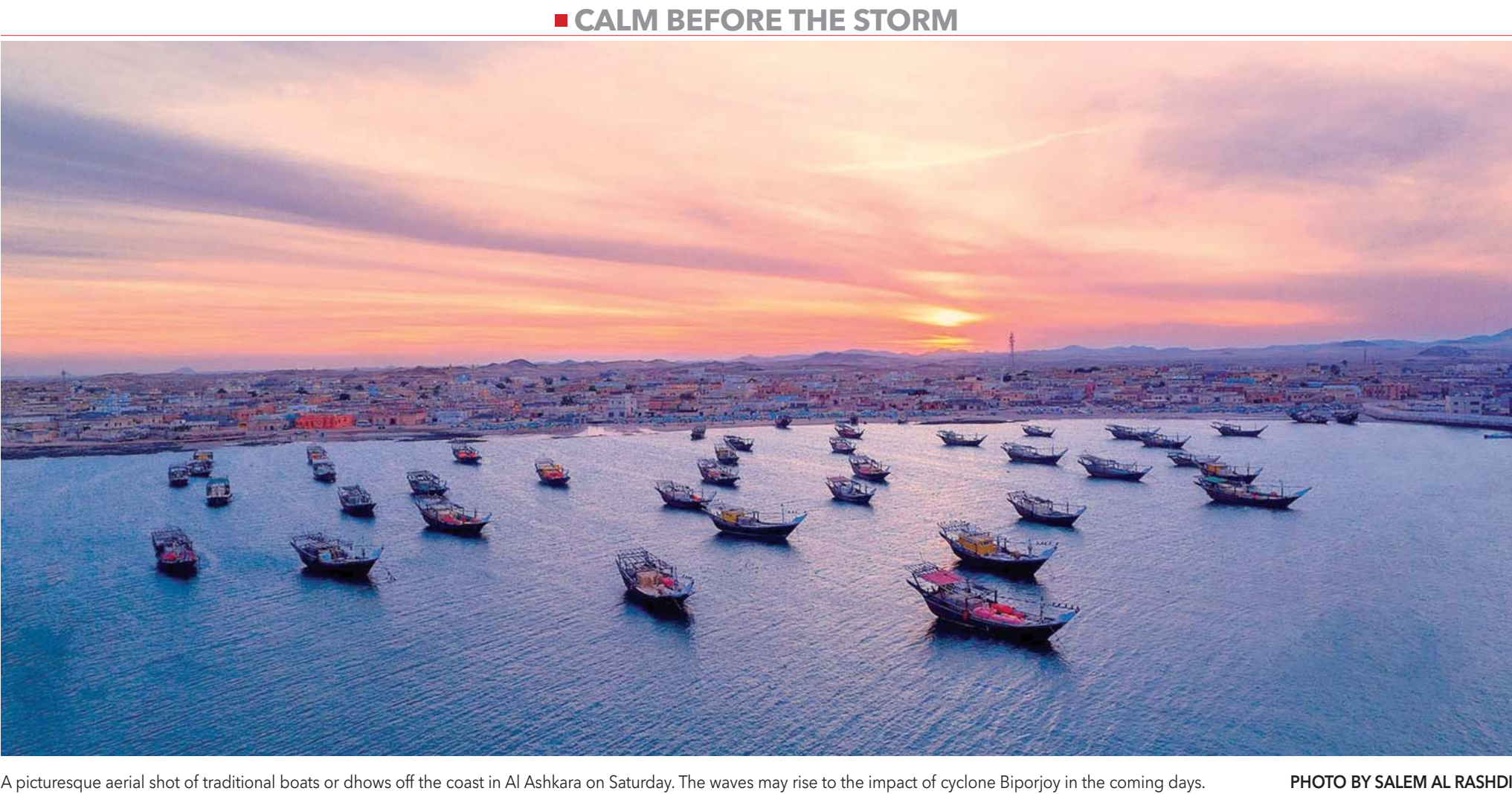
PREVENT CANCER WITH EARLY TEST

A study report from the Ministry of Health suggests that one out of five Omani women is diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime and the overall incidence rate is 15.6 cases per 100,000 in the country. The most common cancers among men in Oman are colorectal, lung and bronchus and prostate cancers whereas the most common cancers among females are breast cancers, thyroid and ovary cancers. **SEE P3**

LONDON

JOHNSON QUILTS AS MP, CLAIMS WITCH-HUNT

Britain's former prime minister Boris Johnson on Friday said he was quitting as a member of parliament, claiming he had been forced out in a stitch-up by his political opponents. The 58-year-old populist politician has been under investigation by a cross-party committee about whether he repeatedly lied to parliament over Covid lockdown-breaking parties when he was in office. In evidence earlier this year he angrily insisted he had not. **SEE P6**



Kids lost for 40 days in Amazon found alive

BOGOTÁ:

Four Indigenous children who had been missing for more than a month in the Colombian Amazon rainforest were found alive and flown to the capital Bogota early on Saturday.

The children, who survived a small plane crash in the jungle, were transported by an army medical plane to a military airport at around 00:30 am on Saturday (0530 GMT).

They were immediately taken off the plane on stretchers with ambulances waiting to bring them to hospital.

“Today we have had a magical day,” President Gustavo Petro told the media earlier on Friday, after announcing their rescue. “They are weak. Let’s let the doctors make their assessment,” he added.

The president had posted a photo on Twitter showing several adults, some dressed in military fatigues, tending to the children as they sat on tarps in the jungle. One rescuer held a bottle to the mouth of the smallest child, whom he held in his arms.

“A joy for the whole country! The 4 children who were lost 40 days ago in the Colombian jungle were found alive,” he wrote on Twitter. Video shared by the Defence Ministry late on Friday showed the children being pulled up into a helicopter as it hovered over the tall trees in almost complete darkness.

Originally from the Huitoto Indigenous group, the children — aged 13, nine, four and one — had been wandering alone in the jungle since May 1, when the Cessna 206 in which they were travelling crashed. The pilot had reported engine problems only minutes after taking off from a jungle area known as Araracuara on the 350-kilometre (217-mile) journey to the town of San Jose del Guaviare. — AFP



One of the four Indigenous children who were found alive after being lost for 40 days in the Colombian Amazon forest following a plane crash is stretchered out of a plane upon landing at the CATAM military base in Bogota on Saturday. — AFP

Sea may be rough due to Biporjoy

LAKSHMI KOTHANETH

@lakshmioman

Tropical cyclone Biporjoy is now classified as category 2 with distance from the centre to Oman at 980 km. The closest rainy clouds are at a distance of 640 km. The direction now is north towards the centre of the Arabian Sea.

The system’s position now is N 17.3 and E 67.4. The wind speed around the centre is 83-90 KT. Avoid going to the sea for three more days, warned the Oman Met Office after the tropical cyclone was classified as category 2.

Weather forecasters said that areas of Oman bordering the Arabian Sea might continue to face rough seas for three more days while its destination might be the coasts of India and Pakistan. The Sultanate of Oman is unlikely to be affected, but the situation is being monitored as a precautionary measure.

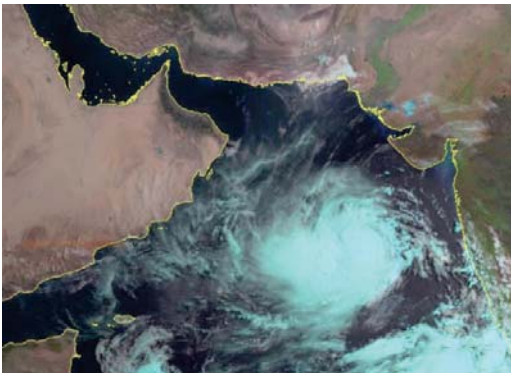
Earlier, the Met Office warned that the low lying areas of Arabian Sea coasts could face inundation of sea water.

The first cyclone of the year in the Arabian Sea has had its way in confusing the monitoring teams across the region on its track as well as in its intensity. Various models had predicted various tracks, but Oman Met Office has been on track.

“Cyclone Biporjoy has moved about 910 km south of Karachi,” the country’s Met Office said on Saturday.

In India, Kerala has issued a yellow alert while heavy rains are expected in Gujarat and Maharashtra.

The coastal areas will see the sea waves rising to rough waves 3-6 metres on the coasts of the Arabian Sea during the next three days, and the average waves on the coasts of the Sea of Oman is expected to be 1.5-2.5 metres, starting from Monday, June 12, 2023. The general weather forecast for Sunday stated that it would be mainly clear skies with a chance of clouds formation over Al Hajar Mountains and adjoining areas during the afternoon. **TURN TO P2**



STAGE SET FOR SHURA POLL CAMPAIGN

MUSCAT:

The Ministry of Interior on Friday announced the end of deadline for submitting objections to the candidates in the preliminary list for the 10th Majlis Ash’shura polls. The list included more than 883 candidates, including 33 women.

This time the list is bigger by about 116 candidates, compared to the polls last time, with 767 candidates. The number of women decreased by about 10 candidates, bringing their number in the tenth elections to 33 candidates, compared to 43 for the ninth term.

Dhofar Governorate topped the list with 255 candidates, including two women followed by Al Dakhiliyah with 111 candidates.

Voting for Majlis Ash’shura members will be held via mobile phones following the success of a similar process, which was applied during the Municipal Councils elections.

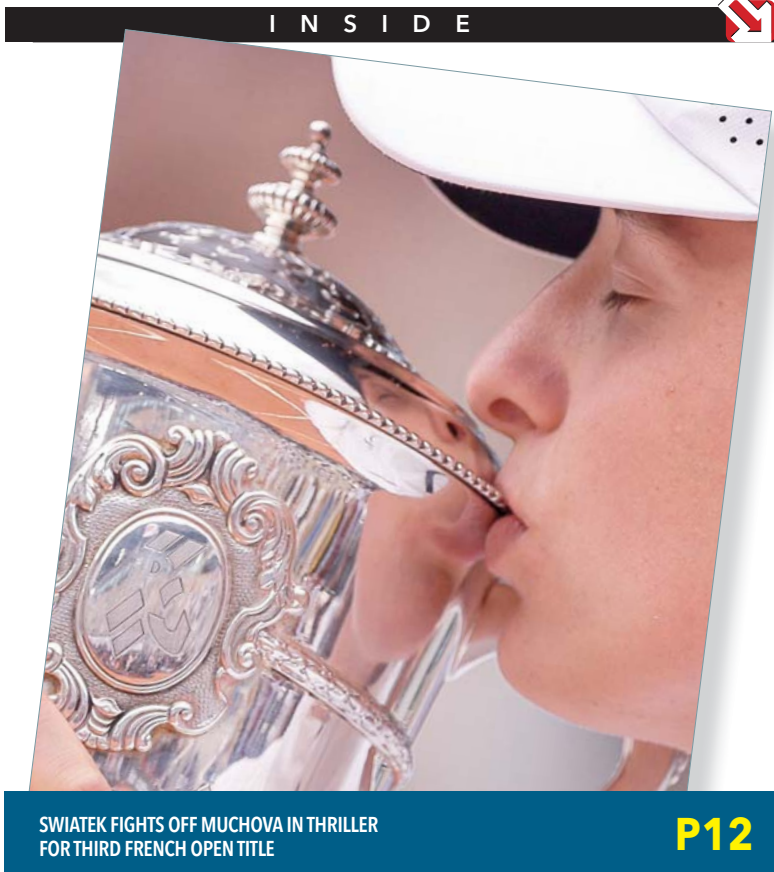
For the first time in December last year, the Municipal Councils elections were held online through the Intakhib app launched by the Ministry of Interior. The app was designed in accordance with the security standards to ensure complete confidentiality in the election process. It makes casting of votes an easy and convenient process. Intakhib runs on smartphones having the NFC feature and Internet connection, and a voter must have his or her name registered in the electoral roll.

The Ministry of Interior has also introduced a new online public service called ‘My Page’ as part of the Intakhib app and Majlis Ash’shura’s election website.

The service has been launched to support candidates participating in the upcoming elections to promote their manifesto and conduct election campaigns on this platform.

The ‘My Page’ service will allow candidates to post their personal information and share photos and videos in compliance with approved electoral campaign regulations.

This feature allows voters to access the list of candidates, stay updated on their activities, interact with them and comment on their content.





# Resumption of Saudi-Iran diplomatic ties welcomed

**RIYADH:** The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and the United States, in a statement issued, stressed the importance of joint efforts to work towards de-escalation in the region. They affirmed their joint commitment to support diplomacy for the realisation of those goals.

The Gulf and American sides agreed about the important role of infrastructure projects in enhancing integration and interdependence in the region, besides contributing to stability and prosperity at the regional level.

After the joint ministerial meeting on GCC-US strategic partnership, held in Riyadh, the two sides stressed the need to support navigational rights and freedoms. They underlined collective efforts to address threats that might target the security of ships in waterways in the region.

The ministers also underscored the importance of confronting terrorism and extremism in all countries around the world.

The ministers welcomed the decision of Saudi Arabia and Iran to resume diplomatic relations.



In this context, they stressed the importance of the region countries' adhering to international law, including the United Nations Charter.

The two sides stressed the importance of ongoing peace efforts led by the United Nations in Yemen after the April 2022 truce and the calm that prevailed later.

They hoped to see the realisation of a comprehensive political process leading to a permanent

end to the conflict. With regard to the Palestinian issue, the two sides stressed the need to refrain from all unilateral measures that undermine the two-state solution or raise the level of tension. They urged to maintain the historical status quo in holy places in Al Quds (Jerusalem).

The ministers hailed the special role of Jordan in this regard.

They also expressed their appreciation for Egypt's decisive

role in mediating between armed factions in Gaza and Israel in the aftermath of the recent hostilities.

The two sides reaffirmed their commitment towards reaching a political solution to the Syrian crisis in a way that preserves Syria's unity and sovereignty, meets the aspirations of its people and complies with international humanitarian law and the UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015).

The ministers commended the growing positive partnership between the GCC and Iraq.

They welcomed the progress in the electrical interconnection project aimed to link Iraq to the GCC electricity network.

The Gulf and US sides also expressed their deep concern over the recent outbreak of fighting in Sudan. They affirmed their support for diplomatic efforts aimed at achieving a permanent cessation

of hostilities in Sudan. The two parties expressed the conviction that there is no military solution to end the conflict. In this context, they urged the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to trash out a peaceful solution.

of hostilities in Sudan.

The two parties expressed the conviction that there is no military solution to end the conflict. In this context, they urged the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces to trash out a peaceful solution.

The ministers decided to hold a meeting of the Joint Working Group on Cyber Security later this year. They stressed the need to continue meetings among regular working groups to discuss defence issues. They decided to hold another round of meetings of two working groups later this year— one on "Integrated Air-Missile Defence" and the other on "Maritime Security". — ONA

## Oman, Belgium strengthen ties in transport, logistics and digital economy

**MUSCAT:** Eng Said bin Hamoud al Maawali, Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology, on Friday met in Muscat with Hadja Lahbib, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions in the Kingdom of Belgium, and her accompanying delegation.

During the meeting, they discussed strengthening the existing cooperation between the two friendly countries, reviewing the investment opportunities available in the ports of the Sultanate of Oman, the available infrastructure therein, green mobility initiatives in partnership with the private sector, in addition to discussing aspects of cooperation in the fields of metro and the semiconductor industry, and exchanging knowledge and experiences between the two sides. In addition to highlighting some successful experiences.

The meeting was attended by Eng Khamis bin Mohammed al Shamakhi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology for Transport, Pascal Gregory, Ambassador-Designate of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Sultanate of Oman, Reggie Vermeulen, Honorary Consul of the Kingdom of Belgium to the Sultanate of Oman, and a number of officials from both sides.



**MEETS BADR:** Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidy, Foreign Minister, also received in Muscat on Friday Hadja Lahbib, Minister of Foreign Affairs, European Affairs, Foreign Trade and the Federal Cultural Institutions in the Kingdom of Belgium.

During the meeting, the guest minister conveyed greetings of King of the Belgians to His Majesty the Sultan.

She extended thanks for the efforts made by Oman to secure the release of the Belgian citizen, as well as an Austrian citizen and a Danish citizen.

As far as the bilateral relations between Oman and Belgium are

concerned, the two ministers lauded the progress witnessed by these relations in various economic, trade, investment and cultural areas. They also commended the cooperation between Duqm Port and the Port of Antwerp, stressing the importance of expanding the cooperation to cover other fields, particularly in the renewable energy projects and green hydrogen production.

The two sides also underlined the joint keenness to expand cultural, academic and student exchange programmes and cooperation in the fields of

science and technology, as well as promoting tourism and investment opportunities between the two countries.

The meeting further discussed the developments at the regional and international arenas.

In this context, both sides affirmed that they will continue exchanging views on these developments, stemming from the joint keenness to come up with peaceful solutions for various issues in a way that maintains security and stability. The meeting was attended by a number of officials from both sides. — ONA

### ■ US EMBASSY HOLDS RECEPTION FOR 247TH NATIONAL DAY



The United States Embassy held a reception on the occasion of its 247th National Day, at the Al Bustan Palace Hotel on Thursday. The ceremony was attended by senior officials in the Sultanate of Oman, heads of diplomatic missions accredited to the Sultanate of Oman, and officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. — ONA

## Oman, Saudi Arabia plan tourism boost initiatives

**VINOD NAIR**  
@vinot\_nair

In a significant move to enhance tourism between the Sultanate of Oman and Saudi Arabia, plans are underway for the implementation of a joint tourist visa and the initiation of various collaborative initiatives. This development comes shortly after discussions about introducing a 'Schengen-style' entry system in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

During the recent meeting between Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, and Ahmed al Khatib, Saudi Arabia's Tourism Minister, in Muscat, it was decided to focus on joint projects to attract foreign tourists, as well as citizens and residents of GCC, which include a unified tourist visa, the seasonal flights, and the creation of joint tourism calendar.

Underlining the importance of this step, Saudi newspaper *Saudi Gazette* said that during the first quarter of this year, around 164,000 Omani tourists visited Saudi Arabia, a 136-per cent increase compared to the same period last year. Similarly, nearly 49,000 Saudi tourists visited Oman during this time, showcasing a growth of 92 per cent.

It may be noted that 1,938

The first quarter of 2023 saw 164,000 Omani tourists visit Saudi Arabia, a 136% increase. Similarly, nearly 49,000 Saudi tourists visited Oman during this time, with a growth of 92%

Saudi tourists also visited Al Jabal Al Akhdhar during this period.

His Highness Sayyid Faisal bin Turki al Said, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, also held a meeting to discuss efforts aimed at strengthening the position of the Sultanate of Oman as a preferred tourist destination for Saudi tourists in particular.

HH Sayyid Faisal stressed the need to raise awareness among Saudi citizens of the tourism potentials of the Sultanate of Oman, especially adventure tourism, leisure, and cultural and heritage attractions.

"The concerned authorities are currently in talks to launch a 'Schengen-style' entry system, which will facilitate entry into all partner countries with one visa," said Fatima al Sairafi, Minister of Tourism, Kingdom of Bahrain, on the sidelines of the Arabian Travel Meet.

## Sea likely to be rough on category 2 Biporjoy



### FROM P1

Chances of high clouds advection along the coastal areas of Arabian Sea continue with possibility of late night to early morning low level clouds over parts of coasts of South Al Sharqiyah, Al Wusta and Dhofar governorates.

Along the Oman Sea coast, winds will be southwesterly light at night changing to northeasterly light to moderate at day time, and along the rest of the governorates it will be northwesterly light to moderate occasionally fresh, while along the coastal areas of Arabian Sea winds will be southwesterly moderate to fresh.

Maximum temperature was recorded in Al Mudhaibi with 46 degrees Celsius, while Al Buraimi, Al Suwaiq, Nizwa, Adam, Fahud, Duqm and Marmul recorded 45 degrees Celsius. The coolest place was Jabal Shams with a maximum of 18 degrees Celsius and a low of 12 degrees Celsius.



## 7 taken to hospital for smoke inhalation

VINOD NAIR  
@vinot\_nair

Authorities in Muscat have expressed concerns over the escalating number of house fire incidents caused by electrical faults and the excessive use of electronic gadgets during the summer season.

Recent incidents, including one in Al Ghubrah and another in Al Khuwair, resulted in injuries due to smoke inhalation.

The Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority (CDAA) emphasised the importance of regular maintenance and safe usage of electronic devices, highlighting the dangers of faulty air conditioners and overloading electrical outlets.

On Saturday, the firefighting teams of CDAA in the Governorate of Muscat put out a fire that broke out in a house in Al Ghubrah area in the Wilayat of Bausher. Emergency medical care was provided to five people as a result of smoke inhalation, and they were shifted to the hospital. Their health condition is said to be stable.

Steps such as proper gas cylinder handling, safe storage of flammable materials, and avoiding the use of grills indoors were also recommended.

Speaking to the Observer, CDAA sources said, "People do not give attention to maintenance and use of electronic devices at home. Faulty ACs can be very dangerous and it is very important to service at the start of the season. Overloading and overheating can be one of the reasons for such incidents. It is important to unplug or switch-off devices that are not needed."

The main reasons according to CDAA, are house fires due to failure in not closing the gas cylinder after completion of cooking or while leaving the house, storage of flammable materials, children playing with lighters and matches, smoking and throwing cigarette butts on materials, and using flammable building materials for interior decorations, ensuring the safety and maintenance of electrical connections and gas installations, avoiding the use of grills and charcoal tools indoors, making sure electrical outlets are not overloaded and avoid placing electrical wires over furniture or under carpets.

The Sultanate of Oman reported 4,058 fire-related incidents in 2021, compared to 3,409 in 2020, 3,864 in 2019, 4,602 in 2018, and 4,748 in 2017.

## Municipality warns against abandoning vehicles in public places



STAFF REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Muscat Municipality has once again warned against leaving vehicles unattended in residential neighbourhoods and public places for a long time as they pose security and environmental concerns.

The Municipality inspection team during their field visits deals with abandoned vehicles by placing a warning sticker on cars, which are removed from the site after a specific period.

The Local Law stipulates the imposition of an administrative fine of RO 200 after seizing the neglected vehicle when its owner returns to the municipality. Fines for buses carrying 15 passengers or less, bicycles are RO 400, and RO 1,000 for trucks, buses (more than 15 passengers), locomotives, trailers, tractors, and vehicles used for transporting hazardous

materials.

A fine of RO 5 shall be imposed on the owner of the neglected vehicle for each day if he is late in receiving the neglected vehicle from the impoundment site.

Article (6) stipulates that the municipality shall coordinate with the Royal Oman Police (ROP) to take measures to sell the abandoned vehicle through a public auction, in the event that the owner of the neglected vehicle does not return to the municipality within 90 days from the date of its seizure.

Article 79 of Local Resolution No (1/2006) regarding the protection of public health stipulates that it is not permissible to leave the vehicle on the road to avoid accidents or obstruct traffic.

Article 131 of the same regulations states that It is permissible to seize a neglected vehicle if it is found neglected anywhere on the road.

## Symposium raises awareness on breast cancer, women's health

KABEER YOUSUF  
@kabeeryousef

A study report from the Ministry of Health suggests that one out of five Omani women is diagnosed with breast cancer in her lifetime and the overall incidence rate is 15.6 cases per 100,000 in the country.

The most common cancers among men in Oman are colorectal, lung and bronchus and prostate cancers whereas the most common cancers among females are breast cancers, thyroid and ovary cancers.

The Directorate General of Health Services for Muscat, represented by the Department of Primary Healthcare, in cooperation with the Omani Breast Cancer Association and the Sultan Qaboos Integrated Center for Cancer Treatment and Research, organised a health awareness symposium on women's health and early detection of breast cancer.

The one-day symposium titled 'Vigor and Wellness' was held under the auspices of Her Highness Hajija bint Jaifer al Said, and in the presence of Dr Tamra bint Said al Ghafriyah, Director-General of Health Services for Muscat, and officials from the Ministry and the Directorate. The



symposium targeted community members and health workers in the health institutions affiliated to the Directorate.

It aimed to spread awareness among members of society, especially women, about the importance of early detection of cancer, and urged women to conduct early detection of breast cancer, in addition to strengthening the role of those in charge of providing healthcare services at all levels of the health-care system with scientific and practical advice that includes how to avoid cancer and detect it in its early stages.

"Women are provided with early examination for breast cancer, which are available in all primary healthcare institutions in Muscat and everyone should make use of the service, in order

to ensure the safety and health of the individual from being infected with this disease," said Dr Samira al Maimani, Director of the Primary Healthcare Department, Directorate General of Health Services in Muscat in her opening speech.

Lynn al Atassi, Head of Corporate Communications, Oman Arab Bank, said that this cooperation with MoH comes within the framework of the bank's awareness of its responsibility to contribute to raising awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer. Noting that the concerted efforts of all contributes to increasing the community's culture of the importance of follow-up and periodic examination, and also have a great impact on preserving the safety of society and



containing patients with effective and appropriate treatment.

Signs and symptoms of breast cancer may include a mass or thickening of the breast, and a change in breast size, shape, or appearance. The best way to prevent the disease is early examination, proper diet, and adherence to healthy lifestyles.

## Military attache in London visits SAF shooting team

LONDON: Brigadier General Ahmed bin Ibrahim Ambusaidy, the military attache at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London, visited the Sultan's Armed Forces shooting team during the team's training in the outdoor camp at Camp Pirbright in the United Kingdom.

The Sultan's Armed Forces shooting team continues its preparations in the United Kingdom to participate in the



Confederation and British Army Shooting Championships, which begins on Friday June 16, and to review the efforts and preparations.

The military attache listened to a briefing on the course of the team's training and the competitions it will participate in during the two championships.

The military attache also urged the team to continue presenting the honourable levels in the competitions, praising the preparations and readiness made by the team.

The military attaché at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London was accompanied during the visit by the assistant military attache at the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in London. — ONA

## Enchanting Sooty Gulls captivate bird enthusiasts

TEXT & PHOTOS BY  
YAHYA AL SALMANI

It is a common sight to see Sooty Gulls during its breeding season at the Daymaniyat Islands. Perched on rocky cliffs or resting on the floor of stone cliff to protect their eggs, Sooty Gulls attract bird enthusiasts with their beautiful colours of red, grey, and yellow. Their beaks are yet another attraction to bird lovers.

The bird is commonly found on the islands and near coastal areas, particularly in the Daymaniyat Islands Reserve, which is a 45-minute boat ride from the coast of Muscat. Upon reaching the islands, visitors are drawn to the large number of sooty gulls nesting in close proximity.

During this time, the islands and other spots in Oman are filled with these birds. They lay their eggs in rock formations and take care of their young. The adult birds work hard to provide food and ensure the survival of their offspring, protecting them from birds of prey and foxes that inhabit the Islands. Predators may



include the sooty falcon, vultures, and herons.

Their species can be found in various countries, including Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, UAE, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Iran, and Pakistan. Vagrant populations of Sooty Gulls are also observed in India, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives.

The bird has dark upper parts and white underparts. The head, back, rump, breast, and tail are dark grey, while juveniles have a paler head with a speckled white

neck. Their long legs are gray, and their irises are blackish.

Studies on bird life indicate that adult Sooty Gulls have a long bill with a red tip followed by a narrow blackish band, while the rest of the bill is pale or bluish-gray. Juveniles have a bluish base without the red tip. Their call is a repeated 'gar gar' sound, serving as a warning to potential threats approaching the nesting areas.

Sooty Gulls inhabit various natural ecosystems, including tropical and subtropical mangrove vegetation, sea cliffs, offshore islands, intertidal mud flats, rocky, pebbly, shingle, and sandy shorelines, beaches, tide pools, lagoons, estuaries, coral reefs, and shallow seas with microalgae like kelp and sea grass. The diet of these gulls mainly consists of dead, small fish and offal. They forage in harbours, ports, inshore islands, and intertidal zones. The breeding season of the Sooty Gull begins in June and ends in September. Nesting sites are located on inshore coral islands with rocks, sand, and sparse vegetation.

## Oman Air to operate 8 daily flights on Muscat-Salalah route

MUSCAT: To meet the increasing demand and provide enhanced accessibility, Oman Air, the national airline of the Sultanate of Oman, will operate eight daily flights between Muscat and Salalah, starting from June 15 until September 15.

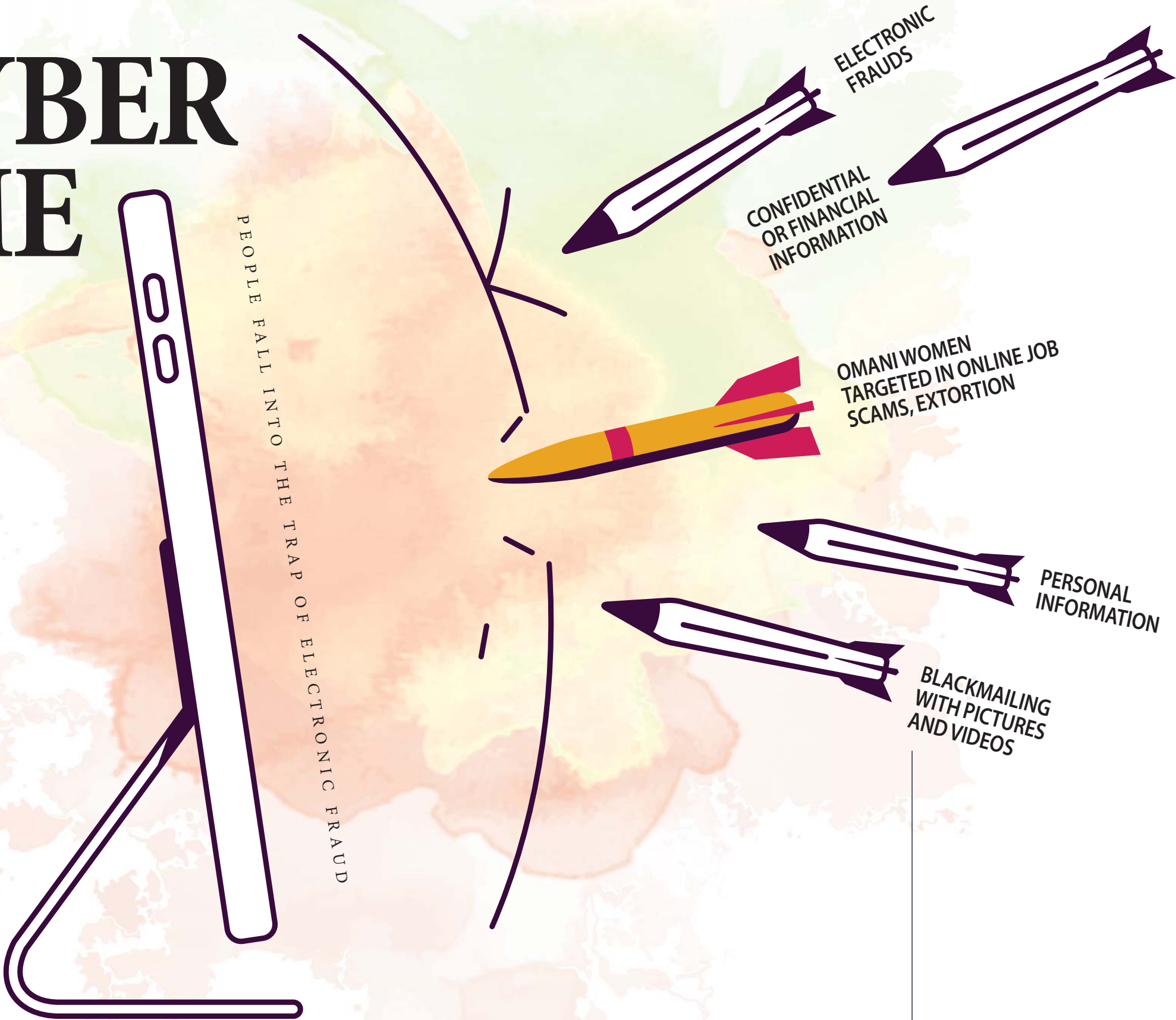
Additionally, in anticipation of the highly anticipated Khareef season, the airline will further augment its services by increasing the daily flight count to 12 on selected days.

Meanwhile, In line with the Royal directives to provide direct fuel price subsidies at Salalah Airport, Oman Air has announced a significant reduction in ticket prices for Economy Class travel between Muscat and Salalah for Omani citizens. The revised ticket prices will be set at an attractive rate of RO 54 return.

The increase in direct flights to and from Salalah during the Khareef season is a testament to Oman Air's commitment to facilitating tourism and seamless transportation for citizens to the Governorate of Dhofar. — ONA



# RISE IN CYBER CRIME





JOB VACANCIES

We are pleased to announce that Oman Investment Authority (OIA) is currently looking for potential talents to fill the following positions:

| Position                                          | Directorate                         |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Senior Legal Advisor - Transaction Management     | General Counsel                     |
| Senior Associate - Operational risk and Assurance | Governance, Risks and Compliance    |
| Senior Specialist - Database Administrator        | Information Management              |
| Associate – Economic Research                     | Economic and Investment Research    |
| Senior Analyst - Management Reporting             | Economic Diversification Investment |

How to Apply ?

To apply and view the detailed job description, please visit the OIA's page on **LinkedIn**

The Last date for receiving the applications will be:  
**20 June 2023**

AFRAH AL BALUSHI  
[@Afrahalbalushia](#)

Many people fall into the trap of electronic fraud, one of the most common electronic crimes at present. Electronic frauds use modern technology to deceive individuals or institutions and obtain confidential or financial information or poach on their bank accounts.

Many victims are trapped of extortion after sharing their personal information. So it is necessary to be fully aware of and be on guard against being cheated.

Many previous investigations have shown that cyber criminals are increasingly targeting vulnerable Omani women when they go online in search of job opportunities.

Blackmailing, with pictures, videos, conversations, and other matters, are common on social media networks such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, among others.

POLICE REPORTS

With the increase in the number of police reports, many restrictions were imposed to help avoid being the victims of these crimes and punish the criminals according to the Penal Code of the Crimes of Extortion and Electronic Threat.

Victims, therefore, are advised to approach the police station to report and provide the necessary

12,812  
CYBERCRIMES IN  
2021, SAW A  
4%  
DECREASE FROM  
2017 TO 2021

NUMBER OF  
PERPETRATORS  
REACHED  
18,357  
DECREASE BY  
12%  
DURING THE  
SAME PERIOD

MUSCAT HAS  
THE MAXIMUM  
NUMBER OF  
E-CRIMES AT  
37.3 %

evidence in order to trap the criminal. The Crime Control Department of the General Department of Investigations and Criminal Investigations of the Royal Oman Police has noticed a 25 per cent rise in such cases.

Mostly the victims were attracted towards fake advertisements displayed on electronic browsing links. According to the latest update from National Center for Statistical Information, the number of cyber crimes for 2021 was about 12,812, which decreased by 14 per cent during the period from 2017 to 2021, while the number of perpetrators reached about 18,357 and decreased by 12 per cent during the same period.

The Governorate of Muscat has the maximum number of electronic crimes, with a rate of 37.3 per cent, while the percentage of perpetrators recorded is 34.4 per cent.

Individuals in their teens are the most vulnerable to getting involved and affected by such crimes, which can be checked through continuous follow-up by parents and awareness.

It is necessary to be alert against cyber crimes. Increasing awareness means people are willing to report, and the victim can seek help from the Economic Crimes Unit by calling 24569701 or emailing Ecocrime@rop.gov.om.





## Digital transformation empowers North Al Batinah govt services

SIHAM AL SAIDI  
SUHAR, JUNE 10

North Al Batinah Governorate is committed to enhancing e-government and e-services, spearheading the industrial development of information technology (IT) to empower society and individuals.

Aligned with Oman's digital strategy and the Oman Vision 2040, these efforts aim to drive economic growth and prosperity.

The General Directorate of Financial and Administrative Affairs and the Municipality of North Al Batinah and its departments have reported remarkable improvements in 115 services across various sectors.

These range from health, technical, administrative, finance, afforestation, maintenance and geographic information systems.

The team of digital transformation at Al Batinah North Governorate also participated in Minajm laboratories, which is one of the four tracks that make up the executive plan of the government digital transformation programme 2021-2025, concerned with developing and

Suhar's digital strategy and Oman Vision 2040 drive prosperity through digital transformation

improving government services.

Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of North Al Batinah, with the team of digital transformation in the Governorate, discussed the methodology for inventorying these services.

To establish an ecosystem led by ICY supporting the smart government and smart services, the supervisory team at North Al Batinah continued working on the proposed training programmes and workshops to motivate the staff to work with the aim of development and address challenges in implementing the digital transformation project.

It is worth noting that the digital projects in the governorate aim to improve and raise efficiency, simplify government service procedures and quality and enhance the digital user experience, and build confidence and awareness of electronic services.

## Cultural Club holds literary lecture at Peking University

BEIJING: Shaikh Dr Mohammed bin Salem al Harthy, representative of the Cultural Club of the Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science at the College of Foreign Languages at Peking University, and editor-in-chief of 'Al Thaqafiya' magazine, delivered a lecture on "Arabic Language and Civilisational Communication" at a symposium on Omani-Chinese relations in China.

In his lecture, the representative of the Cultural Club spoke about the importance of the Arabic language and its historical position as a tool for communication and the impact of Arabic on other languages.

He called upon students to take care of the language, to practice and to pay attention to memorising its literary texts as this has a direct positive reflection.

He said that some languages went beyond simply borrowing from Arabic, to writing in Arabic letters, such as Urdu, Malay, Turkish, Persian and Hindi, referring to the richness of Arabic



language, and the influence of other languages, such as Spanish, Portuguese, French, English and Italian. A coordination meeting was held to prepare for the launch of the joint symposium on Omani-Chinese relations, which is expected to be held by the end of September.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged visions, ideas and publications, followed by a visit to the library of ancient manuscripts, and a tour of the museum dedicated to King Abdulaziz Public Library, which includes a number of exhibits, photographs, illustrators of rare Arabic and Chinese manuscripts. — ONA

## 79 bottled drinking water factories until Dec '22

MUSCAT: The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources revealed that the number of bottled drinking water factories under its control and supervision reached 79 by the end of last year. These factories collectively produce around 6.2 million litres of water daily.

According to the ministry, these factories are dispersed across various governorates, including 10 in Muscat, 9 in Dhofar, 4 in Al Buraimi, 8 in Al Dakhiliyah, 12 in Al Batinah North, 11 in Al Batinah South, 4 in Al



Dhahirah, 5 in Al Sharqiyah North, and 1 each in Al Sharqiyah South and Al Wusta.

Recent years have witnessed a significant rise in requests for

establishing water purification and bottling plants, indicating the growing demand in line with population growth and development.

The proliferation of these

Oman witnesses surge in bottled drinking water factories. They collectively produce around 6.2 million litres of water daily

plants underscores their importance as investments aligning with food and water security projects, catering to the increasing needs of the population and supporting industrial activities reliant on water resources.

KABEER YOUSUF  
@kabeeryousef

Nominations have been invited for the 6th CCED Oman student awards for postgraduate education, according to the promoters of the rare student recognition programme where students, professors, and industry stakeholders can nominate exemplary individuals for this paid internship at CCED as part of the accolade.

The Oman Student Awards for the Advancement of Postgraduate Education, instituted by CC Energy Development, has seen previous winners go on to secure senior positions in many of Oman's leading industrial companies and policy roles in the public sector, were launched today by CC Energy Development, one of the country's biggest independent oil producers, to receive 2023 submissions.

Speaking to Observer, Walter Simpson, Managing Director, CCED, said that these students include not just the founders of new industries and technologies

but also the future leaders of companies, academia, and government organisations.

"Our vision is to mould a PG community of Masters and PhD students in Oman that supports and contributes to a country's transition into a diversified and knowledge-based economy. Investing in the future of local and national talent is part of CCED's core strategy in adding business value and achieving growth along with the communities we work with," said Simpson.

The selection committee, which will score the nominee profiles, comprises distinguished individuals from local and international government, academia and industry. The winners will be presented with their Awards at the 10th Oman Industry Artificial Intelligence (AI) Forum 2023 on November 1.

The Oman Student Awards were established in 2016 to celebrate the role that postgraduate education plays in creating an innovation ecosystem that can invent the future in part through research,

**Our vision is to mold a PG community that supports and contributes to a country's transition into a diversified and knowledge-based economy and investing in the future of local and national talent**

WALTER SIMPSON  
Managing Director, CCED

in part through education, and in part through active efforts to move university-derived ideas into industry.

The criteria for PhD awards are as follows

Omani National or Oman-based and Oman-educated for a period of 10 consecutive years, Near completion of PhD or a

recent PhD graduate in an energy-related field (Degree must have been completed within the past two years), demonstrates potential to be a future thought leader in the energy industry in Oman, PhD dissertation should be relevant to Oman, demonstrate the intention of working in Oman and finally extra weight is given to doctorate research that clearly impacts the advancement of the industry.

The criteria for masters award are Omani national or Oman-based and Oman-educated for 10 consecutive years, near completion of a Master's or a recent Master's graduate in an energy-related field (degree must have been completed within the past two years), demonstrates potential to be a future thought leader in the energy industry in Oman, current or planned involvement in energy-related research in Oman, demonstrate the intention of working in Oman, extra weight will be given to those with the intent to pursue a PhD., and finally exemplary undergraduate and graduate grades.

### RNO CARRIES OUT RESCUE OPERATION



The Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) carried out a rescue operation in the Wilayat of Sur in the Governorate of South Al Sharqiyah. A wooden ship (Al Boom) passed through the Arabian Sea after it suffered a technical malfunction. — ONA

## Water projects in North Al Sharqiyah worth RO 143m

IBRA: Nama Water Services Company has said that the total cost of managing the water services sector in the Governorate of North Al Sharqiyah stood at more than RO 143 million.

The cost quoted by Nama includes existing projects and projects under construction, as well as 'small, medium and large development' projects and the annual cost of water

tanker contracts.

Qais bin Saud al Zakwani, CEO of Nama Water Services Company, said that 26,035 subscribers benefit from water networks at North Al Sharqiyah Governorate. The governorate has 2,064 km of water network pipes, 75 water collection reservoirs and 14 main pumping stations, Al Zakwani added.

— ONA

### Tender Announcement

The Internal Tender committee of **Ministry of Social Development** hereby announces the following tender :-

| Tender No. | Tender Subject                                                                                                            | Grade                                                                                                                                                                  | Last date for obtainment of Tender Document | Last date for Tender Submission | Tender Document Price (non-refundable) |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| 164/2023   | General maintenance work for the building of Al-Wafa Center for Rehabilitation of Disabled People in the Wilayat of Bahla | Companies specialized in the field of building contracting and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the second degree                        | Thursday 29-6-2023 02:00 PM                 | Wednesday 19-7-2023 10:00 AM    | R.O. 25/=                              |
| 166/2023   | The work of supplying, preparing and providing nutrition meals for the inmates of the Social Welfare House at Rustaq      | Companies specialized in the field of catering and nutrition services and registered with the General Secretariat of the Tender Board in the first or excellent degree | Thursday 29-6-2023 02:00 PM                 | Wednesday 19-7-2023 10:00 AM    | R.O. 25/=                              |

❖ Specialized Companies, registered with the **Tender Board** may obtain the Tender documents at the Tender Board e-tendering digital portal link (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>), On **Sunday 11/6/2023**.

❖ For Inquiry, please contact through the e-tendering website ([reg@tenderboard.gov.om](mailto:reg@tenderboard.gov.om)) tel. (24402200).

**" The lowest or any other tender shall not be binding to the Ministry "**

[www.mosd.gov.om](http://www.mosd.gov.om)



French Prosecutor Line Bonnet (R) and Judicial Police Director Damien Delaby (L) hold a press conference in Annecy. — AFP

## Annecy knife attack suspect detained, says French prosecutor

**PARIS:** The suspect in a knife attack in which four toddlers and two pensioners were wounded in the southeastern French town of Annecy has been placed in detention, the local prosecutor said on Saturday.

The suspect, a Syrian refugee born in 1991, is under formal investigation for attempted murder and resisting arrest with a weapon, the prosecutor said.

The injured are no longer in critical condition, Annecy Prosecutor Line Bonnet-Mathis told a news conference, adding that the four children were still in hospital.

The stabbing was the first violent attack targeting children since 2012, when gunman Mohamed Merah shot three Jewish children and one of their parents, and then three soldiers, in Toulouse in 2012.

The suspect has chosen not to speak while in police custody and when presented before judges, the prosecutor said.

He was examined by a psychiatrist who considered that he was fit to be held in

custody. Drug and alcohol tests were negative.

“Presently it is premature to assess his motivations,” Bonnet-Mathis said, reiterating that there was no indication yet that terrorism was the assailant’s motivation.

The suspect was granted asylum in Sweden 10 years ago, having arrived from Türkiye. The prosecutor said the man was believed to be married with a young child.

He entered France in October 2022, having travelled through Italy and Switzerland, she said, adding that he had no police record in France and was thought to be homeless.

His request for asylum in France was refused on the grounds that Sweden had already approved one.

Witnesses told investigators that they heard the suspect call out for “his wife, his daughter” and shouted “Jesus Christ”, the prosecutor added.

On his arrest, police found a folding knife, two Christian faith images, a cross as well as cash and a Swedish drivers’ licence. — **Reuters**

# Sudan ceasefire brings rare respite for Khartoum civilians



Smoke rises above buildings as people wait on the side of a road with some belongings, in Khartoum. — AFP

**KHARTOUM:** Residents reported a welcome lull in fighting in the Sudanese capital Khartoum on Saturday after a 24-hour ceasefire between two warring generals took effect.

Multiple truces have been agreed and broken since the conflict flared, and Washington slapped sanctions on both rival generals after the last attempt collapsed at the end of May.

The air strikes and artillery bombardments that have rocked greater Khartoum almost daily subsided at least temporarily, allowing trapped civilians to venture outdoors to buy desperately needed supplies.

In one Khartoum market, people were seen scrambling to stock up on fruit and other basic goods. “The truce is a chance for

us to get some food supplies after we lived on rationed quantities in recent days,” said one of the shoppers, Mohamad Radwan.

There was no immediate word on observance of the ceasefire in the conflict’s other main battleground, the flashpoint western region of Darfur.

Announcing the latest truce on Friday, US and Saudi mediators warned the warring parties they would break off their diplomatic efforts unless they honoured their commitments this time.

“Should the parties fail to observe the 24-hour ceasefire, facilitators will be compelled to consider adjourning” talks in the Saudi city of Jeddah which have been suspended since late last month, they said.

The Saudi and US mediators said they “share the frustration of the Sudanese people about the uneven implementation of previous ceasefires”.

The army said it has “agreed to the proposal”, adding it “declares its commitment to the ceasefire”.

The paramilitary RSF said: “We affirm our full commitment to the ceasefire.”

Both statements said the truce could support humanitarian efforts, while cautioning against violations by their opponents.

“If observed, the 24-hour ceasefire will provide an important opportunity... for the parties to undertake confidence-building measures which could permit resumption of the Jeddah talks,” the US-Saudi statement said.

Ceasefire announcement came a day after Sudanese authorities loyal to Burhan declared UN envoy Volker Perthes “persona non grata”, accusing him of taking sides.

UN chief Antonio Guterres later expressed support for Perthes, who is currently in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa for talks.

The fighting has sidelined Perthes’s efforts to revive Sudan’s transition to civilian rule, which was derailed by a 2021 coup by the two generals before they fell out.

It has also complicated the coordination of international efforts to deliver emergency relief to the 25 million civilians that the United Nations estimates are in need. — **AFP**

# UK politics reels from shock of ex-PM Johnson’s departure

**LONDON:** Former British prime minister Boris Johnson’s departure from parliament over Covid lockdown-breaking parties sparked fevered speculation on Saturday over his and the current government’s future, with allies and enemies trading barbs.

Johnson announced he was leaving as a member of parliament on Friday, claiming he had been forced out in a stitch-up by his political opponents.

One of Johnson’s allies quit earlier on Friday, while another

resigned on Saturday, triggering three by-elections for a government languishing in the polls and heaping pressure on current Prime Minister Rishi Sunak.

The 58-year-old Johnson has been under investigation by a cross-party committee about whether he deliberately lied to parliament over parties when he was in office.

In evidence earlier this year, he insisted he had not.

The Privileges Committee, which has a majority of MPs from



Former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson leaves his home, in London, Britain. — Reuters file photo

his own Conservative party, has powers to impose sanctions for misleading parliament, including suspension.

By quitting, Johnson avoids the consequences of a humiliating fight to remain an MP in his Uxbridge and South Ruislip constituency in northwest London where he holds a slim majority of just over 7,000.

He denounced the committee, chaired by veteran opposition Labour MP Harriet Harman, as a “kangaroo court”.

“It is very sad to be leaving

Parliament -- at least for now -- but above all I am bewildered and appalled that I can be forced out, anti-democratically... with such egregious bias,” he said.

He claimed the committee’s report, which has not been published, was “riddled with inaccuracies and reeks of prejudice”, adding he had “no formal ability to challenge anything they say”.

Their “purpose from the beginning has been to find me guilty, regardless of the facts”, he said. — **AFP**

### SHORT TAKES

#### TEHRAN

### Raisi and Macron discuss promotion of ties

Iran’s President Ebrahim Raisi and his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron in a lengthy phone call on Saturday discussed ways to promote ties, state media reported.

“The 2 sides discussed how to promote relations esp about ongoing negotiations & regional developments,” state news agency quoted Raisi’s deputy chief of staff Mohammad Jamshidi.

“They agreed on a road-map for engagement,” Jamshidi added, saying that the call lasted 90



minutes. The call comes after the UN nuclear watchdog reported progress in Iran’s cooperation with the agency, resulting in the closure of the file on the discovery of nuclear material at an undeclared site. — **AFP**

#### ANKARA

### Blast in explosives factory kills five

A blast at a Türkiye military explosives factory killed five people on Saturday, a regional governor said.

“According to preliminary information, a chemical reaction caused an explosion around 8:45 am in the dynamite preparation department. Unfortunately, five employees were killed,” Vasip Sahin, governor of the Ankara province, told reporters at the factory. The bodies of all the victims have been recovered from the rubble and prosecutors



have opened an investigation into the accident. The factory is in the Elmadag region, some 40 kilometres east of the capital Ankara, and is part of Türkiye’s defence ministry. — **AFP**

#### MOGADISHU

### Six civilians killed in hotel siege

Six civilians were killed and 10 wounded in a six-hour siege by Al-Shabaab group at a beachside hotel in Somalia’s capital Mogadishu, police said on Saturday.

“Six civilians were martyred in the attack... and 10 others were wounded. Three brave members of the security forces were martyred during the rescue operation,” the Somali Police Force said in a statement.

The assault, for which Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility,



began just before 8:00 pm on Friday when seven attackers stormed the Pearl Beach hotel, a popular spot at Lido Beach along Mogadishu’s coastline. — **AFP**

# Battles rage as Ukraine tries to retake Russian-occupied territory



Andrew E. Kramer

The writer is New York Times bureau chief in Kyiv.



Eric Schmitt

The writer is a senior correspondent covering national security for The New York Times.

Intense fighting raged across a wide swath of southeastern Ukraine for a second day on Friday, as Ukrainian forces attacked occupying Russian troops in multiple locations, while military analysts and US officials cautioned that it was far too early to gauge the success of Ukraine’s offensive.

Both sides were grappling with severe flooding caused by the destruction of a major dam on the Dnieper River, but east of there, the fierce combat indicated that Ukraine’s long-awaited counteroffensive against the Russian attack was underway, according to analysts and Western and Russian officials.

The Russians have constructed layers of formidable defences — with trenches, bunkers, minefields, concrete tank obstacles and gun emplacements — and the flat ground leaves advancing troops vulnerable to Russia’s artillery and air power.

Videos and photos posted by pro-war Russian bloggers, show that at least three German-made Leopard 2 tanks and eight American-made Bradley Fighting Vehicles were recently abandoned by Ukrainian troops or destroyed.

The Pentagon on Friday announced another round of military aid to Ukraine, this time worth \$2.1 billion, including air defence missiles and artillery shells.

Both warring countries gave positive-sounding but vague assessments that offered minimal detail about the battle. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine said in a video address on Thursday night that his forces were achieving “step by step” results, but did not say what those results were, and the Ukrainian military said on Friday that the “enemy remains on the defensive.”

President Vladimir Putin of Russia said, at a public appearance in Sochi, Russia, that Ukraine’s counteroffensive had begun, as evidenced by its use of “strategic reserves.” Ukraine’s military had not made progress, he said, but still had “offensive potential.”

Pentagon officials and military analysts have been increasingly bullish on Ukraine’s prospects for taking back much of the 18 per cent of the country that Russia still occupies.

“This isn’t something you judge based on a few days of fighting,” Michael Kofman, the director of Russian studies at CNA, a research institute in Arlington, Virginia, said in a Twitter message on



A Ukrainian commander known as Barakuda, left, in a damaged apartment building in Vesele, in Kherson.

Friday. “The offensive will play out over weeks and likely months.”

The Institute for the Study of War, an analysis group based in Washington, wrote on Thursday evening that Ukraine had not yet committed all of the newly trained and equipped units it had prepared for the offensive, and was fighting in the Zaporizhzhia region against Russian units that were considerably stronger than those elsewhere along the front.

The Ukrainians have attacked in several places in Zaporizhzhia and the adjacent Donetsk region, looking for weaknesses to exploit, and are expected to shift troops and equipment to concentrate on those vulnerabilities.

Some of the heaviest fighting has been reported, by officials on both sides, near the town of Orikhiv, in the southern Zaporizhzhia region. Analysts have long anticipated a major Ukrainian thrust there, pushing southward toward the city of Melitopol and the Sea of Azov, in an attempt to cut in two the land that Russia has seized.

Ukraine was also attacking to the northeast, in the Donetsk region, around

the town of Velyka Novosilka and the city of Bakhmut, which fell last month to Russian forces after the longest and bloodiest battle of the war. Ukrainian forces reporting gaining ground on the city’s flanks.

This Ukrainian counteroffensive is expected to be one of the largest military operations in Europe since World War II, involving tens of thousands of soldiers and hundreds of tanks, armoured vehicles and howitzers, fighting in and around farm fields, towns and villages.

Farther west, in the Kherson region, the two sides are separated by the Dnieper River, now much wider and surrounded by devastation after the destruction on Tuesday of the Kakhovka dam. That would make a Ukrainian advance across the river much more difficult, but Ukrainian officials say such an assault was not in their plans, and the dam breach will have no effect on the course of the fighting.

A senior Biden administration official said that US spy satellites detected an explosion at the Kakhovka dam just before it collapsed, but American analysts still do

not know what — or who — caused it.

Separately, a Norwegian seismic monitoring foundation reported that its equipment in Romania had detected two explosions from the direction of the dam. There was a weaker one at 2:35 a.m. on Tuesday, and then a stronger one, with movement equivalent to a magnitude 1 to 2 earthquake, at 2:54 a.m., about the time that the dam broke, the group said.

Experts say the dam, was probably destroyed by an intentional explosion within the massive structure. They say an explosion from the outside, like a missile strike, or a structural failure caused by earlier war damage and high water spilling over the top, were conceivable causes but far less likely.

Ukraine’s government says the only plausible scenario is that the Russians, who were in control of the dam, blew it up. Its security service on Friday released an audio clip of what it said was an intercepted phone call, in which a man it identified as a Russian soldier said “it was our sabotage group” that destroyed it, and added that the damage was “more than they planned.”

This Ukrainian counteroffensive is expected to be one of the largest military operations in Europe since World War II, involving tens of thousands of soldiers and hundreds of tanks, fighting in and around farm fields.

## Record pollution and heat herald a season of climate extremes



Somini Sengupta

The writer is the international climate reporter for The New York Times.

Fires are burning across Canada, blanketing parts of the eastern United States with choking, orange-gray smoke. Puerto Rico is under a severe heat alert, as are other parts of the world. Earth’s oceans have heated up at an alarming rate.

Human-caused climate change is a force behind extremes like these. Although there is no specific research attributing this week’s events to global warming, the science is unequivocal that global warming significantly increases the chances of severe wildfires and heat waves like the ones affecting

major parts of North America.

Now comes a global weather pattern known as El Niño, which can drive up temperatures and set heat records. On Thursday morning, scientists announced its arrival.

Taken together, the week’s extremes offer one clear takeaway: The world’s richest continent remains unprepared for the hazards of the not-too-distant future. A sign of that came when Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said his government may soon create a disaster response agency in order to “make sure we’re doing everything we can to predict, protect and act ahead of more of these events coming.”

The recent fires have also punctured the notion that some places are relatively safe from the worst hazards of climate change because they’re not near the equator or they’re far from the sea. Almost without warning, smoke from faraway fires upended daily life.

So much wildfire smoke pushed through the border that schools in Buffalo, New York, cancelled outdoor activities. Detroit was suffocated by a toxic haze. Flights were grounded at airports in the Northeast.

“Wildfires are no longer a problem just for people who live in fire-prone, forested areas,” said Alexandra Paige Fischer, a professor who studies fire adaptation strategies at the University of Michigan.

In the United States, more people are already living with wildfire smoke. A 2022 study by Stanford researchers found that the number of people exposed to toxic pollution from wildfires at least one day a year increased 27-fold between 2006 and 2020.

The two countries experiencing these extremes, the



Pedestrians walk amid heavy haze from wildfire smoke on the Brooklyn Heights promenade in New York.

United States and Canada, are major producers of oil and gas, which, when burned, produce the greenhouse gases that have significantly warmed the Earth’s atmosphere. The average global temperatures today are more than 1.1 degrees Celsius higher than in the pre-industrial era.

The boreal forests of western Canada offered ready fuel. The trees and grasses of eastern Canada turned to tinder. “Under warmer temperatures, those dry years will cause things to dry out and become flammable more quickly than they would have otherwise,” Williams said.

Other parts of the world have felt the scorch this year. Vietnam broke a heat record in May, with temperatures soaring past 44 degrees Celsius, or 111 Fahrenheit. China broke heat records in more than 100 weather stations in April. The boreal forests of Siberia are also burning.

As in the North American boreal forests, climate change is making the Siberian fire season longer and more severe. It has also increased lightning ignitions, said Brendan Rogers, a boreal forest fire expert at the Woodwell Climate Research Center. There are different conditions in different years, to be sure, he said in an email, but “the common denominator is warm / hot and dry conditions that prime the ecosystems for burning.”

Where does all that excess heat in the atmosphere go? Much of it is absorbed by the oceans, which is why ocean temperatures have been steadily rising for the past several decades, reaching records in 2022.

# How monoculturalism effects on the human mind



Dr Hamed al Sinawi @alsinawi

The writer is a senior consultant psychiatrist at Sultan Qaboos University Hospital

Monoculturalism is a term often used in sociology to describe group dynamics. It refers to a culture that is dominated by a single shared objective, belief or other elements that define a group.

In a monocultural frame, one sees the world with their own experiences as the definition of “normal”. Therefore, any notion that deviates from this belief is seen as wrong and socially unacceptable.

A prime example of this is Germany in the 1930s, where the monoculture is easily identifiable. What people accepted to be good and evil at that time and place was shown to be far from the truth. As we often identify good and bad based on our surroundings, developing the objectivity required to look past our monocultures is a complicated task. Once an idea is deeply ingrained in one’s mind as true, it no longer registers as “cultural” or “subjective”.

So how does this concept pertain to our daily lives?

On a deeper level, monoculturalism is what breeds stereotypes and stigmas. The deeply ingrained notions of what “normal” looks like inherently clash

with alienated concepts which may not exist in our culture but may exist in others.

For example, the man – the husband and father - is usually the pillar that holds the house together. A pillar’s job is to hold the structure together and keep it from falling apart. Therefore, a defective pillar – one that can no longer support the weight on its back – loses its value. Similarly, the idea of the supporting pillar seeking support – in the form of therapy – is inherently alien, as it is seen as a sign of weakness – the polar opposite of what a man should resemble.

On a more personal level, we often believe that in order to live our best lives, we should decide what we want and go after it. The inherent flaw in this belief is that we are psychologically incapable of predicting what makes us happy. Your brain cannot fathom what you have not experienced – which is why you wake up if you “die” in your dreams.

When you choose what you want for the future, you are simply recreating an already existing solution or a past ideal based on your experiences.

When things don’t go as planned, you automatically assume that you failed, when in reality you just failed at recreating something you perceived as ideal. You may have recreated something that is

‘IN MONOCULTURAL FRAME, ONE SEES THE WORLD WITH THEIR OWN EXPERIENCES AS THE DEFINITION OF ‘NORMAL.’ THEREFORE, ANY NOTION ‘THAT DEVIATES FROM THIS BELIEF IS SEEN AS WRONG AND SOCIALLY INACCEPTABLE’

even better, yet your brain interprets it as foreign and therefore “bad”.

This is why people often preach that one should “Live in the moment” and to “experience new things”, as it is the only way to think outside the box that just happens to be your skull.

This topic also relates to another common misconception: that “problems” are the walls between where we are and where we want to be.

As Marcus Aurelius points out: “The impediment to action advances the action. What stands in the way becomes the way.” This means that problems are in fact pathways, not barriers.

Facing a problem forces you to take action to resolve it. That action leads you to thinking differently, behaving differently and choosing differently. The “problem” becomes the catalyst for your progression. It simply pushes you outside your comfort zone.

In a world that values individuality and personal growth, it’s essential to recognise the limitations of monoculturalism.

By acknowledging and embracing a range of personal experiences, we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and others.

## Palestinian couple brace for east Jerusalem eviction

CLAIRE GOUNON

In the walled Old City of Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, Nora and Mustafa Sub Laban are counting down the last days before a court decision that has hovered over them since 1978 is carried out.

After decades of legal wrangling, they are set to be evicted from their home in the Muslim Quarter to make way for Jewish settlers.

“These days, I’m like a prisoner waiting to be put to death. I don’t sleep like other people,” Nora Sub Laban said.

The east Jerusalem residents have been embroiled in a 45-year legal battle with authorities and Israeli settlers.

The settlers are part of an organisation called Atara Leyoshna and are represented by Eli Attal, according to both the Sub Laban family and Ir Amim, an anti-settlement watchdog.

Attal declined to comment about the case when approached. The Israeli plaintiffs claim that Jews lived in the building before the division of the holy city into Israeli and Jordanian sectors following the proclamation of the Jewish state in 1948.

They invoke an Israeli law from the 1970s that allows Jews to reclaim property owned by Jews before 1948, even if they are not related.

The Sub Labans say they were designated “protected tenants” by Jordan in the 1950s, before Israel captured east Jerusalem in 1967 and proceeded to annex it in a move regarded as illegal by the United Nations.

The family showed a Jordanian rental contract dating back to 1953, as well as Israeli court rulings recognising their status as “protected tenants”.

Yet the courts said that the couple do not currently live permanently in the building, so their “protected tenants” status no longer applies and the eviction can go ahead.

Nora said the judgment refers to a period when she was not living in the apartment daily because of a hospitalisation.

“Legally speaking, within the Israeli system, nothing more can be done,” said Rafat Sub Laban, the couple’s son and an employee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

According to Ir Amim, some 150 Palestinian families in Jerusalem’s Old City and nearby neighbourhoods are currently threatened with eviction because of “discriminatory laws and state collusion with settler organisations”.

— AFP

## Dam’s destruction reshapes Ukraine, but not arc of the war



Andrew E Kramer

The writer is the New York Times bureau chief in Kyiv

The Ukrainian soldiers sped along a dirt road, their pickup truck bouncing over ruts, lest they become an easy target for Russian tanks across the Dnieper River.

Nearby, Russian howitzers fired with deafening booms, sending shells streaking over the ruins of the Kakhovka dam, the destruction of which unleashed a flood with far-reaching humanitarian and economic consequences. As Ukraine reckons with the devastation, its military must also fight in the flood zone, adjusting and adapting to the changing contours of the land to meet its broader strategic goals.

Fighting continued apace on Thursday in the area of the destroyed dam, across the expanse of floodwaters downriver and over the vanishing reservoir upstream.

“Soldiers will go back to fighting,” said a commander fighting near the dam, who asked to be identified by his nickname, Barakuda, for security reasons and in keeping with Ukrainian military rules. “They are already doing that.”

The two armies resumed artillery bombardments, even as mud flats were emerging on Thursday along the shores of what had been a body of water as large as the Great Salt Lake in Utah, and is expected to mostly disappear.

The destruction of the dam is physically reshaping this front in the war, but not necessarily in ways that will impede Ukraine’s long-planned counteroffensive with its newly acquired arsenal of Western weaponry.

The main thrusts are expected in a different theatre of the war, on the open plains of the Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk regions to the east. The changes on this part of the front line formed by the Dnieper River benefit and harm both militaries.

Below the dam, soldiers who had faced one another in positions a mile or so apart across the river are now separated by miles of floodwater.



A bridge that collapsed into the water in the Kakhovka dam reservoir after the dam was breached, in the Kherson region of Ukraine.

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE DAM IS PHYSICALLY RESHAPING THE WAR, BUT NOT NECESSARILY IN WAYS THAT WILL IMPEDE UKRAINE’S LONG-PLANNED COUNTEROFFENSIVE WITH ITS NEWLY ACQUIRED ARSENAL OF WESTERN WEAPONRY

Upstream, the reservoir, broad enough to be difficult to see across in places, is disappearing into mud flats, potentially drawing the two sides closer together — although the area is a smelly, boggy wasteland now without clear military utility.

“This will have a certain impact as the landscape of the future battlefield has changed significantly and even the front line itself has changed,” Natalia Humeniuk, the spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern military command, told local news outlets.

“But this is not a critical change.”

The military had weighed the

possibility that Russia would blow up the dam, she added. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine has warned of the same.

The flood will have little effect on Ukraine’s counteroffensive, as its military never intended to make fighting along the river a major part of the overall campaign, Mykhailo Samus, director of the Army, Conversion and Disarmament Center, a military research organisation in Kyiv, said in a telephone interview.

Ukraine’s threats of a riverine assault were designed to force Russia to deploy troops away from the main area of attack, Samus said. “Before the flood we needed to cross the Dnieper and after the flood it is the same, just harder,” he said. “Auxiliary and diversionary maneuvers can still be conducted.”

The Institute for the Study of War said on Wednesday that the flood had washed away Russian defensive positions on the eastern bank, potentially easing Ukrainian assaults. That report could not be independently verified.

To the south, where the mouth of the Dnieper opens to the Black Sea, a strategic sandbar held by the Russians may now become vulnerable if parts of it flood, Ukrainian officials said.

— The New York Times

# Arabian Nights: Enriching the world

Arabic folk tales hark back to a golden age, with their origins to have been Persian, Indian, and Iraqi from the 8th century as performances, later formally written in Syrian Arabic script of the 14th-15th and 16th centuries that, thanks to English publisher Andrew Lang, were largely immortalised in 1998, with his publication of ‘The Arabian Nights Entertainments.’ Tracing back to Sanskrit, Mesopotamian, Persian, and Arabic civilisations, they have ensured the names of Scheherazade, Aladdin, Sinbad, Ali Baba and his Forty Thieves will remain with us forever, a culture’s gift enriching all mankind.

Thank goodness for later aficionados who have since perpetuated the legends, the stories and tales, the myths and folklore, of the ‘Thousand and One Nights,’ that have proven so romantically evocative to children, both of yesterday and today. The remarkably exotic Oriental influences, the unrivalled mysterious beauty of the Arabian civilisations of old, the splendour of the Islamic world’s architecture, the pomp and circumstance excesses of the Persians, the religious diversities of Egypt, the wealthy influences of Mesopotamia, featured characters shaped by these convoluted beginnings, brought to life by our imaginations, and now perpetuated through books, stage, cinema, and now superbly enhanced digitally, so nothing is lost or left behind, while still leaving so much to the imagination.

The most handsome, articulate, intelligent and energetic male characters have had their characters drawn, and drawn out so magnificently, their personalities and humour taken to another level, whether animated or real, while never being really real. Does that make sense? Princesses, and concubines alike have ethereal, unmatched beauty, they charm us, delight us, and make us want to dance with them, tease, tempt and fall in love with them, and to protect them from evil. We would lay down our lives for such beauty.

Villains too take on a certain comedic fragility, a buffoonery that shows them for what they are, rather than what they appear to be, which is so refreshing. Djinn, wizards, spirits, and genies abound, good and bad, but with endless



Ray Petersen  
r.j.petersen52@gmail.com

The writer is a media consultant

THE INTERESTING THING ABOUT THESE STORIES IS OF THEIR DEVELOPMENT WITH THE TIMES, AND THEIR ADAPTATION TO THE CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF SOCIAL IMPERATIVES

powers, while giants, goblins, trolls, and ogres live and hide under bridges to seize the unwary, in the same way that dwarfs, elves, and gnomes inhabit smaller spaces. It appears that the earliest tales were to entertain, unlike their European opposites which were very much of religion and faith, whether poetry, songs, or dances.

The interesting thing about these stories is of their development with the times, and their adaptation to the changing landscapes of social imperatives, as they were pinched, plucked and pulled, tweaked, to meet societal needs particularly in Europe where, for example: the first Cinderella was murderous, manipulative, and narcissistic, but when her characteristics were changed to more virtuous qualities of being victimised by her stepsisters, her saccharine sweetness, beauty and innocence paramount, to fit in with the reformation of French society, she became inescapable.

The rise of puritanism, and German identity, forced an alignment with family values which saw Hans Christian Andersen gain considerable popularity, as the wants and the needs of the populace changed. I guess it was the ‘snowflake’ movement of the time, in the same way that James Bond’s stereotypical racism and misogyny have given way to greater sensitivity in more recent times. This is a textbook form of subtlety that must be admired in some respects, because of how difficult it has proven, historically, to change anything! Respected Japanese author Haruki Murukami writes, “I go back to the reading room, sink down into my sofa, and into the world of the Arabian Nights. Slowly, like a cinematic fadeout, the real world evaporates and I am there, in the world of my story. It is my favourite feeling in the world.”

Another of the ‘literaturna,’ Denise Mina, alludes to the almost primal need of the Arabic world to tell its stories, saying that they are as much about the teller as the listener, which is interesting, as Omanis are absolutely riveting storytellers and poets.

Me, I will not change my old lamps for new ones, but have no hesitation in exchanging my new ones, for some really old ones. Especially those bought in an old, dimly lit, small town souq. I’ll give them a rub... and... (maybe) shazaam!

## FINAL CHECK



Britain’s Prince William, Prince of Wales, carries out the Colonel’s Review at Horse Guards Parade in London on Saturday ahead of The King’s Birthday Parade. The Colonel’s Review is the final evaluation of the parade before it goes before Britain’s King Charles III during the Trooping of the Colour on June 17. – AFP

# National sovereignty’s silver lining

Commentary on the world economy has never been short of exhortations for greater global cooperation. “What happens anywhere affects everybody ... [so] it is pretty clear that the world needs more ... international coordination and cooperation,” wrote a leading International Monetary Fund official in 2013. “[V]irtually every problem destabilising the world ... is global in nature and can be confronted only with a coalition that is global,” echoed a leading columnist in 2019.

Worries about the inadequacies of global governance and weakening multilateralism have heightened in recent years, because the United States and other leading advanced economies have increasingly put their domestic agendas first. Unilateral approaches have dominated in trade, industrial policies, and the climate transition. The World Trade Organization – the crowning achievement of global governance in the hyper-globalisation era we are leaving behind – has been reduced to an ineffective bystander.

For the globalist commentariat, this is clearly bad news. For the global economy, however, the consequences are less clear – and could be salutary. In fact, in a world in which national



DANI RODRIK

WHEN GOVERNMENTS PURSUE MORE INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDAS, THEY PROVIDE A FURTHER BENEFIT TO THE WORLD ECONOMY.

governments focused on their own sustainable prosperity and social cohesion, the global economy would do just fine. Upon closer scrutiny, the case for global economic governance turns out to be considerably weaker than is commonly presupposed.

Start from the conventional case for global cooperation. We live in a world that is economically interconnected, goes the usual argument. What one country does often affects others. If governments do not coordinate their policies and reach agreement on common rules, these spillovers could leave everyone worse off.

But this reasonable-sounding argument has a big hole: the mere existence of spillovers is not an adequate justification for global coordination. In the overwhelming majority of cases where economic policies generate cross-border spillovers, national governments legitimately retain full autonomy – with little apparent detriment to the world economy.

Consider a government that wants to double its budget for tertiary public education or

for the training of scientists and engineers. Should other governments be allowed to object and invoke international rules to constrain or discipline the policy? Even the most diehard globalists would consider this an absurd possibility.

But there is definitely a cross-border spillover, and it could be a large one: if the policy is carried out, the home country will strengthen its comparative advantage in skill-intensive goods, harming its competitors in global markets. Because spillovers are so pervasive, and because many domains of government policy are naturally viewed as “domestic” (as the education example indicates), they are not a good guide to where we should seek global cooperation.

Perhaps global rules should focus on policies that might be harmful to the home economy. Investing in public education would most likely benefit the domestic economy, even if it harms certain trading partners. But raising import tariffs or subsidising certain industries would under many circumstances harm the domestic economy as well as trading partners.

But this approach would not produce a reliable guide, either. Import tariffs, subsidies, and myriad other policies that might decrease efficiency under perfect market conditions can be desirable under second-best, real-world conditions – say, to address regional unemployment or technological externalities. It is not clear that global bureaucracies would be better positioned – or viewed as more legitimate – than national policy authorities to determine the appropriateness of such policies for the home economy. And, in any case, shouldn’t democracies be allowed to make their own mistakes? The argument for global governance is much stronger for the rather narrow category of policies that are strictly “beggar-thy-neighbour” – the harm they generate abroad is a necessary precondition of the benefits produced at home. Exploiting a country’s monopoly power on world markets, maintaining low capital taxes to shift paper profits from abroad, or undervaluing the domestic currency to “steal” employment from abroad are classic cases.

But such examples are few and far between. The vast majority of

economic policies that produce adverse cross-border spillovers are not of the beggar-thy-neighbour type, and they would be deployed even in the absence of harm to other countries.

What about “climate protectionism,” which is at the centre of contemporary worries around unilateralism? While US green subsidies’ local-content requirements and the EU’s tariffs on carbon-intensive imports have raised the ire of third countries, such concerns are misplaced. Climate change is an existential problem for the world, and addressing it is a true global public good. From a global-governance standpoint, it would be far worse if leading countries chose to free ride on others’ decarbonisation policies and did not do much themselves to address climate change.

For a variety of largely domestic reasons, the US and the EU have taken major strides towards advancing the climate transition. That is cause for celebration, not condemnation, even if they have done so unilaterally and using very different instruments.

# sport

Follow us on  
omanobserver.om/sports



## Red Warriors aim victory against Uzbekistan at Cafa opener

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Oman's Red Warriors face the toughest test of their Central Asian Football Association (Cafa) Nations Cup 2023, as they will take on the hosts Uzbekistan at Bunyodkor Stadium in Tashkent, Uzbekistan on Sunday for group A matches. The match will start at 7:30pm (Oman time). In the same group, Tajikistan will meet Turkmenistan in the opener of group A games. The match will kick off at 5:30 (Oman time).

Taking part in the Cafa event is part of shaping the players readiness for the upcoming crucial assignments AFC Asian Cup Qatar 2023 finals and the qualifiers for Asian teams on road to the Fifa World Cup 2026 as well as the AFC Asian Cup 2027. Oman will seek a win against Uzbekistan to begin the tournament strongly and register an accomplishment ahead of the official assignments start.

The Croatian coach Branko Ivankovic thanked in the press conference on Saturday the Uzbekistan Football Association for the organising of the tournament and warm welcome to the team. “ We will play four crucial matches in this tournament and these games will be perfect stations for the team to gear up properly ahead of the continental and international events. I am attending this friendly tournament for the second time as I was here before with Iran team,” the coach added

**FRIENDLY TOURNAMENT**  
The 69 years old voiced confidently that he is fully aware on the Uzbeki team. “ Uzbekistan team classified as very strong and developed team in Asia. I hope all the best for them and reach to their planned targets. This friendly tournament is very crucial for Oman team and will help us a lot for our preparations for the next events. If the things moved as we



are planning, we may will meet with Iran from the other group. This will be a great test for us beside the three matches in group stage,” he said  
Coach Branko affirmed that Oman team respect all the participated teams in this preparatory event. “ We will enter to this friendly tournament with a target of registering the maximum technical outcomes. I observed the last three matches of Uzbekistan team and they are very well organised team which comprised very top players,” he ended  
Oman's Harib al Saadi said that this tournament is very essential for the team ahead of the joint



Asian and world cup qualifiers. “ As players, we are looking to maximise our benefits from this friendly event. The team are in its best condition to begin this tournament,” he finished  
The national team will compete against hosts Uzbekistan,

Tajikistan and Turkmenistan in Group A in the Central Asian Football Association (Cafa) Nations Cup 2023 while Iran, Kyrgyzstan (hosts) and Afghanistan teams comprised Group B. The event is scheduled in Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan during June 10 to 20. The Oman team will utilise from their participation at the Central Asian event by playing some tight matches against the Asian teams from different schools. Oman will take on Tajikistan on Wednesday in their second match and will conclude their group games against Turkmenistan on Saturday.

## Messi gets superstar’s welcome in China ahead of Australia friendly

**BEIJING:** Hundreds of jubilant fans greeted Lionel Messi as he arrived on Saturday in Beijing, where his World Cup-winning Argentina will face Australia in a friendly match next week.  
“Messi! Messi!” chanted several hundred fans who were waiting for the football superstar at the airport, many wearing the blue-and-white striped jersey of the Albiceleste's No 10, according to social media images.  
Several hundred others waited outside the team's hotel, not far from the banks of the Liangma River, popular with Beijingers for strolls.  
This is Messi's seventh trip to China, the last being in 2017, according to local media.  
Several banners written in Spanish and English welcomed the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner at the hotel.  
“I waited from 9 am to noon,” said Liu Yuheng, who wore the jersey of Barcelona, the club where Messi spent most of his career.  
“I thought he would come through the main door but not



through the back door. I was a little disappointed not to see him,” the 26-year-old said.  
“As I couldn't buy a ticket for the game, I booked a room in the same hotel as Messi and was hoping to catch a glimpse of him.”  
World champions Argentina will play a friendly against Australia on June 15 at Beijing's newly renovated 68,000-capacity Workers' Stadium.

By midday, the star's arrival was the most talked-about topic on the Weibo social network.  
“I absolutely want to see Messi!” wrote one user, echoing others' comments.  
“I am still feeling the emotions of the match when Argentina secured the World Cup,” said another, referring to the team's victory after an epic final against France in December.  
The friendly will mark the return of international football to China, after three years of strict Covid-19 restrictions that emptied stadiums and led to a cascade of cancellations of sporting competitions.  
The clash will be a rematch of the round of 16 at the World Cup, where Argentina won 2-1 against the Socceroos.  
Messi, who has chosen to leave Paris Saint-Germain over the summer to pursue his career with Inter Miami, will also play another friendly match, when Argentina take on Indonesia in Jakarta on June 19, as part of this tour. — AFP

## Turki al Abri emerges national hopes singles TT Champion



ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Turki al Abri, Ibri young paddler, claimed the title of national Hopes Singles TT Championship after defeated his rivals Nasser al Zaabi from Saham 3-0 in the final clash on Friday, at the main indoor hall in Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.  
Al Abri produced an excellent performance to end all the sets on a successful note while his opponent Nasser al Zaabi worked very hard to return the match into the origin point but Ibri's player managed to end the game on his side. Ali al Ajmi from Saham club bagged the third place award as he beat his teammate Nasser al Balushi in the third and fourth playoff.  
As many as 57 players took part in the national Hopes Singles table tennis Championship representing different domestic clubs including: Masirah, Seeb, Salalah, Ibri, Yanqul, Al Ittifaq, Qurayat, Nakhal and Saham. All the players were distributed into 14 groups and each group

comprised from four players. The toppers and the second placed teams from each group advanced to the knockouts stages.  
The champion Turki al Abri progressed from the eighth group as he registered full marks from two games against Said al Alawi (Yanqul) and Anwar al Sabqi (Al Ittifaq). Then, he beat Tariq al Jassasi (Ibri) in the 32nd round before emerging a win over Yazn al Ghafri in the round of 16. In quarters, the winner of the event registered a tough win against his teammate Ali al Rawahi and he outclassed over Ali al Ajmi in semis and then Nasser al Zaabi in the final. After the match completion, the young champion Turki al Abri expressed his joy in the new achievement. “ I am very glad to win this title and this will encourage me to do much better in the upcoming domestic and abroad events. I am attending in the ongoing ITTF international camp in Muscat and I will join in the following camp of the national teams in this week. I will eye to register better accomplishments in the forthcoming championships,” he ended.

# Kipyegon and Girma star in night of world records in Paris

**PARIS:** Kenyan Faith Kipyegon made it two world records in a week after delivering a masterclass in the women's 5,000m at the Paris Diamond League meeting on Friday while Ethiopia's Lamecha Girma smashed the 19-year-old record in the men's 3,000m steeplechase.

Kipyegon headlined a stellar night of track and field at the Stade Charlety that also saw Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen set a new world record in the rarely-run 2 miles event. Kipyegon showed her trademark kick to the line in the 5,000m to win in 14min 05.20sec, slicing a full second and a half off the previous best of 14:06.62 set by Ethiopia's Letesenbet Gidey, the world 10,000m champion.

There were further outstanding performances from Keely Hodgkinson, the world and Olympic silver medallist from Britain who set the 10th fastest time ever in dominating the women's 800m in 1min 55.77sec, while American Grant Holloway showed promising early-season form in winning the 110m hurdles in 12.98sec. But there was disappointment in the long-

awaited season opener for Olympic 100m champion Marcell Jacobs, who could only finish seventh in a race won by world 200m champion Noah Lyles.

It was, however, Kipyegon who stole the show just seven days after shattering the women's world record in the 1500m in Florence.

"No, I did not think about the world record, I do not know how I made it," said Kipyegon, who burst into tears after crossing the line.

"I just focused on the green light and tried to stay relaxed and enjoy the race.

"I just did the race and wanted to see what happens. When I saw that it was a world record I was so surprised. It was all about giving my best. I just wanted to improve on my personal best, the world record was not my plan."

Not to be outdone, Girma, twice a silver medallist at the world championships and once at the Olympics, clocked 7:52.11, shattering the previous best of 7:53.63 set by Kenyan-born Qatari Saif Saaeed Shaheen in Brussels in 2004.



"I'm happy and very proud. I felt so fast during the race, so confident," said Girma, 22.

"The world record is not a surprise, I planned to beat it tonight in Paris. It's a result of a full determination."

## FIRST OUTDOOR WR FOR INGEBRIGTSEN

Ingebrigtsen's efforts over the 2 miles event was equally as impressive, with the trio of record breakers aided not only by on-the-mark pace-setting but also by the Wavelight trackside lighting system that indicated world record pace --

and a raucous crowd.

The 22-year-old Norwegian, already the world record holder for 1500m indoors, clocked 7min 54.10sec in an incredible display in the seldom-run event, which is not an acknowledged Olympic or world distance.

The time smashed the previous best performance of 7:58.61 set by Kenyan Daniel Komen in July 1997 in Hechtel, Belgium.

"Being able to make this record feels amazing. It is my first world best outdoors," Ingebrigtsen said.

World 200m champion Lyles won the 100m in 9.97, just one

hundredth of a second ahead of Kenya's African champion Ferdinand Omanyala.

Jacobs, who skipped the two opening Diamond League meets of the season with a back problem, was never in contention coming out of his blocks and the Italian finished well off the pace in 10.21.

Many eyes in the build-up had been on Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone, who destroyed the 400m hurdles world record when she claimed world championships gold on home soil last year, but now has her sights set on the long-standing best in the 400m flat.

But the 23-year-old American ran out of gas in the 400m, finishing second to world silver medallist Marileidy Paulino of the Dominican Republic who overhauled her in the home straight.

Paulino ended strongly in a meeting record of 49.12, with McLaughlin-Levrone, making her first Diamond League appearance in Europe since 2019, second in a personal best of 49.71.

American Gabby Thomas won the women's 200m in 22.05, with 2019 world champion Dina Asher-Smith of Britain a disappointing fourth in 22.57. — AFP

## VINGEGAARD CRUISES TO DAUPHINE PENULTIMATE STAGE WIN



**FRANCE:** Denmark's Jonas Vingegaard won the seventh and penultimate stage of the Criterium du Dauphine to consolidate his overall lead on Saturday.

The reigning Tour de France champion pulled clear five kilometres out to cross the summit finish line 41 seconds clear of British rider Adam Yates with Australian Jai Hindley back in third.

Vingegaard goes into Sunday's closing stage to Grenoble with a lead of over two minutes in the general classification.

Vingegaard, who also won Thursday's fifth stage, has proved he is approaching his defence of the Tour de France in good shape after mastering Saturday's stage featuring three big climbs.

"I feel great, I wanted this stage win," said the Dane. "My team-mates did a great job throughout the day."

Sunday's eighth stage is another tough affair, with six climbs during the 153km ride.

"We'll see how I feel, I think I'll approach it riding more cautiously," said Vingegaard.

Looking ahead to the Tour de France he added: "I don't think I'm yet at my peak, I've still got some work to do." — AFP

# Gordon, Brown step up for Nuggets in game four win over Heat

**MIAMI:** Aaron Gordon scored a career play-off high 27 points in an all-out attack on the Miami Heat on Friday that helped push the Denver Nuggets to the brink of their first NBA championship.

Gordon led all scorers in the Nuggets' 108-95 victory over the Heat in Miami that put Denver up 3-1 in the best-of-seven NBA Finals.

The player once known for his dunking prowess -- including runner-up finishes in the 2016 and 2020 All-Star weekend slam-dunk contests -- showed just how versatile he has become as he connected on 11 of 15 shots from the field -- including three of four from three-point range.

"Making threes, getting to the foul line, guarding at a high level — Aaron did it all for us tonight, he really did," Nuggets coach Mike Malone said.

Gordon erupted for 15 points in the second quarter as the Nuggets — who trailed by one after Jimmy Butler's three-pointer to close the first period — took a 55-51 halftime lead.

"This team does a good job finding the people that are kind of in a rhythm and kind of going," Gordon said. "When it comes down to it, it's just wanting to be great for my team-mates. I know when my team-mates need me and just doing it for my brothers."

He made his first three attempts from three-point range



Denver Nuggets forward Aaron Gordon (50) shoots the ball against Miami Heat centre Bam Adebayo (13) during the first half in game four of the 2023 NBA Finals at Kaseya Center. — USA TODAY Sports

— including one from the corner that put Denver up 86-73 with five seconds left in the third quarter.

"I'm just taking the ones that they're giving me, taking the open shots," said Gordon, who was staring down the Heat bench before the ball had cleared the net.

"It's just gamesmanship," he said. "That's part of the game. When you make a three in the corner with the opposition's bench, you can have a little fun with them."

Team-mate Kentavious Caldwell-Pope wasn't surprised to see a few long-range shots fall for Gordon — he's given him some advice.

"I always tell AG, man, continue to play his game. When you're shooting threes, no up, no in, so

make sure you get that ball up so it can go in. He did that tonight."

Gordon's big second quarter helped the Nuggets gain control even as Nikola Jokic shook off a twisted ankle.

When foul trouble sidelined Jokic for more than five minutes in the fourth, Bruce Brown took it to Miami.

Brown scored 21 points in 30 minutes off the bench, pouring in 11 in the final period as the Nuggets repelled every Heat run.

Miami had cut the deficit to eight when Brown converted a three-point play to push Denver's lead back to double digits.

His pull-up three-pointer with 1:21 remaining was the final dagger, giving Denver a 108-91 lead. — AFP

## BAGNAIA WINS ITALIAN GP SPRINT AS BINDER BREAKS MOTOGP TOP-SPEED RECORD

**ITALIA:** Ducati's Francesco Bagnaia extended his lead at the top of the world championship by winning the sprint race at the Italian Grand Prix on Saturday while his title rival and closest contender Marco Bezzecchi finished second.

Bagnaia's sprint win in his home race moved him up to 106 points while VR46 Racing's Bezzecchi is four points behind ahead of Sunday's race.

It was Bagnaia's third sprint win of the season, while he has made the podium in five of the six sprints.

Rain threatened to wreak havoc early on but the sun peeked out from behind the dark clouds at Mugello, although the riders still had to deal with wind and drizzle on sections of the track.

"It was a bit scary in the end with rain in sector two and three," Bagnaia said.

"I just tried to not leave any chance for him (Bezzecchi) to overtake. I really enjoyed today."

Gresini Ducati's Alex Marquez started on the front row but his race lasted barely a few seconds until Brad Binder nudged him on turn one, causing the Spaniard to lose his balance and crash. Binder received a long-lap penalty as a result.

Binder eventually finished outside the top 10 but not before the South African had written his name into the history books by becoming



the fastest Grand Prix rider ever, clocking 366.1 kph.

Alex's brother Marc Marquez started well to stay behind pole sitter Bagnaia but he was soon overtaken by both the Pramac Ducatis and the two VR46 Racing riders, dropping down to seventh when Jack Miller also got past him on the Red Bull KTM.

Bezzecchi then made his move to get past the Pramac Ducatis and up to second, giving Bagnaia chase with the two riders separated by just one point in the championship standings going into the sprint.

Bagnaia held on for the win to the delight of the Italian fans in attendance while Jorge Martin edged Pramac team-mate Johan Zarco in an intense battle for third. Martin also moved up to third in the championship standings (87 points).

"It was a fantastic sprint. I had pace but I wasn't fast enough in qualifying," said Bezzecchi, who was only seventh-fastest in qualifying.



# SWIATEK BAGS 3RD FRENCH OPEN TITLE

**PARIS:** Iga Swiatek battled past Karolina Muchova 6-2, 5-7, 6-4 to win her third French Open title on Saturday and become the first woman to successfully defend the Roland Garros title since 2007.

The 22-year-old Swiatek is just the third woman in the Open era to win each of her first four Grand Slam finals, the Pole adding to her 2020 and 2022 titles in Paris and last year's US Open triumph.

Monica Seles and Naomi Osaka are the only other players to accomplish the feat.

Swiatek, the world number one from Poland, is also the youngest woman to claim back-to-back French Open titles since Monica Seles in the early 1990s.

Justine Henin was the last woman to win successive Roland Garros crowns when she captured her third in a row and fourth in total 16 years ago. Swiatek's latest coronation caps another dominant two weeks on the clay in Paris, where her record stands at 28 wins and two losses in five visits.

Muchova, at 43 in the world, was the fourth lowest ranked woman to reach the French Open final, her first championship match at a major. Swiatek, then just 19, was ranked 54 when she lifted her first trophy -- three years after Jelena Ostapenko's shock triumph. Muchova's compatriot Renata Tomanova was runner-up in 1976.

However, the unseeded Czech had won all five matches in her career against players in the top three -- four of them at Grand Slams -- having stunned Aryna Sabalenka in the semi-finals.

On guard against an underdog with a habit of taking those down at the top, Swiatek

quickly applied pressure on the 26-year-old Muchova.

A miscued forehand from Muchova gave the Pole two break points in the second game which she took with minimal fuss.

The top seed consolidated with a quick hold before Muchova got on the board in game four, drawing loud roars from the Court Philippe Chatrier crowd.

Muchova carved out a break opportunity to get back on serve but Swiatek snuffed it out in a protracted fifth game -- pumping her fist in relief as she surged 4-1 up.

Swiatek saw another break point come and go the following game, but her disappointment was brief as she easily won the next two games to wrap up the opening set.

Back and forth

Muchova had outfoxed her rivals with her cunning variety throughout the tournament, but Swiatek had clearly done her homework since the Czech won their only other meeting



Japan's Tokito Oda plays a forehand return to Britain's Alfie Hewett during their men's wheelchair singles final match on day fourteen of the Roland-Garros Open tennis tournament at the Court Philippe-Chatrier in Paris. -- AFP

in Prague in 2019.

A loose service game allowed Swiatek to pull 3-0 in front in the second set, but Muchova refused to roll over, displaying the grit and resolve she used to rally from match point down against Sabalenka in the previous round.

A crunching forehand down the line retrieved the break before Muchova levelled at three games each.

Swiatek slowed Muchova's momentum as the pair traded holds before the reigning champion showed her first real sign of nerves, double-faulting to leave her rival serving at 5-4 to force a decider.

Muchova couldn't take advantage as Swiatek broke right back, but another shaky game from the Pole presented her with another shot.

Two set points passed Muchova by but she set up a third with a brilliant backhand volley on the stretch, with Swiatek then pumping her return long to send the match to a third set.

Muchova sensed the tide was turning in her favour as Swiatek's title defence began to creak, the Pole broken to love as her opponent rattled off eight straight points to move 2-0 ahead.

But with her formidable record at Roland Garros, Swiatek came storming back and snatched three games on the bounce.

Muchova broke for 4-3 only for Swiatek to hit back immediately and then secure a nervy hold, resisting another break point, to move within a game of victory.

Swiatek swiftly raced 30-0 ahead and earned two championship points when Muchova dragged a forehand wide, the Czech succumbing in the most brutal of ways with a double fault to end a thrilling contest. — AFP



Czech Republic's Karolina Muchova lifts up her trophy. --AFP



Follow us on  
omanobserver.com/business



Take advantage of Higher Profit Rates up to 3.75%  
With High-Yield Savings Account  
To apply, simply visit your nearest branch.

2477 5777 | [www.maisarah-oman.com](http://www.maisarah-oman.com) | [f /MaisarahOman](#) | [@MaisarahIslamic](#) | [@Maisarah.Islamic](#)

#MAISARAHWORLD

MAISARAH  
البنك الإسلامي  
Islamic Banking Services

# MSX 30 market value climbs to RO 23.7 billion

**MUSCAT:** The market value of the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) rose at the end of last week to about RO 23.7 billion, recording weekly gains of RO 27.5 million, benefiting from the return of the leading shares to rise after their decline during the previous two weeks.

Trading statistics issued by the MSX showed an increase in the prices of 23 stocks, most of which are among the leading stocks, such as: Bank Muscat, Omantel, Dhofar International Development and Investment, Oman Cement, Renaissance Services, Al Jazeera Steel Products, Al Anwar Ceramic Tiles, and Galfar Engineering and Contracting.

The main MSX 30 index resumed its rise after two weeks of decline, rising by 28 points and closed at 4,658 points. The industrial sector index recorded the best rise, up 106 points. The financial sector index rose 31 points.

The Shariah index recorded gains of more than two points, while the services sector index recorded the only decline between the sectoral indices were affected



by the decline in the shares of energy companies, to end the weekly trading at 1,681 points, recording a weekly decline of about 26 points.

The trading value during the

past week amounted to RO 14.5 million, compared to RO 16.1 million in the previous week, recording a decline of 9.8 per cent, with the number of transactions falling by 24 per cent to 2,153, down from 2,833 transactions.

Trading focused on the shares of Omantel and Bank Muscat, which acquired about 24 per cent of the total trading value. Omantel's share witnessed transactions worth RO

2.1 million, representing 14.6 per cent of the total trading value.

Bank Muscat's share witnessed transactions worth RO 1.3 million.

The bonds and sukuk market recorded trades of more than RO 7 million, accounting for 48.1 per cent of the total trading value witnessed by the Muscat Stock Exchange last week.

The second issue of Meethaq's sukuk witnessed transactions of about RO 1.5 million, and Sohar International Bank's permanent bonds in 2019 witnessed transactions of RO 1.3 million, representing 8.9 per cent of the total trading value.

During the past week, Oman Investment and Finance Company announced the approval of its board of directors of the proposal to merge with Dhofar International Development and Investment Holding Company by way of consolidation.

The authorised capital of the company is from RO 75 million to RO 100 million, and the company's issued capital is increased from RO 54.4 million to RO 79.6 million, and the shares of the increase amounting to 86.8 million are allotted to the shareholders of Oman Investment and Finance in accordance with the terms of the merger.

According to the merger proposal, the value of Oman Investment and Finance Company was determined at RO 25.2 million.

Oman Investment and Finance Company said that its board of directors believes that the merger is in the interest of the company's shareholders, and the board has agreed to call for an extraordinary general meeting of the company's shareholders to study the merger with the Board's recommendation to vote in favour of the merger.

The items of the Extraordinary General Assembly meeting of Oman Investment and Finance Company, which will be held on June 21, include approval of the proposal to dissolve Oman Investment and Finance Company and its merger by consolidation into Dhofar International Development and Investment Company, and to authorise the company's board of directors to complete all merger procedures with the concerned authorities.

— ONA

## \$220m deal to connect GCC power grids with Iraq



STAFF REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The Gulf Electrical Interconnection Authority (GCCIA) has successfully entered into a \$220 million contract with five prominent companies to construct a 295-km, 400-kV transmission line that will serve as a vital link connecting the electrical grids of the Gulf states with Iraq. Anticipated to be completed within a span of 24 months, the project will offer an initial capacity of 500 megawatts.

The undertaking of this project aligns with the GCCIA's overarching objective of enhancing the reliability and security of electricity supply within the region.

Moreover, it presents a remarkable opportunity to foster energy trade between the Gulf states and Iraq.

Financial backing for this initiative is being provided by the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development and the

THE UNDERTAKING OF THIS PROJECT ALIGNS WITH THE GCCIA'S OVERARCHING OBJECTIVE OF ENHANCING THE RELIABILITY AND SECURITY OF ELECTRICITY SUPPLY WITHIN THE REGION

Qatar Fund for Development.

The formal signing of this contract represents a noteworthy milestone in the ongoing endeavours of the GCCIA to establish a robust connection between the electrical grids of the Gulf states and Iraq. This project is poised to play a pivotal role in fortifying energy cooperation between these two regions.

Commenting on the agreement, Eng Yaqoub al Kiyumi, Vice Chairman of the GCCIA's Board of Directors (who is also CEO of Nama Power & Water Procurement of the Sultanate of Oman), said: "This project constitutes a significant milestone for both the GCCIA and the broader region.

# Knights Bay eyes 111,000 t/y of nickel ore from Oman mining block

Unlocking value: British mining specialist welcomes Royal Decree ratifying award of Ibra concession

CONRAD PRABHU  
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Knights Bay, the UK-based miner of strategic minerals, says it is targeting the production of significant quantities of nickel and cobalt ores from its concession in Oman's Ibra Wilayat — mineral commodities that are essential building blocks for a clean economy.

In a post over the weekend, the specialist mining firm welcomed the issuance of a Royal Decree ratifying the award of a mining concession covering Block 21 in North Al Sharqiyah Governorate.

"It is with great excitement that we can announce the receipt of the Royal Decree issued by the Sultan of Oman, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The Royal Decree confirms and approves the exploration and mining agreement for Mineral Concession Block 21 between the Government of Oman (Ministry of Energy and Minerals) and Knights Bay," the British firm stated.

That agreement, inked in



(Picture courtesy: Knights Bay)

March this year, confers upon Knights Bay concession rights to a massive 1,444 square kilometre site representing "a new potentially world-class nickel laterite deposit with cobalt, chrome, and iron-ore credits", the company noted.

Initial geology and testing has focused on a 300 km2 area within the concession, according to Knights Bay.

Extensive sampling over 1.2 sq km of an existing strip mine within the 300 square kilometre has produced average grades 1.05% – 1.2% nickel with upside potential.

Long-term production

objective target is 111,000 tonnes per year of contained nickel in sulphates and 5,100 tonnes per year contained cobalt in sulphates at full production," it further added.

Royal Decree 36/2023, issued earlier this week, represents an "historic milestone", said Knights Bay, adding: "We would like to thank everyone involved, especially the team in the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and the British Embassy Muscat; thank you for all your support and patience."

With the concession award, the Sultanate of Oman has embarked on an ambitious effort

to unlock its deposits of strategic minerals, notably lithium and cobalt, to capitalise on the huge demand for these commodities in the renewables and EV battery production sectors, among other industries.

Deposits of lithium ore were also the target of a new concession agreement signed by the ministry late last month.

If unlocked in suitably large quantities, these strategic minerals could potentially herald the growth of investments in mineral processing facilities in Oman, and possibly, end-user industries as well, say experts.

# OBA holds session for young entrepreneurs

MUSCAT: The Oman Banks Association (OBA) organised a session for the youth on June 7, 2023, Wednesday, from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm at the Technopark Innovation Center, Ghala, Muscat.

The objective of the event was to spread awareness to young entrepreneurs starting their own businesses and invite bank members to help shed light on the financial aspects of starting a business.

During the session, a successful young Omani entrepreneur shared his experience in starting up a business, the financial planning process, and risks to avoid.

The session started with an introduction presented by Marah al Lawati from OBA on the role of the Oman Banks Association in promoting the banking sector



and economic development of the country.

The event provided an opportunity for young Omani entrepreneurs and self-employed to interact one-on-one with

successful business people, learn from bankers about financial and debt planning, as well as, a great networking opportunity among themselves for this young business community.

Marwa bint Murad al Zadjaliyah, Projects and Events Manager at the Oman Banks Association stated “We are pleased at OBA to engage with the community and assist in guiding

the youth to be productive and successful. This event is the first in the series of “Let us hear from you...” that will cover different parts of the Sultanate of Oman focusing on young entrepreneurs and self-employed to plan and develop through a series of events that encourage sharing experiences and advice.

Oman Banks Association continues focusing on different segments of society, contributing towards a sustainable social development as part of the Oman Vision 2040”.

Oman Banks Association is a non-profit professional association created to represent the banking sector, promote Omani banking activities, coordinate with regulators on matters of policy and strategy, and support banking excellence in Oman.

# OAB, Alizz Islamic Bank support Al Dakhiliyah investment forum

MUSCAT: Oman Arab Bank and Alizz Islamic Bank have joined hands with Al Dakhiliyah Governorate represented by Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up office to explore opportunities in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate at the first-of-its-kind investment forum.

Scheduled to take place on June 11 and June 12, the preparatory workshop will serve as a platform for the forum to identify investment prospects in areas of agriculture, industry, heritage and tourism in the governorate as well as gain insights on interested investors. The event is the initial installment in a series that will subsequently expand to the other governorates. Through these projects, both banks aim to foster innovation, facilitate ease of business and provide equal opportunities for all.

Sulaiman al Harthi, CEO of Oman Arab Bank, said:

“Together with Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit and the Governor’s office, we are working together to understand the specific needs of each governorate and explore development projects that will yield economic returns on the local communities and ultimately Oman.”

“Achieving the goals of Oman Vision 2040 is of incredible importance to the private sector, holding the keys to our economic prosperity and competitiveness, and maintaining pace with regional and global developments. We all have vital roles to play as we strengthen economic relations between the government and private sector — and the banking industry is a particularly important driver of progress.”

Ali al Mani, General Manager of Alizz Islamic Bank explained, “This forum is dedicated to advancing economic

development of Al Dakhiliyah Governorate by identifying untapped opportunities. By nurturing and prioritising the pivotal sectors of industry, tourism, and agriculture, we aim to stimulate robust economic growth and support in creating a thriving and sustainable economy for the governorate.”

Ahlam bint Hamed al Qassabiyah, Director of Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Office in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate added, “The governorate is committed to consistently improving the investment environment, with a strong emphasis on three key sectors: industry, heritage and tourism, and agriculture. We are dedicated to channelling our efforts into these sectors. We will diligently examine and evaluate the investment opportunities that arise from the workshop, in close collaboration with various government entities.”

# OABC to hold workshop on FTA rules of origin

MUSCAT: The Oman American Business Centre (OABC) invites everyone to join its second webinar in a five-part series of online workshops designed to give a greater understanding of the US-Oman Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The second session is taking place on Monday, June 12 and will cover the Rules of Origin.

“Goods traded between the US and Oman must meet the rules of origin to ensure eligibility for preferential treatment under the FTA.

This topic is one of our more frequently asked questions, particularly when it pertains to manufactured items and textiles.

Once again, the team of experts from the AmCham Jordan FTA Unit will be covering all you need to know on this important topic,”



OABC said.

The remainder of the online workshop series will be as follows: Technical Compliance, an Essential Condition of Market Access (July); Exporting to the US (August) and Sourcing from the US (September) The FTA programme is in partnership with the US Embassy Muscat.

The online workshops are free and open to everyone, but one must register in advance by Sunday, June 11. A webinar link will only be sent to those who register.

# \$220m deal to connect GCC power grids with Iraq

FROM PAGE 13

It represents our first foray into interconnecting electrical grids beyond the GCC system, thereby paving the way for potential future connections with other nations.

The project will facilitate cooperation in electricity provision, bolster network reliability for all involved parties, and establish the Wafra substation as a strategic focal point for strengthening connectivity with Kuwait and serving as an initial junction for connecting with Iraq.

The GCCIA remains committed to advancing electrical network technologies, exploring avenues for integrating renewable energy solutions, and has ambitious plans for expansion projects, including linking with Kuwait, expanding connections with the UAE, and establishing a direct link with the Sultanate of Oman in the near future.”

# Take luxury experiences further with the Lincoln Navigator

MUSCAT: The flagship Lincoln Navigator has been a benchmark for luxury in the automotive industry. The Navigator stands out with its inspiring luxury, a host of advanced features and space and comfort that is one of the largest in its segment.

Powering the Lincoln Navigator is a twin-turbo V6, 3.5L engine with auto start-stop technology, that produces 440 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed automatic transmission with SelectShift paddle activation.

Giving the Navigator a bold look are adaptive pixel projector LED headlamps with signature lighting, predictive curve lighting and sign-based lighting. The Navigator is also equipped with panoramic vista roof with power sunshade and Lincoln Embrace: LED-illuminated exterior door handle pockets, Lincoln approach detection system, Lincoln logo illuminated



mats and Lincoln signature lighting with fade on/off.

The Navigator makes a fine mark on every journey with an impressive interior which includes 1st-row passenger seat memory, 3rd-row PowerFold 60/40 split bench seat with power recline, 12” configurable LCD instrument cluster, Head-up Display, ambient lighting-LED, enhanced active noise control, wireless charging pad and more.

Occupants can enjoy available

Revel Ultima 3D audio system with 28 speakers that work in concert with Navigator’s interior design and acoustics. Standard SYNC 4 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls.

To navigate your drives safely, the Navigator easily adapts to changing conditions with adaptive cruise control with stop-and-go and lane centring assist,

auto high-beam headlamps, blind spot information system with cross-traffic alert and trailer coverage, evasive steering assist, lane-keeping system with blind-spot assist which includes lane-keeping aid, lane-keeping alert, driver alert system and a pre-collision assist.

The Navigator is also equipped with driver and front passenger-dual-stage front airbags, front-seat side airbags, safety canopy side-curtain airbags with rollover sensor, AdvanceTrac with RSC (Roll Stability Control), MyKey technology and SecuriCode invisible keypad.

In Oman, Lincoln vehicles are brought to you by Arabian Car Marketing Co. LLC. Please log on to [www.lincolnoman.com](http://www.lincolnoman.com), or [www.facebook.com/lincolnoman](https://www.facebook.com/lincolnoman) or [www.instagram.com/lincoln\\_oman](https://www.instagram.com/lincoln_oman) for the latest news, test drive requests and the latest press releases.

# OCCI to hold Ordinary General Assembly on June 25

MUSCAT: The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) will hold an Ordinary General Assembly of the Chamber at its headquarters in Ruwi at 5pm on Sunday, June 25, 2023.

Faisal bin Abdullah al Rawas, Chairman of the Board of Directors, extended a warm invitation to all association members who have fulfilled their annual membership fee obligations.

The assembly will delve into various significant matters, including the review and approval of the auditor’s report for the fiscal year ending in 2022.

Additionally, the appointment of an auditor for the upcoming fiscal year, which concludes on December 31, will be deliberated upon.

Furthermore, the suggestions submitted by association members to the council at least fifteen days prior to the meeting will be carefully considered. In accordance with the Chamber’s system, each member is entitled to representation at the assembly meeting.

Representation can be carried out by the owner, solely authorised partner, or solely authorised manager, as indicated by the commercial registration data.

It is essential to note that each member possesses a single vote, and delegation or authorisation for attendance or voting in the assembly meeting is strictly prohibited.

In the event that the required quorum is not achieved during the first meeting, a second meeting of the Assembly has been scheduled for Thursday, July 6, 2023, at 5 pm in the main building of the Chamber. Printed copies of the annual report for the year 2022 will be available at the Chamber’s headquarters and its branches in the following week.

Additionally, the electronic version of the auditor’s report can be accessed on the Chamber’s official website.

“The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry eagerly anticipates the presence and active participation of its esteemed members at the upcoming Ordinary General Assembly. This meeting presents an opportunity to collectively shape the future of our vibrant business community,” the Chamber added in a press statement.

# GCC, Iraq launch electric interconnection project

JOMAR MENDOZA

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Iraq yesterday inaugurated their electrical grid interconnection project. This ambitious project, with an initial capacity of 1000 megawatts, which has been in development for several years, will connect the national power grids of GCC states and Iraq, creating a unified network that will improve the reliability of electricity supply, reduce costs and promote sustainable development in the region.

The inauguration, held under the auspices HH Royal Prince Saud bin Nayef bin Abdulaziz, Governor of the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, in the presence of ministers of energy and electricity of the GCC states, was made with an electrical connection ceremony between the city of Arar in Saudi Arabia and the Yusufiya region in Iraq.

Mohsen bin Hamad al Hadhrami, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Gulf Electrical Interconnection Authority (GCCIA), attended the event and said "the Gulf electrical interconnection project is one of



the most important infrastructure interconnection projects approved by the leaders of the GCC states.

The Gulf electrical interconnection project has achieved, year after year, technical

and economic benefits for the GCC countries, as it contributes to support in emergency cases to spare the networks of the GCC countries electrical outages. It provides immediate support

during emergency cases by transferring the required power through the grid that extends for a distance of about 1,050 km from Kuwait to the Sultanate of Oman."

The project, since its operation until now, has supported approximately 2,700 cases.

It has also contributed to achieving savings for the GCC countries ranging from \$200 to \$300 million annually and the cumulative savings for the GCC countries since the start of the project has reached \$3 billion.

"The project aims to meet part of the demand for electrical power in the southern Iraq, with about 500 megawatts of energy from

the GCC countries through the Gulf electrical interconnection network as a first stage. The project will take about 24 months and is expected to be completed and operational by end of next year."

Jassim al Budaiwi, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council, said that the Gulf electrical interconnection project is one of the most important projects linking the infrastructure between the GCC states and aims at addressing the loss of power supply, reducing carbon emission and reducing the costs of establishing optical fibre networks.

It provided the basis for the exchange and trade of electricity among member states in order to serve the economy and support the reliability of electrical supply.

"The connection with the southern grid of Iraq is one of the most important strategic projects for the GCC states. It will support the existing cooperation between the GCC countries and the Republic of Iraq. It will allow the Republic of Iraq to find sustainable alternatives to electric power and will achieve economic benefits for both sides through the export of electricity from the GCC states to Iraq."

Eng Ahmed al Ibrahim,

CEO of the Gulf Electrical Interconnection Authority, said GCC energy ministries created a platform for energy exchange since 2016, which "leads to us to realise the Arab dream after linking with Iraq and then Jordan and Egypt or the 'Arab Common Market for Electricity.' The next plan after linking outside the GCC system is linking with Jordan and Egypt and we are now in the final feasibility study for linking to reach Europe."

The GCCIA leads the renewable energy alliances and the integration of renewable energy sources into the electricity grids of the GCC states and have ambitious plans and projects to produce electric energy with renewable energy according to the best technologies.

He revealed the trend to increase the investment in GCC electrical by about \$1.5 billion over the next five years, pointing out that these investments contribute to supporting three huge project: the expansion of electrical connectivity in Kuwait, expansion of electrical connectivity in the UAE and direct connection with the Sultanate of Oman.

He stressed that the increased investment in the grid will increase the capacity of the electrical connectivity with the GCC states.

## Food sector tops the value of insured sales by Credit Oman



MUSCAT: The food and consumer goods sector recorded a 23-per cent growth in the value of insured sales by Credit Oman during Q1, bringing the total sales value of this sector to RO 43,329,415, compared to RO 35,232,322 in the same period in 2022.

The share of the value of locally insured sales within the Sultanate of Oman amounted to RO 29,591,180, while the value of sales from the Sultanate of Oman and to the world amounted to RO 13,738,396.

The building and construction materials sector continued to grow in the volume of insured sales, which amounted to RO 31,569,518, compared to the same period last year, which amounted to RO 30,944,167.

In the mining sector, the growth rate increased to 274 per cent in the total volume of insured sales for exports and domestics, with a total value of RO 1,449,708. The petrochemical and plastics sector recorded a growth of 135 per cent, with a total value of RO 4,836,527.

The clothing industry sector witnessed a significant decline of 37 per cent, bringing the total value of insured sales to RO 427,558 compared to the same period last year which amounted to RO 683,360.

— ONA

## Producer price index in Oman rises during Q1

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman's producer price index in the first quarter of 2023 recorded an increase of one per cent, compared to the same period in 2022, according to data issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information. Prices of oil and gas products led this increase, registering a growth of 2 per cent, while non-oil products recorded a decrease of 4 per cent.

The increase in the prices of oil and gas products is attributed to the rise in the prices of crude oil products and natural gas by 2.8 per cent, while refined oil



products decreased by 2.9 per cent.

The decrease in the prices of non-oil products is due to the decline in the prices of the manufacturing industries group by 5.5 per cent, in which most of the prices of the sub-groups decreased in varying proportions, as the prices of metal products, machinery and equipment decreased by 13.5 per cent, and the prices of other transportable commodities products by 3.1 per cent.

In the food, beverage and textile products group, the prices of beverages increased by 8.5 per cent, the prices of woven fabric

products by 35 per cent, shoes by 1.8 per cent, bakery products and other food products by 2.3 per cent. The prices of dairy products decreased by 0.5 per cent, and the prices of clothing products were stable.

In transportable goods, the prices of chemical products decreased by 5.8 per cent, glass, cement and marble products by 1.6 per cent, dyes and pharmaceutical products by 0.4 per cent, furniture products and other goods by 0.3 per cent, and re-melted iron waste products by 1 per cent. Prices of rubber and plastic products increased by 2.2 per cent. — ONA

## Arab food safety symposium opens in Muscat

QASIM AL MAASHANI

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Delegates from Arab nations, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and international scientific organisations gathered here on Saturday, June 10, for the 2nd Arab Symposium on Codex Alimentarius. The two-day symposium is being hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources in partnership with the Food Safety and Quality Centre.

The symposium has four broad objectives: To review the outcomes of earlier meetings held by the main committees of the Codex Alimentarius; to shape the future direction of the Arab initiative on Codex Alimentarius; to delineate the activities of the Arab electronic working groups established within this initiative; and to establish a robust and harmonised food safety framework across the Arab region.

The symposium coincides with the prestigious 60th anniversary of the establishment of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Health Organization.

As the global reference on food quality, the Commission was established to develop comprehensive guidelines



ensuring consumer health and facilitating international food trade.

The symposium signifies the renewed commitment of Arab nations to uphold these standards and contribute to the continual advancement of global food safety practices.

Ahmed Eddouaicer, coordinator of the Arab Codex initiative at AIDSMO, emphasised the importance of prioritising Arab initiatives within the esteemed framework of the Codex Alimentarius.

He said that this goal necessitates a focused approach, particularly in fortifying the capacities of member states. To achieve this, extensive studies and scientific literature will be prepared, aimed at

propelling advancements in information technology.

Additionally, database development in various areas of interest, including risk analysis, will be prioritised. Through unwavering dedication to these fundamental aspects, the overarching ambition is to enhance the effectiveness and proliferation of Arab initiatives within the realm of the Codex Alimentarius.

Dr Hussein al Masroori, Director of the Centre of Food Safety and Quality in Oman, said that the primary objective of the symposium is to foster a unified standpoint among Arab countries, allowing them to effectively represent their respective populations in matters concerning the

system, safety and quality of food.

He said that it is crucial for these countries to align themselves with international organisations like the Codex Alimentarius Commission, particularly when addressing food, which is a fundamental element directly impacting human well-being.

Moreover, standardising specifications brings substantial benefits to the private sector, responsible for implementing these specifications in manufacturing and production processes.

In the absence of a common framework, the private sector faces challenges in meeting diverse requirements. Therefore, establishing unified standards that prioritise consumer welfare while facilitating private sector operations becomes imperative.

Such standards are advantageous to both consumers and the private sector, ensuring the safety and quality of food products.

The Second Arab Symposium on Codex Alimentarius is a significant event that will help to advance food safety and international standards in the Arab region.

The symposium is a testament to the commitment of Arab nations to ensuring the safety and quality of food for their populations, and it is a valuable opportunity for delegates to share knowledge and best practices.

# Omani cuisine: A tantalising blend of tradition and entrepreneurship



STEFANO VIRGILLI  
stefano@virgilli.com

The author is a member  
pf the Internatinal Press  
Association

Omani cuisine is making waves in the culinary world, captivating both locals and international food enthusiasts with its unique flavours and rich cultural heritage. This rising star on

the gastronomic scene is not only a delight for the taste buds but also a thriving business opportunity.

The culinary entrepreneurs of Oman are harnessing the power of tradition and innovation, transforming Omani cuisine into a lucrative venture that showcases the country's rich culinary heritage.

According to the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, the number of food-related startups in Oman has increased by 30% over the past three years, reflecting the growing interest and entrepreneurial spirit in the culinary sector.

These local food startups, food trucks, and pop-up restaurants are becoming increasingly popular, offering a contemporary twist to traditional Omani dishes while capitalising on the rising demand for unique culinary experiences.

To promote Omani cuisine and create a platform for culinary entrepreneurs, various initiatives have emerged.

Culinary events and festivals, such as the Omani Food Festival, have witnessed a steady increase in participation. In 2022, the festival recorded a 20% increase in attendees compared to the previous year, attracting both local and international visitors.

These events not only provide a stage for local businesses to showcase their culinary prowess but also contribute to the overall growth of Oman's tourism sector.

In line with the rise of culinary tourism, Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has actively promoted Omani gastronomy as a unique selling point.

As a result, Oman has experienced a surge in international

visitors seeking authentic dining experiences.

According to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, culinary tourism has shown a year-on-year increase of 15%, with visitors expressing a strong interest in exploring the flavours of Omani cuisine.

Culinary entrepreneurs in Oman are embracing the concept of local sourcing and sustainability, responding to the growing consumer demand for ethically sourced ingredients. The farm-to-table movement has gained significant traction, with many restaurants and food businesses forming partnerships with local farmers.

According to the Omani Farmers Association, there has been a 25% increase in demand for locally grown produce by the

culinary industry over the past two years.

Sustainable practices are being adopted by Omani seafood businesses, ensuring the preservation of marine ecosystems.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Water Resources has implemented strict regulations and guidelines to promote responsible fishing techniques and protect the biodiversity of Omani waters.

This commitment to sustainability not only ensures the availability of fresh seafood but also appeals to conscious consumers who value environmentally friendly dining options.

Preserving the authenticity and richness of Omani cuisine is a paramount concern for culinary entrepreneurs. Culinary training programmes and apprenticeships play a vital role in passing down

traditional recipes, cooking techniques, and flavours to future generations. The Omani Culinary Institute, established in 2018, has trained over 150 aspiring Omani chefs, equipping them with the necessary skills to uphold the culinary legacy of Oman.

Cultural exchanges with international culinary experts and chefs have facilitated the fusion of Omani cuisine with global culinary trends. The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth has organised several cultural exchange programmes, bringing together Omani chefs and international culinary experts.

These collaborations have not only enhanced the culinary repertoire of Omani cuisine but also facilitated the introduction of Omani flavours to the global culinary landscape.

## US grapples with how clean is green hydrogen

PAUL DAY

Signed into law last year, the Biden administration's Inflation Reduction Act will plough almost \$400 billion into clean energy projects and a large part of that will finance a tiered subsidy for emission-free hydrogen production. The tax credits are expected to attract investment in the US clean hydrogen industry at every stage of the process and from companies all over the world.

However, the plan has prompted concerns hydrogen production will ramp up faster than the addition of new, emission-free electricity, and the newly installed electrolyzers will absorb all available emissions-free power from renewables, nuclear, and hydro, leaving the country's coal- and gas-fired plants to fill the void.

"The electrolysis process only makes sense if we're using completely renewable energy and we need to ensure that the effective energy being used by the grid for these projects is renewable," says Pete Budden who leads the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC's) state and regional-level hydrogen policy work.

"We can't allow these projects to incorrectly incentivise fossil fuel generators to increase their output on the grid to meet this need of electrolyzers."

Hydrogen can only be considered clean, and eligible for the subsidy, if it is accompanied by the installation of clean electricity, Budden says.

The inflation act's 45V Hydrogen Production Tax Credit awards up to \$3 per kilogrammes (kg) of hydrogen produced to projects with lifecycle greenhouse gas emission (GHG) intensity of less than 0.45 kg per kg of hydrogen.

The system has four tiers, depending on how much CO2 is produced in the production of the hydrogen, with the lowest offering \$0.6/kg for GHG intensity of 2.5-4.0 kg per kg of hydrogen.

The question of tax credits is one for the US Treasury, which must decide by August which activities will be eligible for which tier.

Until that is clear, developers are left waiting.

"The Treasury must develop a set of guidelines so that businesses know that if they do X, they get the credit. The promise of the inflation act has been extremely helpful for the United States and has stimulated investments from overseas, but this incomplete guidance leaves for unfinished business," says President and CEO of the Fuel Cell and Hydrogen Energy Association Frank Wolak.

"The question is, how do you calculate and score the greenness of the highest tier?"

Determining the "greenness" of the hydrogen is a high stakes game for the industry, which is already laying plans to invest in electrolyzers, hydrogen hubs, pipelines, refuelling stations, and other essential infrastructure, while also finding the right consumers that are ready to decarbonise their own supply lines. — Reuters

## What recession? Economy's staying power poses big questions for the Fed



JEANNA SMIALEK

The author writes about the  
Federal Reserve and the  
economy for The New York  
Times

Employers are hiring rapidly. Home prices are rising nationally after months of decline. Consumer spending climbed more than expected in a recent data release.

America's economy is not experiencing the drastic slowdown that many analysts had expected in light of the Federal Reserve's 15-month, often aggressive campaign to hit the brakes on growth and bring rapid inflation under control. And that surprising resilience could be either good or bad news.

The economy's staying power could mean that the Fed will be able to wrangle inflation gently, slowing down price increases without tipping America into any sort of recession.

But if companies can continue raising their prices without losing customers amid solid demand, it could keep inflation too hot — forcing consumers to pay more for hotels, food and child care and forcing the Fed to do even more to restrain growth.

Policymakers may need time to figure out which scenario is more likely so that they can avoid either overreacting and causing unnecessary economic pain or underreacting and allowing rapid inflation to become permanent.

Given that, investors have been betting that Fed officials will skip a rate increase at



Jerome Powell, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board of Governors, has hinted that central bankers could allow themselves time to judge how their interest rate increases are affecting the economy. — The New York Times

their June 13-14 meeting before lifting them again in July, proceeding cautiously while emphasising that pausing does not mean quitting — and that they remain determined to bring prices under control.

But even that expectation is increasingly shaky: Markets have spent this week nudging up the probability that the Fed might raise rates at this month's meeting.

In short, the mixed economic signals could make Fed policy discussions fraught in the months ahead. Here's where things stand.

### Interest rates are much higher.

Interest rates are above 5%, their highest since 2007. After sharply adjusting policy over the past 15 months, key officials including Jerome Powell, the Fed chair, and

Philip Jefferson, President Joe Biden's pick to be the next Fed vice chair, have hinted that central bankers could pause to allow themselves time to judge how the increases are impacting the economy.

But that assessment remains a complex one.

Even some parts of the economy that typically slow when the Fed raises rates are demonstrating a surprising ability to withstand today's interest rates.

"It's a very complicated, convoluted picture, depending on which data points you are looking at," said Matthew Luzzetti, chief US economist at Deutsche Bank, noting that overall growth figures like gross domestic product have slowed — but other key numbers are holding up.

### House prices are wiggling.

Higher interest rates can take months or even years to have their full effect, but they should theoretically work pretty quickly to begin to slow down the car and housing markets, both of which revolve around big purchases made with borrowed cash.

That story has been complicated this time. Car buying has slowed since the Fed started raising rates, but the auto market has been so undersupplied in recent years — thanks in large part to pandemic-tied supply chain problems — that the cool-

down has been a bumpy one. Housing has also perplexed some economists.

The housing market weakened markedly last year as mortgage rates soared. But rates have recently stabilised, and home prices have ticked back up amid low inventory.

House prices do not count directly in inflation, but their turnaround is a sign that it's taking a lot to sustainably cool a hot economy.

### Job signals are confusing.

Fed officials are also watching for signs that their rate increases are trickling through the economy to slow the job market: As it costs more to fund expansions and as consumer demand slows, companies should pull back on hiring. Amid less competition for workers, wage growth should moderate and unemployment should rise.

Some signs suggest that the chain reaction has begun. Initial claims for unemployment insurance jumped to the highest level since October 2021 last week, a report on Thursday showed. People are also working fewer hours per week at private

employers, which suggests bosses aren't trying to eke so much out of existing staff.

But other signals have been more halting. Job openings had come down but edged back up in April. Wages have been climbing less swiftly for lower-income workers, but gains remain abnormally rapid.

The jobless rate climbed to 3.7% in May from 3.4%, but even that is still well shy of the 4.5% that Fed officials expected it to hit by the end of 2023 in their latest economic forecasts.

Officials will release fresh projections next week.

And by some measures, the labour market is still chugging. Hiring remains particularly strong.

"Everyone talks as if the economy moves in one straight line," said Nela Richardson, chief economist at ADP. "In actuality, it's lumpy."

### Price increases are stubborn.

Still, inflation itself may be the biggest wild card that could shape the Fed's plans this month and over this summer. Officials forecast in March that annual inflation as measured by the personal consumption expenditures index would retreat to 3.3% by the end of the year.

That pullback is gradually happening. Inflation stood at 4.4% as of April, down from 7% last summer but still more than double the Fed's 2% goal.

Officials will receive a related and more up-to-date inflation reading for May — the consumer price index — on the first day of their meeting next week.

Economists expect substantial cooling, which could give officials confidence in pausing rates. But if those forecasts are foiled, it could make for an even more heated debate about what comes next.

— The New York Times

WJ Towell Group Company



**Quality car rentals at competitive prices.**

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

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

أوربت ORBIT  
Car Rental & Lease

# Classifieds



To receive news updates from OMAN OBSERVER,

**WhatsApp**  
 <your name> to  
**96473232**


**Observer Classified Section**

SUNDAY JUNE 11, 2023 DHUL QAADA 22, 1444 AH

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

Ali al Maashari: 99639264  
 ali.almaashari@omandaily.om

Saada al Rashdi  
 95919344

94501166  
 24649593  
 24649595


**DOOR TO DOOR CARGO**  
 DOOR TO DOOR AIR AND SEA CARGO WORLD WIDE


 INDIA BANGLADESH NEPAL PHILIPPINES UAE INDONESIA EUROPE UK CANADA USA

WHATSAPP **96353654**  
 TOLL FREE NUMBER **80066766**  
 Follow us:  www.alnamanicargo.com

**Driving School**

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

Contact No: 99074072

**SKT سماء الخضراء للتجارة SAMAA AL KHADRA TRADING**

**SERVICES:**

PIPING SYSTEMS VALVES  
 DRAINS INTERCEPTORS

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

## SIT. WANTED

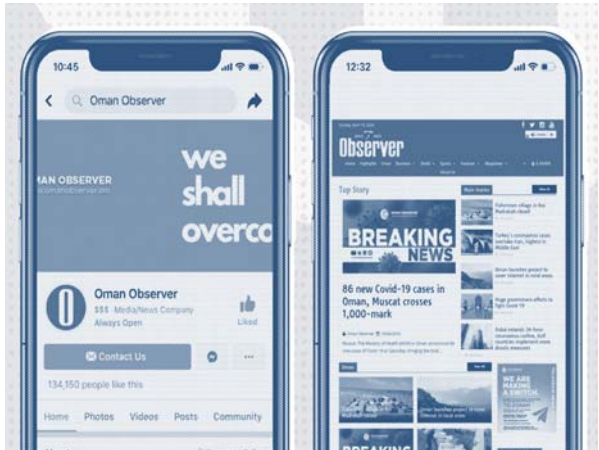
INDIAN male, 20+ years of experience in Supply Chain Procurement, Operations, Logistics in India and Oman, MBA, CISC and CISC certifications in supply Chain Management is looking for suitable opportunities in Oman. Contact: 99014627

INDIAN chef, 27 years experience. (20 years with Ministry, Oman). Seeks job. Contact: 92141722.

I AM Muhammed Manaser from Sri Lanka, looking for job. I can read, write, speak Arabic, English and Hindi. I have experience as PRO/Requirement Officer/Logistics helper. 78793877.

CIVIL engineer with masters in construction management having total 9 years of Gulf experience in construction (as site engineer) & telecom industry (as design review engineer) is looking for suitable job. Ready to join. Email: syed.faraazuddin@gmail.com Contact: +968 99433023, Whatsapp: +91 9052755276.

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



## SIT. WANTED

SRI LANKAN, male, Quantity Surveyor, 12 years experience, including Oman & Qatar, Sri Lanka, looking for good opportunity. Experience in Tender Management, Estimation, Caost Control, Project Quantity Surveyor. Language - English, Hindi, Tamil, Sinhala. Having D/L. Contact 78411354. E-mail: thaya1987@gmail.com

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

## FOR SALE

RESTAURANT equipment for sale. Contact: 77260040.

**HAVE A PROPERTY FOR RENT?**

Advertise with us.

Contact us on: **99639264**

**URGENTLY REQUIRED**  
 Aluminium Fabricator looking for

**SALES EXECUTIVES**  
 (With own car)

**PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Candidates with releavant experience only can apply

Email: aluminium@shanfari.com  
 Whatsapp Number: 99256757 / 99422814

## FOR RENT

Flat for rent

- 1) Darsait, near Indian School: Two bedroom flat, bath attached. Hall, kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat, hall, kitchen and toilet.
- 2) Al Khuwair, near Rawasco: One bedroom, bath, kitchen, AC, curtains.
- 3) Al Ghubrah near Mars Hypermarket: Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet. One bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet.
- 4) Al Ghubrah near Indian School: Two bedroom flat with attached bath, hall, kitchen and guest toilet.

\*All flats provided with airconditioners, contact GSM: 91473374/97886085.

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

**EAGLE FREIGHT EXPRESS**  
 DOOR TO DOOR COURIER SERVICES  
 INDIA | NEPAL | BANGLADESH

25 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE FAST DELIVERY EXCELLENT SERVICES

**WORLD WIDE CARGO SERVICE** Tel.: 99432926, 78211708, 92319472, 93350126  
 Head Office (H.O.) Room No.: 218, 1st Floor, Aircargo Complex, Branch Al-Hail, Email: eaglefreightexpress@gmail.com

**AUDIT, ACCOUNTING, VAT, TAXATION**

Contact: **97239696**  
**95355638**

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

**PEST CONTROL OMAN CO. L.L.C.**

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

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

Tel: 24787606, 24787503  
 Direct Line: 24786077  
 GSM: 99382355, 99172309

pcomctom@omantel.net.om  
 P.O. Box 565, Al Wadi Al Kabir 117, Sultanate of Oman

## SERVICES

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

## RENT A CAR

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

To advertise on our social media platforms and website

**Please Contact our Team**

**95210257**

OMAN OBSERVER  
 www.omanobserver.om

@omanobsen


**OMAN OBSERVER**

**For Advertisements**  
 Please Contact with our Team:

**Head Office**  
 Mohd Al Rashdi  
 99841230  
 m.alrahdi86@yahoo.com

**Salalah Office**  
 Bakhit Al Shihri  
 92998577  
 bakhit.omandaily@gmail.com

**Ali Al Maashari**  
 99639264  
 wadiameeh@yahoo.com

**Nizwa Office**  
 Abdullah Al Abri  
 99429094  
 nizwaofc@omandaily.net.om

**Suham Office**  
 Musalam Al Saidi  
 99429192  
 sohardaily@outlook.com





@omanobserver  
 www.omanobserver.om

## CHANGING WORLD

Wild elephants eating rubbish mixed with plastic waste at a dump in the eastern district of Ampara. Sri Lanka is set to launch a nationwide clean up of plastic waste ahead of new laws banning the sale of single use plastics. — AFP



## LIFESTYLE

The future of Clergerie, one of France's last remaining shoe manufacturers, hangs in the balance on a court decision being scrutinised not only by its employees, but also by the fashion world and its historic founder, who fears that the brand, which made its way as far as Hollywood during its golden age, will be "skinned". — AFP



## ENTERTAINMENT

Bollywood actors Vicky Kaushal (R) and Sara Ali Khan (L) distribute sweets during the promotion of their Hindi-language movie 'Zara Hatke Zara Bachke' at Siddhivinayak temple in Mumbai. — AFP



## TRAVEL TALES

The oasis of Fachi is famous for its fortress and its old town, with almost intact walls. Some symbolic sites of the ancient city are still used for traditional ceremonies. — AFP



## DINING

Dous Makos is a type of vanilla fudge native to Petit-Goave, Haiti. It usually is layered with a strip of vanilla, chocolate and a layer made with red food colouring. — AFP

# art & life

**SUNDAY** | JUNE 11, 2023 | DHUL QA'ADA 22, 1444 AH

 **OMAN OBSERVER**       [www.omanobserver.om](http://www.omanobserver.om) [features@omanobserver.om](mailto:features@omanobserver.om)

# Experience real Bedouin lifestyle with Umm Said

Many tourists are now making a stop in Al Shargiyah Governorate, particularly in Bidiya intrigued by what a Bedouin lifestyle is like. One of the tents that have become the centre of attraction is the household of Umm Said... **p20**



## TRAVEL TALES

# Florence seeks to ban Airbnb rentals apartments from city centre — mayor

**FLORENCE WANTS** to ban residential properties in its historic centre from being used for short-term rentals by platforms such as Airbnb in order to free up more homes for local people in the Tuscan city.

Dario Nardella, the mayor of one of Italy's most popular tourist destinations, said his city would pursue new rules at a local level because he regarded draft nationwide plans to regu-

Under Nardella's proposal, dubbed 'save historic centres', the mayor plans to block new short-term rental contracts and offer tax breaks to encourage more permanent forms of residence.

Nardella is a member of the centre-left PD party, which is part of the opposition at national level.

As in other European coun-



tries, a mixture of low salaries, a property shortage, short-term holiday rentals and high inflation have driven a housing crisis, with low-wage earners and students hit hard in Italy.

The central government is working on a bill, which according to Italian media reports, would require each residential property rented to tourists to have a national identification code to help track and regulate lettings. Those failing to comply would risk a penalty of up to 5,000 euros (\$5,500).

Additionally, authorities in the most visited cities would have the right to impose a minimum stay of two nights in the context of short rentals in their city centres.

Florence is home to the Uffizi art gallery and its city centre was declared a UNESCO heritage site in 1982.

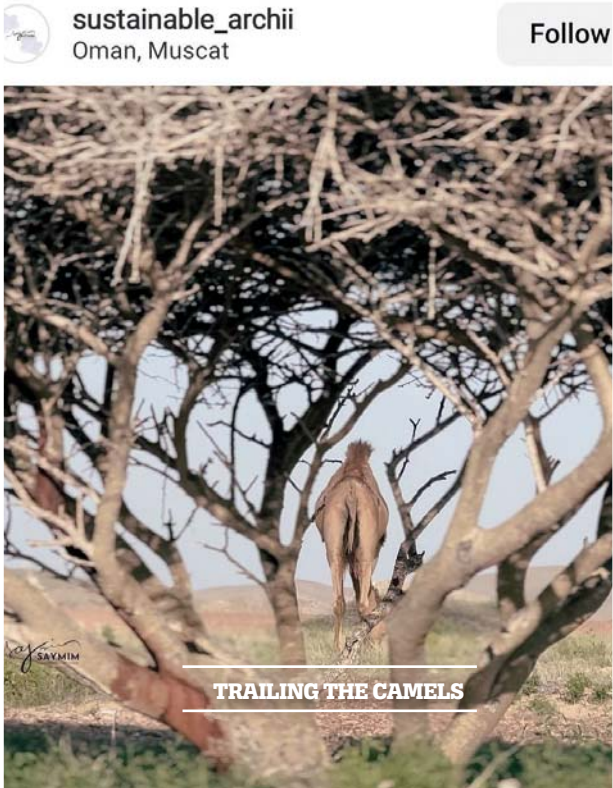
Student protests against the rising cost of living in big cities spread across Italy since last month.

Airbnb did not immediately respond to a request for comment from Reuters. — **Reuters**



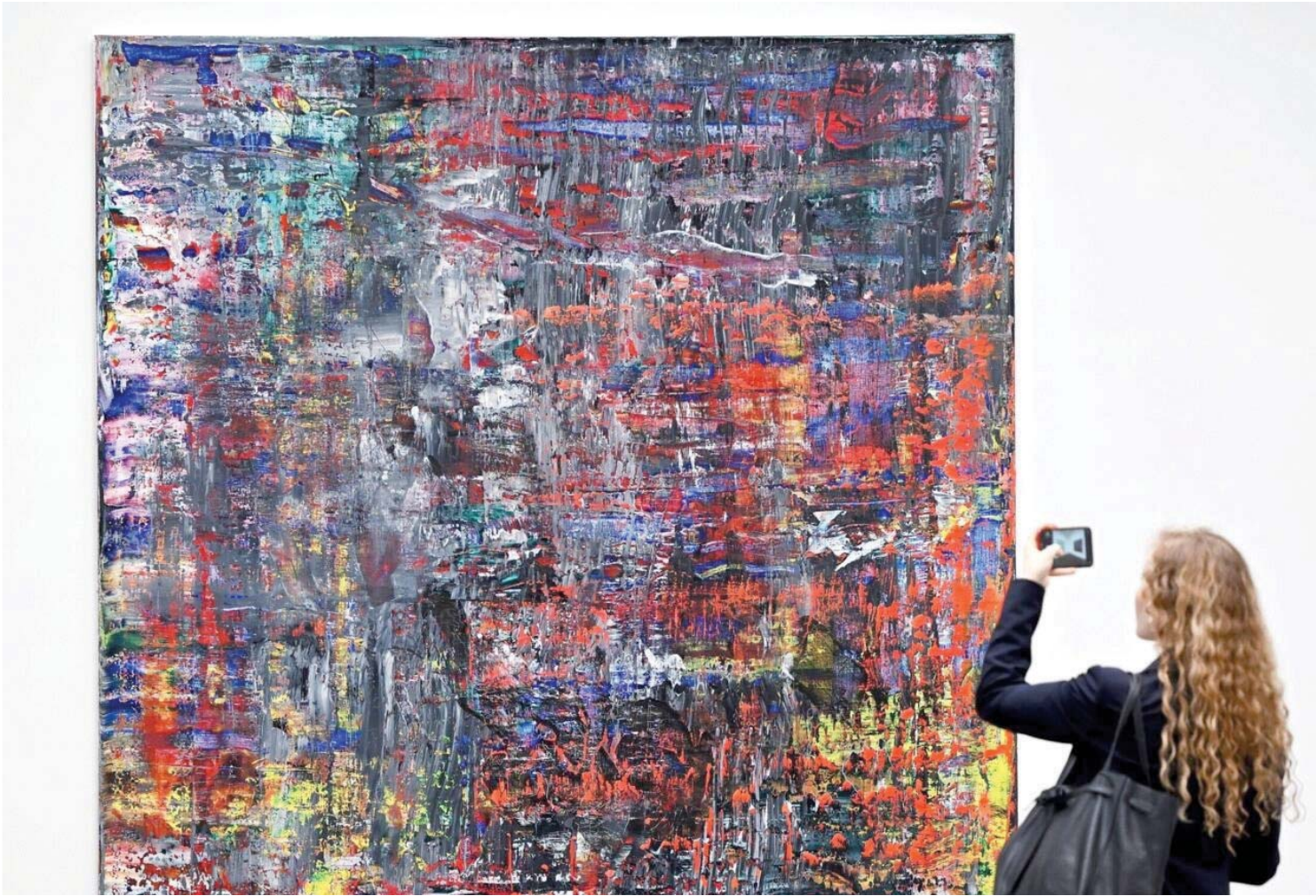
find us on  
**TWITTER**  
Scan the QR Code or follow us on  
www.twitter.com/omanobserver

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



SHARE A SLICE OF YOUR LIFE

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



Not dead yet:  
abstract art  
alive and kicking  
at London's  
Gagosian



**LONDON'S GAGOSIAN GALLERY** is hosting a major new exhibition of abstract art, bringing together the playful use of textures by young artists and traditional work of veterans in the field.

"Abstract painting is a term that we've been trying to define for over 100 years and there is no consensus," curator Gary Garrels told AFP on Thursday at the opening of the show, which runs until August 25.

"For me, abstract painting is painting that is having an internal conversation where the issues of the painting itself — colour, surface, texture, materials, scale — are the primary parts of the conversation that's not referring to something out-

side the painting, that's somehow descriptive."

Garrels spent 18 months visiting the studios of "three generations" of artists to bring together 41 recent paintings for the exhibition — "To Bend the Ear of the Outer World"

Some are from well-known artists, others are by virtual unknowns.

The overall aim is to take the pulse of a movement that has sometimes been seen as a dying art form.

But Garrels insisted: "It's far from being dead. It's very much alive. We have another good century ahead of us. Incredible range, richness and diversity."

To demonstrate that abstract art is very much alive, the show

opens with contrasting paintings by two European artists of the same age.

One — "It's not yesterday anymore" (2022) — is by British painter Cecily Brown's explosion of harsh brushstrokes and colours.

The other — "Emko" (2023) — by Germany's Tomma Abts, is small, precise, monochromatic and geometrical. Each painting is displayed on its own, on a large white wall, to highlight each artist's individuality.

**NO MOVEMENT**

The rooms of the Gagosian gallery are organised according to links between the painters, whether temporal, geo-

graphical or stylistic.

Veteran German painter Gerhard Richter's richly variegated "Abstraktes Bild" (2017) is coupled with the minimalist "Rivers" (2020-21) by American artist Brice Marden and the organic fluidity of Pat Steir's "Rainbow Waterfall #6".

"They began their serious, mature work and were recognised in the 1960s but have continued to make great painting," said Garrels.

At the other end of the scale, Columbia's Oscar Murillo's "Manifestation" (2020-22) combines conventional oil paint with oil stick, graphite and spray paint on canvas and linen.

Its dramatic thick dark

strokes contrast with the lightness and luminosity of "Untitled" (2022) by the young American Ryan Sullivan.

With Sullivan's use of moulded cast urethane resin, fibreglass and epoxy, both have free reign in their use of textures.

Garrels says "there's no movement" in abstract painting.

"It's not like we have abstract expressionism or colour field painting. We have individual artists pursuing their own visions," he added.

For some, the medium is all about the expressiveness of the stroke, while others focus on "quiet" art based on pure, almost homogeneous surfaces, with few tonal nuances.

Many of these artists have friendships that, according to Garrels, are reflected in the dialogue between their works.

American artist Jacqueline Humphries and US-based German artist Charline von Heyl for example share a taste for indirect painting, mediated by screens or other tools.

That gives their work an elusive character that is difficult to take in.

The exhibition mainly features German, American and British artists.

Murillo, who was born in the city of La Paila, has dual Colombian-British nationality. He emigrated to the UK with his family, and trained and now lives in London. — **AFP**

DISCOVERY

Fungi could be 'untapped potential' of carbon storage, study suggests



**FUNGI COULD BE** an "untapped potential" of carbon storage, with more than 13 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e passing through an underground network of mycelium every year, a new study suggests.

Equivalent to 36 per cent of annual CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from fossil fuels, the carbon is stored at least temporarily in the fungi, though the researchers said more work is needed to understand how much is retained long-term.

Scientists already knew of mycorrhizal fungi's storage ability because they form symbiotic relationships with almost all land plants and transport carbon, converted into sugars and fats by the plant, into soil.

Now an international team, publishing in the journal Current

Biology, has revealed the possible scale of fungi's carbon-capture powers by conducting a meta-analysis of hundreds of other studies of plant-soil processes.

They estimate that 13.12 gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub>e is passing through fungal networks every year, in addition to that sequestered by trees through photo-

synthesis.

Professor Katie Field, of the University of Sheffield and co-author of the study, said: "We don't have any off-the-shelf solutions just yet but I think what our numbers show is that there is untapped potential there."

"They're unlike any other organisms on Earth and they've been overlooked for almost the entirety of biological study."

"We've only just scratched the surface in how important they might be in terms of environmental function."

"Even the species - there's an estimated between six and seven million species of fungi but we've only ever described between 12-15,000. So there's so much we don't know."

Mycorrhizal fungi have existed for about 500 million years and make up vast underground networks in every landscape on every continent on earth, even under roads in urban environments.

Prof Field hopes the work will lead to changes in environmental policy and towards managing land in a "fungi-friendly fashion."

This would include encouraging farming practices that use fewer pesticides while preventing soil degradation. It would not only allow fungal networks to grow in their own natural way but would also improve the fertility of the soil through boosting organic matter, she said. — **PA Media/dpa**

DINING

First restaurants in Vietnam awarded Michelin star



**VIETNAM'S BOOMING** food scene was awarded its first ever Michelin stars on Tuesday, with four restaurants selected by the prestigious dining guide.

Three eateries in Hanoi — Gia, Tam Vi and Hibana by Koki — and one in Ho Chi Minh City — Anan Saigon — were each awarded one Michelin star.

Although there were no stars handed out to traditional street food eateries serving classics such as pho — a noodle soup — or bun cha — a vermicelli noodle dish with grilled pork — Vietnamese flavours feature heavily among the winners.

Tam Vi largely focusses on northern Vietnamese dishes including ham with periwinkle snails — served with fresh herbs, rice vermicelli noodles

and fish sauce — and crab soup with spinach, a popular summer meal.

Nguyen Bao Anh, whose mother, Tam, owns the restaurant and named it after herself, said her mum "had a dream of opening a restaurant where customers could come and feel like they were eating a home-cooked meal". "The restaurant serves traditional food and I think now not many restaurants serve that kind of food that remind people of familiar flavours," Bao Anh said after the awards ceremony in Hanoi.

"This award is for my mum and I'm proud of her," she added.

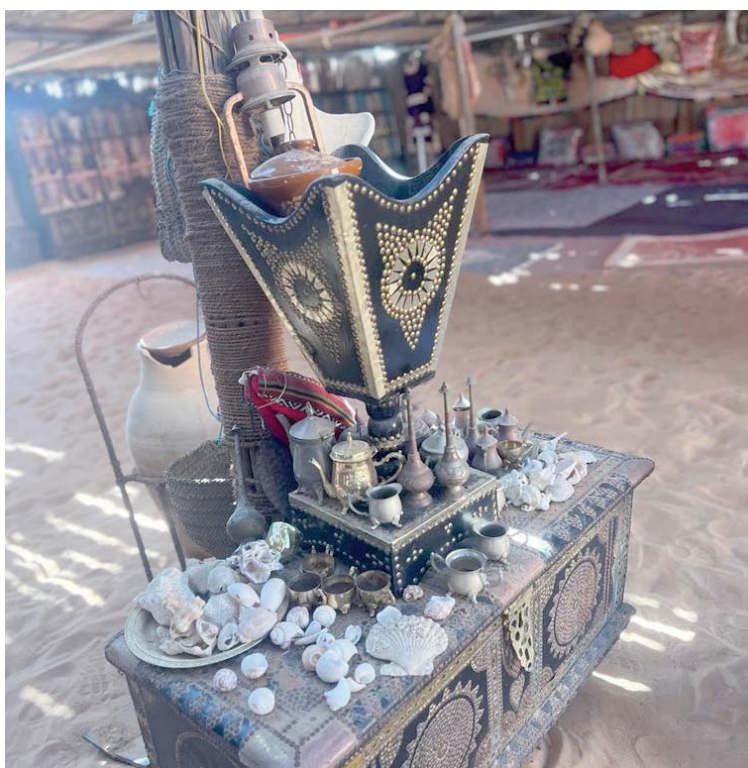
Sam Tran, the chef and co-founder of high-end contemporary restaurant Gia, spent 10 years studying in Australia before returning to Hanoi, her home city, to push the boundaries of Vietnamese cuisine.

Gwendal Poullennec, international director of the Michelin Guide, said Vietnam's two biggest cities, Hanoi and commercial centre Ho Chi Minh City, offered a vibrant and varied dining experience.

"Hanoi has a laid back and relaxed vibe, with small shops and restaurants mostly from the Old Quarter", Poullennec said. — **AFP**



## Experience real Bedouin lifestyle with Umm Said



By Siham Al Saidi

Oman's Bedouin lifestyle stands as a testament to the enduring spirit of a remarkable people, offering a gateway to the allure of the desert and the richness of a vibrant culture. As the world seeks authentic encounters and meaningful connections, venturing into the realm of Oman's Bedouins promises a transformative journey – one that leaves an indelible mark on the hearts of those who embark upon it.

Many tourists are now making a stop in Al Sharqiyah Governorate, particularly in Bidiya intrigued by what a Bedouin lifestyle is like. Stepping into the heart of Bedouin communities allows travellers to unlock the secrets of a bygone era, delving into a world of customs, traditions, and values steeped in history. The Bedouins, known for their resilience and adaptability, have meticulously preserved traditional practices that have been passed down through generations.

With their deep-rooted nomadic traditions and symbiotic relationship with the desert, the Bedouins offer visitors a remarkable opportunity for cultural immersion and unparalleled desert exploration.

One of the tents that have become the centre of attraction is the household of Umm Said, now a visible topic on Google and across social media, when she opened her doors and allow non-Bedus to have access to their cultures and traditions.

Umm Said is in her sixties and lives in an old traditional and beautiful tent that has now become a prominent fixture in the dunes of Al Sharqiyah. Regardless of the remoteness of her home, people from far and wide make a stopover not only to see what a Bedu's home looks like but also to access her crafts and enjoy a cup of authentic coffee served inside the majlis area of their humble abode.

"Welcoming tourists from different countries and nationalities to our home makes me very happy and the more that I can share our lifestyle and some of our traditions without charge and seeing them happy as a response motivates me to keep the doors open," she shared.

"As a luxury travel operator, visiting Umm Said's tent has been a very important part of our itinerary and is also frequently requested by our clients. There's truly a great interest to see and enjoy the traditional Bedu lifestyle and of course, to have interaction with Umm Said herself," shared Andrew Tharwat, manager of Jawharat Bidiyah Resort, one of the luxury resorts based in the area.

"This interest from our guests also encouraged me to visit Umm Said with my family and I was surprised that Umm Said can speak good English to share and express her ideas as well as details of her culture," he added.

"It's fascinating to see that upon entering her home, coffee and dates are always ready for tourists who are visiting and she

keeps offering them as a sign of hospitality and warmth," Andrew said.

"I'd been organising desert trips since 2017 and since then, Umm Said's house has become a famous landmark in Al Sharqiyah. I brought people from around the world to her home and there is a genuine interest to learn about the Bedouin lifestyle. While she's hidden behind her burqa, her hospitality and welcoming character is a great representation of Bedouin culture and it's always great to see her wearing a smile when she interacts with the guests," Talal al Aleabm, one of the tour agency owners, said.

While her tent may not be a very big one, Umm Said is known for her big heart. Part of the immersive experience includes allowing guests to taste some of the traditional Omani dishes, and camel's milk as well as try on some of the Omani traditional costumes.

Having collected unique and beautiful artefacts in her lifetime, Umm Said's house also has become a living museum where guests can see old and antique pieces of things that Bedouins used in the past some of which are over 50 years old.

There is also an opportunity to try henna tattoos on the lady's hands.

The experience is free of charge not only for Omanis but also for international guests because for Umm Said, "As an Omani, it's a shame for us to charge guests when they visit

our house. As hosts, it is our honour to be of service and welcoming them properly is a priority to all Omani people. It's part of our tradition."

One of the most unforgettable experiences Umm Said has when it comes to welcoming guests was way back 30 years ago when they helped a European family who got stuck in the desert. The heat of the desert had totally depleted the family's energy that they felt very relieved and thankful to be welcomed into their home.

"I had to come and use my hand fan so they can feel cool a little bit. The family has come to visit me several years later and they always stop by whenever they are in Oman," she shared.

"To see them remember you and come again for a visit after so many years, it means a lot to me," she said.

There were some guests who had a sleepover at the house as they wanted to experience one night in an authentic Bedouin tent. It was great to give them the experience. The only time I'm worried is during the times when it rains and we have guests in the house. I always hope that the tent is strong and safe enough for the guests to enjoy their stay," she said.

Now as an established attraction, Umm Said definitely needed government and private entities' support to ensure the maintenance and safety of her home.

Umm Said is one of Oman's unsung heroes who continually paint the beautiful and welcoming nature of the Omanis not just to local guests but most especially those coming from other countries.

