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Sultanate of Oman
and the
achievement of
Oman 2040.

Heartiest felicitations to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
on the anniversary of
His Accession to the Throne.





A Renewed Renaissance

OMRAN Group extends its most sincere congratulations to His Majesty

Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
- may God protect him -

On the occasion of His Majesty's accession to the throne in the country.



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Thank you, Your Majesty

Shaddad al Musalmi
Muscat

As the sultanate celebrates two years of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq's rule on Tuesday, his leadership inspires every Omani, man and woman, who pray for his well-being and are grateful for his many good deeds for the nation and its loyal people ever since his accession to the throne.

In his first speech as the new sultan on January 11, 2020, he said, "The trust thrust on our shoulders and the immense resultant responsibilities require us all to work together for the sake of our country, with a persistent resolve to promote it to the loftiest levels. This cannot be realised without your support and cooperation and a combination of all efforts to achieve the desired supreme national goal. Your contribution to the efforts of progress, development and prosperity will be highly appreciated."

The achievements of His Majesty the Sultan are amply evident and manifest in every sphere of life. In these two years, he has sowed and cultivated true faith in the people and is now considered the new father figure of the nation after His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said who will forever be a torch to guide the nation.

Stemming from His Majesty's eagerness to identify the requirements of the educational sector across the sultanate and provide a supportive climate for education, His Majesty the Sultan issued Royal directives to the Diwan of Royal Court to finance the construction of six schools at a cost of RO8.85mn.

Reflecting His Majesty the Sultan's attention to national manpower, he issued Royal orders to take necessary steps to establish the Job Security Fund. His Majesty the Sultan gave RO10mn to set up the fund and encourage society to also contribute in it at a later stage. The initial phase of the Job Security Fund officially began in November 2020.

These are only a few of several developments initiated by His Majesty the Sultan for the welfare of the country and its people.

With your wisdom, we follow you with confidence.

"The elevation of Oman to the level of your aspirations and expectations in all fields will be the theme of the next stage, with the will of Allah. We will keep our eyes fixed on the supreme interest of our country, furnishing all means of support and empowerment to that effect. As we vow to the Almighty Allah that we will dedicate our life for Oman and its citizens, to continue its triumphant march and Blessed Renaissance, we call upon you to vow to Allah to do so."

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq

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We extend our warmest congratulations and blessings to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik, may God protect him, on the occasion of the Accession Anniversary of His Majesty. We pray to the Almighty Allah to enable him to take this great nation to greater prosperity.

Warm felicitations to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
and the people of Oman
on the occasion of the 2nd Anniversary of
His Majesty's Accession.



#Jan11th_Renewed_Renaissance





His Majesty the Sultan meets sheikhs of North Sharqiyah



Manah - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik held a meeting on Monday at Hisn A'Shumookh castle in Manah with sheikhs of North Sharqiyah.

The Diwan of Royal Court issued a statement to this effect reading as follows:

'In continuation of the Royal meetings held by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik with sheikhs of governorates in the sultanate to serve the interests of the country and citizens of this dear homeland and, in pursuance of His Majesty's attention to interact directly with citizens, His Majesty the Sultan held a meeting on Monday, with sheikhs of the North Sharqiyah at Hisn A'Shumookh castle in Manah.

'At the outset of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan gave thanks and praise to the Almighty Allah for the great bounties of safety and security

He has bestowed on Oman, praying to Allah that the march of building in Oman be a success.

'After that, His Majesty the Sultan touched on a variety of issues of developmental, economic and social significance to citizens' aspirations. He affirmed that the government is pressing ahead with measures to upgrade citizens' living standards and achieve economic stability and prosperity. He pointed out that elevating Oman to its deserved status is a national duty that requires the contribution of each citizen.

'Then, His Majesty the Sultan engaged in an open dialogue with the sheikhs, who presented demands and requests for development projects and services needed in their wilayats. This reflected the depth of the relationship between the leader and the people.

'His Majesty the Sultan

stressed that the government would spare no effort in shouldering its responsibilities and that the Renewed Renaissance is cutting its way through, in firm resolve, and will eventually attain its objectives.

'The meeting was attended by Sayyid Bel'arab bin Haitham al Said, Sayyid Khalid bin Hilal al Busaidi, Minister of the Diwan of Royal Court, Sayyid Hamoud bin Faisal al Busaidi, Minister of Interior, Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, Dr Hamad bin Said al Aufi, Head of the Private Office, Sheikh Ali bin Ahmed al Shamsi, Governor of North Sharqiyah, and walis of the governorate.

'May the Almighty Allah protect His Majesty the Sultan and grant him good health and well-being. May He protect Oman, its citizens and residents against all harms.'

ONA



Oman, our
divine objective

ooredoo



HEARTIEST FELICITATIONS
TO HIS MAJESTY SULTAN
HAITHAM BIN TARIK
ON THE ANNIVERSARY
OF HIS ACCESSION TO
THE THRONE



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HH Sayyid Fahd receives Iran's Foreign Minister

Muscat - H H Sayyid Fahd Mahmoud al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for the Council of Ministers received Dr Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in Muscat on Monday.

The Iranian official conveyed greetings and best wishes of President Dr Ebrahim Raisi of Iran to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Sultanate of Oman.

The meeting reviewed the bilateral relations and means of enhancing them in various fields. It also touched on matters of common interest.

The two sides exchanged



views on regional and international developments and the efforts exerted for the consolidation of peace and stability to serve the peoples of the region and enhance international cooperation.

The two sides stressed the importance of activating the joint Omani-Iranian committee, as well as increasing consultations between the two countries on several issues of regional concern.

The meeting was attended by Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister and Ali Najafi Khoshroudi, Ambassador of Iran to Oman.

ONA

NDC COUNCIL HOLDS MEETING FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022



The Board of the National Defence College (NDC) held its annual meeting for the academic year 2021/2022, under the chairmanship of Vice Admiral Abdullah Khamis al Ra'eesi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), Chairman of the NDC Board. The meeting reviewed the evaluation results of the current and previous stages. It also covered the progress of the current academic programme (ONA)

Oman, Iran hold political talks; touch on Vienna meet on JCPOA

Muscat - Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister on Monday had a session of political talks with Dr Hossein Amir Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran during the latter's visit to Muscat.

They reviewed relations of cooperation between the two countries in various spheres and the means of enhancing them.

The two sides reviewed some regional and international issues of common interest. They also touched on Vienna talks regarding the nuclear agreement 'Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)', emphasising the importance of the plan to achieve security and stability.

The session was attended by



Sheikh Khalifa Ali al Harthy, the Foreign Ministry's Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Khalid Hashel al Musalhi, Head of the Minister's Office Department, Ali Najafi Khoshroudi, Ambassador of Iran to Oman and members of the delegation accompanying the guest.

ONA

His Majesty the Sultan pardons 229 prisoners

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander, has issued Royal pardon to a number of prisoners convicted of various offences.

A total of 229 prisoners, including 70 foreigners, have been pardoned, according to an official source at the Royal Oman Police.

The Royal pardon by His Majesty the Sultan coincides with the anniversary of January 11, the day when His Majesty the Sultan assumed the reins of power. It also comes in consideration of the families of the prisoners.



11 January

The Board Chairman of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI), its directors, the directors of its branches at the Omani governorates and the OCCI's executive body have the honor to extend their sincerest congratulations and homage to His Majesty

Sultan Haitham bin Tarik

- May Allah keep and protect Him - on the second anniversary of His Accession to the Throne. We pray to the Almighty God to keep His Majesty, bless Him with good health and to protect our beloved country Oman.





chamber_oman



Oman marches ahead

SINCE HE ASSUMED THE REINS OF POWER, HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HATHAM HAS CALLED UPON ALL CITIZENS TO CONTINUE TO SAFEGUARD THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE RENAISSANCE WITH OMAN VISION 2040 SERVING AS A ROADMAP FOR ALL ASPIRATIONS

CITIZENS TAKE PRIDE IN THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF THE TANGIBLE MEASURES ADOPTED TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF THE RENEWED RENAISSANCE LED BY HIS MAJESTY SULTAN HAITHAM, WHOSE PRUDENCE HAS PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN TACKLING ALL CHALLENGES FACED BY THE COUNTRY

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN CONTINUES TO MEET CITIZENS FROM DIFFERENT GOVERNORATES OF THE SULTANATE, ACTING FROM HIS DEEP CONVICTION IN THE SIGNIFICANCE OF DIRECTLY INTERACTING WITH THE PUBLIC AND LISTENING TO OPINIONS AND PROPOSALS THAT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY AND ITS CITIZENS

THE STATE'S MODERN INSTITUTIONS KEEP PACE WITH SHURA (CONSULTATION) AND DEMOCRATIC BODIES, NAMELY THE COUNCIL OF OMAN, WITH ITS BICAMERAL CHAMBERS OF STATE COUNCIL AND SHURA COUNCIL, AND MUNICIPAL COUNCILS IN DIFFERENT GOVERNORATES OF THE SULTANATE

THE MEDIUM TERM FISCAL PLAN (2020-2023) CONTINUES TO DELIVER A POSITIVE OUTCOME IN ITS SECOND YEAR, INCLUDING THE REDUCTION OF DEFICIT IN 2021, CONTROL OF PUBLIC SPENDING AND CUTTING DOWN PUBLIC DEBT

HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN'S EMPHASIS ON COOPERATION WITH ALL COUNTRIES IS A CLEAR INDICATOR OF OMANI FOREIGN POLICY BASED ON ADVOCATING THE CAUSE OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY



A black and white rendition of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq by Shashikumar N Menon, creative director of Muscat Daily

under HM the Sultan

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

On January 11, 2020, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik pledged to continue to shape Oman in the new era which he has fulfilled as is evident following the testimonies of citizens and expatriates in the sultanate who have expressed confidence in his leadership that is taking the sultanate forward.

Since the very first day of his rule, His Majesty the Sultan has exerted sincere efforts to set up a new phase of Oman's renewed Renaissance that will meet the requirements of the upcoming period and fulfil the aspirations of the Omani people as well as preserve the achievements that took place in the last five decades.

"This is what we have resolved to execute, God willing. We will march forward on this road so that Oman can attain and maintain the prominent place in which His Majesty Sultan Qaboos wished to position it and for which he stayed vigil to realise that goal. He was granted success in his endeavours," His Majesty the Sultan said in his first speech on January 11, 2020.

Addressing the sheikhs of South Sharqiyah at Hisn A'Shummookh castle in Manah recently, His Majesty the Sultan reviewed issues of concern on the domestic front. "Oman is pressing ahead with its development plans and programmes in all fields, despite the challenges, with the prime objectives of realising sustainable growth and furnishing a prosperous present and future for all people, wherever they may be on this benign land," he said.

Amid the ongoing pandemic, His Majesty the Sultan had issued a Royal Order to form the Supreme Committee to tackle COVID-19 and study mechanisms to handle developments resulting from the illness. The committee has been doing all that it can to mitigate the impact of the pandemic.

In a personal gesture to support the efforts to tackle the pandemic, His Majesty the Sultan donated RO10mn to a fund established for the purpose of confronting COVID-19.

During the past two years, His Majesty the Sultan issued several directives, including one to expedite the implementation of the National Unified E-Government Portal to serve as a composite platform incorporating all government services. He also gave directives to top government officials and governors to hold regular meetings, in the presence

of walis, with sheikhs, dignitaries and citizens in their respective wilayats to study the need of services and development projects in their wilayats and heed their opinion on service plans and programmes.

His Majesty the Sultan has over the past months taken a number of steps for the implementation of Oman Vision 2040 which was launched at the beginning of January 2021 for execution in four consecutive plans beginning with 10th Five-Year Development Plan (2021-2025).

On the foreign front, His Majesty the Sultan reaffirmed Oman's foreign policy, which is based on good neighbourliness, friendship and cooperation with all. His Majesty the Sultan also reiterated the sultanate's principle of neutrality and non-intervention in the internal affairs of others.

In his first public remarks as head of state, His Majesty the Sultan promised to uphold his predecessor's foreign policy. "We will follow the same line as the Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said, and the principles that he asserted for the foreign policy of our country, of peaceful coexistence among nations and people, and good neighbourly behaviour of non-interference in the affairs of others."

Based on the national priorities of Oman Vision 2040, His Majesty the Sultan called for channeling of all efforts and resources for the realisation of goals and programmes of fiscal balance, the development of legal instruments for investments, the streamlining and acceleration of government services, the development of economic zones and the implementation of major projects, besides upgrading national expertise. All this will be linked to the employment of citizens being a top national priority.

In this context, His Majesty the Sultan underlined the government's constant keenness to pursue five-year plans aimed at achieving the goals and priorities of Oman Vision 2040.

Within the framework of reviewing state-owned companies and improving their performance, His Majesty the Sultan issued Royal Decree No 61/2020, directing the establishment of Oman Investment Authority (OIA), as a unified investment body comprising investment, monitoring and executive entities. The establishment of OIA marks a significant step that will contribute to augmenting investment revenues and improving the sultanate's international credit status.





These meetings embody the true meaning of the compatibility between the leadership and the people of Oman

MARHOUN AL SAIDI



The meetings aim to support decentralisation in the sultanate, which will lead to implementation of many projects

DR AHMED SAID AL JHWARI



The meetings of His Majesty the Sultan with citizens is an ancient Omani tradition approved by the Late Sultan Qaboos

DR AHMED AL BALUSHI



It indicates the interest of His Majesty the Sultan to listen directly to the problems of citizens and solve them

ALI AL SHAYADI

Citizens hail HM’s meetings with sheikhs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has held three meetings this month with sheikhs of Dakhliyah, Al Wusta, North Sharqiyah and South Sharqiyah at Hisn A'Shumookh castle in Manah.

The meetings aim to confer with citizens in all parts of the sultanate in line with His Majesty the Sultan's conviction in the significance of listening in people's views and proposals in the interest of the country.

Many citizens and experts hailed these meetings.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Dr Ahmed al

Balushi, Dean of College of Engineering at National University of Science and Technology, said, "These meetings aim to build the country. The meetings of His Majesty the Sultan with citizens is an ancient Omani tradition approved by the Late Sultan Qaboos."

"The new stage in building the nation requires meeting the sheikhs of the governorates and listening to the supreme directives for the success of the government's plans to develop each of the wilayats of the sultanate."

He noted that the tours of the Late Sultan Qaboos had positive results on the growth of the country. "His Majesty Sultan Haitham's meetings with the sheikhs will strengthen the

economy, create reassurance among members of society, and help development in sectors, including health and education."

According to Dr Suleiman Zahir al Shuraiqi, senior specialist at National Diabetes and Endocrine Centre, Ministry of Health, the meetings contribute to the leadership's communication channels with the people of the country and to hear citizens' requests. "These meetings also aim to inform citizens of the government's plans, strengthen the economy, and overcome the challenges facing the Omani economy."

Additionally, he noted, these meetings will help clarify strategic projects to be implemented to support the economy and cre-

ate opportunities for jobseekers. These create an atmosphere of reassurance and optimism among citizens that development plans will include all the governorates of the sultanate.

"These meetings embody the true meaning of the compatibility between the leadership and the people of Oman. We are optimistic that these meetings will delight the Omani people and increase confidence of the people in their leader and vice versa," said Marhoun al Saidi, an account executive.

Ali al Shayadi, a teacher, described the meetings in line with the tours undertaken by the Late Sultan Qaboos, which lasted for many weeks in different governorates. "We

thank His Majesty the Sultan for continuing to hold these meetings. It indicates the interest of His Majesty the Sultan to listen directly to the problems of citizens, solve them, and work to develop all the governorates of the sultanate. We wish that the meetings continue to help achieve prosperity for our country."

Dr Ahmed Said al Jhwari, legal consultant, said the meetings aim to support decentralisation in the sultanate, which will lead to implementation of many projects and support small and medium-size enterprises.

"The meetings also aim to activate the role of governors in developing their governorates," Jhwari informed.





Baba Qaboos lives on in our hearts

Shaddad al Musalmi
Muscat

The Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said laid solid foundations for a renaissance in Oman, establishing basic infrastructure that earned accolades from the international community. For this very reason, and many more, Sultan Qaboos will never be forgotten, especially during this time of the Renewed Renaissance.

Baba Qaboos initiated a social and economic system based on justice. The best way to eternalise the good deeds of the late sultan is to preserve his achievements and build on them and this is what is happening in the sultanate under the leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Sultan Qaboos may be gone from our sight but has never been away from our hearts. In January two years ago, our hearts were saddened deeply by his loss. But we are all glad that he left us with fond memories. His footsteps will forever be a torch that we, his children, will use throughout our lives in our march into the future.

Baba Qaboos spread optimism amongst us and being a confident leader, he taught his people to have confidence in both him and themselves. We are forever grateful for all

the efforts he put in for his people and the country's progress, and making it one of the safest and most beautiful places in the world. Thanks to all that he did, Oman feels like home to many.

Sultan Qaboos' exceptional leadership abilities and planning brought about a radical transformation in the sultanate in the life of each individual living here. Citizens and residents, alike, consider the hardships, lack of proper basic requirements and proper transportation and communication as things of the past because of him.

Many will forever remember Baba Qaboos for Oman's development which has been remarkably rapid. When he came to power, Oman had no proper roads, basic amenities or health institutions,

but since then, the sultanate has grown and developed manifold.

In his first speech on July 23, 1970, Sultan Qaboos said, "I promise you to proceed forthwith in the process of creating a modern government. My first act will be the immediate abolition of unnecessary restrictions on your lives and activities. My people, I will proceed as quickly as possible to transform your life into a prosperous one with a bright future. Yesterday it was complete darkness, and with the help of God, tomorrow will be a new dawn on Muscat, Oman and its people."

In January two years ago, our hearts were saddened deeply by his loss. But we are all glad that he left us with fond memories. His footsteps will forever be a torch that we, his children, will use throughout our lives in our march into the future



Steering the nation to a bright future

Congratulations and warmest wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik on the second anniversary of accession.

May Allah grant him good health and the wisdom to guide this vibrant nation to a bright future.





Our Correspondent

Muscat

spread the achievements of cultural development in the governorate through the events and activities that will take place in the centre such as forums, conferences, poetry events, and artistic exhibitions. It will contribute effectively in the cultural development and raising awareness in the governorate. The centre will also enhance innovation and encourage students to introduce their ideas and transfer them into innovations with economic values.

The 10,000 sqm project will be launched in 2024. The sponsors of the project are Petroleum Development Oman, Occidental Oman, BP Oman, Daleel Petroleum, CC Energy Development

The center has three sectors such as Cultural Centre which will be managed by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Youth, Innovation Centre which will be managed by Ministry of Education while Investment sector will be managed by the governorate

The project comes in line with Oman's vision 2040 which aims to increase investment opportunities in logistics and industrial areas, enhance tourism, technical, cultural and entertainment facilities and support scientific research and innovation and create job opportunities and develop local entrepreneurship and SMEs.

Send your
comments to

**muscatdaily@
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Our Correspondent

Muscat

chronic kidney failure of which two cases were that of children." He added this is in continuation of a series of efforts made to transplant human organs and tissues in the sultanate. "The organ transplantation is one of the most important pioneering oper-

DR MOHAMMED SAID AL ABRINI

Dr Mohammed Said al Abri, consultant obesity surgeon at the Royal Hospital, said that advanced laparoscopic operations have brought about a qualitative leap in surgical operations in general and organ transplant

The Royal Hospital recently announced that total number of organ transplants carried out within the national organ transplantation programme is 323, of which 310 were kidney transplants and 13 liver transplants.

Our Correspondent

Muscat

Khalid al Zadjali

There will be three prizes (Gold, Bronze, Silver) for the winners in three categories: Documentaries, animation and

Our Correspondent

Muscat

The Ministry of Health (MoH) announced 539 new cases of COVID-19 and one related death registered in the sultanate in a 24-hour period on Sunday.

'With this, the total number of COVID-19 cases in Oman goes up to 308,261,' an MoH statement said. The total number of COVID-19-related deaths now stands at 4,119.

The number of hospital admissions has also increased. 'As of Monday, 40 COVID-19 patients were in healthcare institutions, including six in intensive care unit,' MoH stated.

THANK YOU

**YOUR MAJESTY SULTAN
HAITHAM BIN TARIK
TWO GOOD YEARS AND
COUNTING**

Sayyid Theyazin announces 6 new sports, culture clubs

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, has confirmed that the Council of Ministers has approved the establishment of six sports and culture clubs in different wilayats

A statement issued by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth said, 'Within the context of the Royal attention accorded by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to sports and culture clubs, given their role in honing the skills and talents of youth and serving as platforms for cultural, sports and youth activities, and in keeping with Oman Vision 2040, Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, has unveiled the Council of Ministers' approval to announce sports and culture clubs in six wilayats.

'The clubs will be in the wilayat of Amerat in Muscat governorate, the wilayat of Nakhal in South Batinah, the wilayat of Taqa in Dhofar, the wilayat of Izki in Dakhliyah, the wilayat of Dima Wa al Taen in North Sharqiyah, and the wilayat of Dhank in Dhahirah.'

Sayyid Theyazin hoped that the clubs will cater to the needs of different segments of society, notably by hosting social events and sports activities to meet the objectives that gave rise to their establishment.

Sayyid Theyazin has announced many initiatives recently to develop the capabilities of youth.

In November 2021, he an-



Youth Centre will be an integrated system of modern facilities in all governorates capable of discovering youth talent

SAYYID THEYAZIN

nounced the establishment of Youth Centre.

Announcing the centre, Sayyid Theyazin said, "Establishment of this centre is one of the initiatives of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth aimed at developing an integrated system of modern facilities in all governorates capable of embracing young people, developing their capabilities and

discovering their talent."

The Youth Centre will also endeavour to achieve other strategic objectives, such as promoting youth participation and contribution to national and international decision-making, and developing young professional leaders who can contribute to nation-building.

In June 2021, Sayyid Theyazin

announced the Oman Committee for Electronic Games and Sports and formed its board of directors.

These decisions reflect the minister's keenness to develop the capabilities of Omani youth in all spheres to enable them to participate in regional and international platforms and succeed.



MoHERI publishes latest issue of 'Scientific Insights'

Muscat - The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) has published the 33rd edition of *Scientific Insights* magazine, which delves into various topics in the field of scientific research and innovation.

In this issue, the cover story titled 'Inside the eye of a hurricane through the lens of scientific research' explores the role of scientific research in confronting floods and hurricanes, and poses several questions to researchers and specialists, including why the sultanate has devastating floods and hurricanes? Can hurricanes be avoided? What is the role of urban planning on rains and reducing losses from floods? The cover story also shares insights of Omani climate researchers and their contribution to the discourse of hurricanes in Oman and the globe.

An article titled 'Dialogue with a Researcher' reviews a research study on a new and innovative way to apply advanced artificial intelligence techniques and adapt these in cooling buildings in the sul-

tanate. The study demonstrates the possibility of reducing the use of electricity by 23.6 per cent annually, while in 'Insight into Innovation', the article provides an overview of the five winning teams of the fourth edition of the Manafa'a Programme, an annual challenge that aims to attract and develop innovative ideas based on biodiversity and genetic resources and transform these into economic products and services.

The 33rd issue of *Scientific Insights* also explores various other scientific and innovation topics, including the importance of data security especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2021 Nobel Prize winners in medicine, physics and chemistry, and the functions of a Nanofiber Electrospinning Unit and a X-ray Photoelectron Spectrometer.

Scientific Insights is a journal published every three months by MoHERI in both Arabic and English. The magazine can be accessed online through the ministry's official social media channels.



مركز البهجة
MARKAZ AL BAHJA

أسمى آيات التهاني لصاحب الجلالة
السُّلطان هيثم بن طارق المعظم
- حفظه الله ورعاه - بمناسبة ذكرى توليه
مقاليد الحكم في البلاد.

**Heartiest felicitations to
His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik
on the occasion of the anniversary of
his accession to the throne.**

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Zubair teams up with HRT to tackle Hankook 24H Dubai



Oman's Al Faisal al Zubair replaced his Lechner Racing Porsche 911 GT3 for a Mercedes-AMG GT3

Dubai, UAE - Oman's Al Faisal al Zubair returns to international circuit racing action this week-end to take part in the Hankook 24H Dubai at the Dubai Autodrome with a new line-up.

According to a press statement, Zubair 'is raring to go after a successful inaugural season in the International GT Open that saw him team up with Andy

Soucek to record several impressive victories and second and third places in the drivers' championship'.

Zubair replaced his Lechner Racing Porsche 911 GT3 for a Mercedes-AMG GT3, where he is heading a four-man Al-Manar Racing by getting HRT under Oman's national flag.

'Zubair teams up with Dutch-

man Indy Dontje, Germany's professional driver Luca Stolz and Austrian amateur racer Martin Konrad in the second of two Mercedes' run by the Haupt Racing Team (HRT) that took over the racing operations of Black Falcon,' the statement added.

"I am really excited for the 24 Hours of Dubai, especially having one year of GT Open experience.

I think I am a lot better prepared now in the GT3 category than I was when I first participated in the Dubai 24. That was cut short after seven hours, so I am counting this as pretty much the first Dubai 24 for me," Zubair was quoted as saying.

"The team we are coming in with now are very successful and have won Dubai 24 numerous



I am excited for the 24 Hours of Dubai, especially having one year of GT Open experience

AL FAISAL AL ZUBAIR



Bangladesh's Yasir Ali (centre) walks from the field after being dismissed on day two of the second Test against New Zealand, on Monday (AFP)

Bangladesh collapse in reply to Kiwis massive 521

Latham hits 252; Trent Boult takes 300th wicket as Bangladesh end second day 126 all out, behind by 395 runs

command. Boult got his ninth five-wicket haul, while Southee and Kyle Jamieson shared five between them.

In the hour leading into the tea break, Bangladesh's top-order went kaput. Shadman Islam and Najmul Hossain Shanto both fell to Boult in similar fashion: Giving Latham catches at second slip. Shadman could have left his but Shanto had no choice but to edge a peach of a delivery.

Southee accounted for debutant Mohammad Naim and captain Mominul Haque, both bowled. Naim, playing his first first-class match in two years, dragged a rising delivery outside off-stump on to his stumps, going for a five-ball duck.

Yasir scored his fifty and was looking in a bit of a hurry with Bangladesh eight down. He fell to Jamieson trying to get some big hits, before Boult took the last wicket of Shoriful Islam.

Cricinfo

SCOREBOARD		
New Zealand 1 st Innings 521/6d		
BANGLADESH 1 st INNINGS		
S Islam	c Latham b Boult	7
M Naim	b Southee	0
N H Shanto	c Latham b Boult	4
M Haque	b Southee	0
L Das	c Blundell b Boult	8
Y Ali	c Mitchell b Jamieson	55
N Hasan	lbw b Southee	41
M H Miraz	b Boult	5
T Ahmed	c Young b Jamieson	2
S slam	b Boult	2
E Hossain	not out	0
Extras:	(nb 1, w 1)	2
TOTAL: 126 in 41.2 overs		
Fall of wickets: 1-7, 2-11, 3-11, 4-11, 5-27, 6-87, 7-109, 8-118, 9-126, 10-126		
Bowling: T Southee 12-4-28-3, T Boult 13.2-3-43-5, K Jamieson 9-3-32-2, Neil Wagner 7-1-23-0		

Loeb eats into Attiyah's lead as Ekstrom wins stage

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia - France's nine-time world rally champion Sebastien Loeb made inroads into overall Dakar leader Nasser al Attiyah's advantage after finishing third in Monday's 395km special stage from Al Dawadimi to Wadi ad Dawasir.

Loeb admitted that despite reducing Qatari driver Attiyah's lead to less than 38 minutes - the event finishes on January 14 - it had been a 'very stressful day' on a stage won by Sweden's Mattias Ekstrom in an Audi hybrid vehicle. "We were going along at a heck of a rhythm and then had a



Sebastien Loeb and co-driver Fabian Lurquin at Stage 7 of the Dakar Rally

puncture after 28km," he said.

"We quickly changed the tyre losing less than two minutes.

"We regained our old rhythm till the halfway point when we saw that we had lost our spare

wheel and it was the only one we had left, so I was a bit careful at the end, but I think in the end I drove a good stage."

Attiyah bidding for a fourth win in the race said it had been a nerve-wracking drive.

"For 350km we had one puncture and then we only had front-wheel drive because we broke the rear," he said. "I was really scared all the way. On the last part I said, 'I don't care, on the last 50km I will try to push a little bit'.

"But it was not easy with just the front-wheel drive. I'm really lucky to be here."

The 51-year-old Qatari added even with his sizeable lead he was far from assuming he had the title in the bag.

"The Dakar is never finished, you know? We'll try to respect the Dakar," he said.

"The Dakar is the Dakar."

The motorbike section is far tighter with Britain's 2017 champion Sam Sunderland regaining the overall lead after winning the stage on his KTM bike. The Dubai-based rider leads Austria's world champion Mattias Walkner by 3min 45sec.

AFP





Heartiest felicitations to His Majesty SULTAN HAITHAM BIN TARIK on the occasion of the anniversary of his accession to the throne



Back with the big boys: Sierra Leone ready for AFCON

Douala, Cameroon - Sierra Leone could not have asked for a tougher start to their first Africa Cup of Nations in quarter of a century than a match against holders Algeria on Tuesday, but coach John Keister says simply being in Cameroon is a step on the way to making the country competitive again.

"It is very important for the people of Sierra Leone that we come here and represent the country," Keister said in Douala on Monday as the west African nation appear at the continental tournament for the first time since 1996.

"As a nation, if we want to be coming to this competition every two years we have to come here and play against the better teams in Africa.

"It helps our development but we are looking forward to it and we are going to be competitive, that's for sure."

Ranked 108th in the world, Sierra Leone twice held Nigeria in qualifying, including coming from 4-0 down to draw 4-4 away, and pipped Benin to secure a berth at the finals.

They will also play the Ivory Coast and Equatorial Guinea in Cameroon and the format is such that one win might be enough to reach the last 16.

"Where we end doesn't really matter. For us it is about growth. We want to be back with the big boys," added Keister, who was born in England but was capped by Sierra Leone as a player. "We don't want to put pressure on ourselves and raise hopes about where we will finish."

They will face the reigning champions at the Japoma Stadium in Douala on Tuesday in the heat and humidity of an afternoon kick-off.

"We know they are one of the better sides in Africa but football is about who wants it more on the day and we are prepared for that. Records are there to be broken," said Keister.

There are few household names in their squad but Sierra Leone can call on Steven Caulker, the 30-year-old London-born centre-back with Turkish club Gaziantep.

Caulker was capped once by England in 2012 when on the books at Tottenham Hotspur but qualified for Sierra Leone through his grandfather and changed international allegiance when the opportunity arose to play at the Cup of Nations.

"His background speaks for itself and as a coach, when you have a player of that calibre you are always going to welcome him with open arms," Keister said.

AFP



Last-gasp Mane penalty gives Senegal victory

AFRICA CUP OF NATIONS
Bafoussam, Cameroon - Liverpool star Sadio Mane converted a penalty deep in added time to snatch a fortunate 1-0 win for Senegal over Zimbabwe in the Africa Cup of Nations Group B opener on Monday in Bafoussam.

Disaster struck the gallant underdogs when a shot hit the right arm of Kelvin Madzongwe and Mane sent goalkeeper Petros Mhari the wrong way with the resulting penalty on 97 minutes to settle a lacklustre affair.

While Senegal, one of the favourites to win a competition delayed twice by COVID-19, dominated possession, they rarely threatened to break down a well-organised Zimbabwe defence.

Group B continues later on Monday when Guinea will be slight favourites to overcome Malawi and join Senegal at the top of the table.

Senegal lacked Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy and Napoli centre-back Kalidou Koulibaly, who are recovering in Cameroon after testing positive for the coronavirus.

Zimbabwe travelled to central Africa without a couple of their top players, Marvelous Nakamba from Aston Villa and fellow midfielder Marshall Munetsi from French Ligue 1 outfit Reims, due to injuries.

With reigning African Footballer of the Year Mane and Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Idrissa Gueye in the starting line-up,



Senegal were expected to secure maximum points without undue difficulty.

The opening 20 minutes were controlled by the Teranga Lions, who camped in the Zimbabwe half and passed the ball casually while their opponents did a lot of chasing at a sparsely populated Stade de Kouekong.

Senegal issued a declaration of their intentions within 45 seconds of the kick-off in 30°C heat when Bouna Sarr fired narrowly wide from just outside the box.

Sarr from German and European giants Bayern Munich went even closer midway through the opening half with a shot across the goal that was just off target.

After a quiet start, Mane burst between two defenders on 24 minutes only to see his low shot, aimed at the far corner of the net, blocked by goalkeeper Petros Mhari.

As the half progressed Zimbabwe began to move into Senegale territory and should have done better from a free-kick inside the D with 30 minutes gone.

Captain Knowledge Musona took the set-piece and should have at least found the target instead of watching his tame attempt go harmlessly wide.

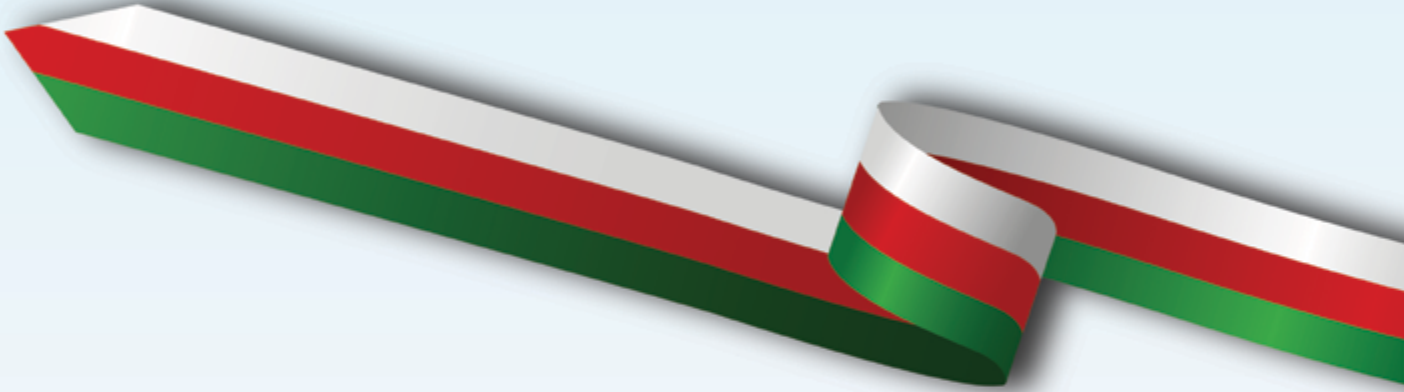
As half-time approached in the western highlands of Cameroon, Mane turned provider, setting up unmarked Gueye, who was let down by his first touch as he was poised to shoot at goal. A goalless opening half ended with Senegal back on the attack and Fode Ballo Toure firing into the side netting.

The second half followed a similar pattern to the first as Senegal dominated possession without seriously threatening to take the lead.

Mhari rescued Zimbabwe 16 minutes from time when he dived to cut off a cross destined for Mane at the far post.

AFP

On the 2nd Anniversary
of the accession of
His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik
to the throne,
we extend our most sincere greetings.
May Allah bestow His blessings on him
and the people of Oman.



Al Ansari Group, management team and employees are wholeheartedly committed to the progress of the Sultanate and the prosperity of its people under the wise leadership of **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**



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On the anniversary of His Majesty's accession to the throne, bp Oman extends its sincerest congratulations to **His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik** – may Almighty Allah preserve him – and to the people of Oman.



OCC floats tender for construction of fourth cement production line

Muscat - Oman Cement Company (OCC) floated a tender for the construction of its fourth cement production line in the sultanate and to upgrade its third line.

The fourth line will have a capacity of 10,000 tonnes per day of clinker, whereas the daily capacity of the third line will be upgraded from 4,000 tonnes to 5,000 tonnes per day.

OCC will add 11,000 tonnes per day to its current production levels as part of its plans to develop the production of cement in Oman to meet the demand in local markets and to achieve self-sufficiency of high quality cement.



Eng Salem Abdullah al Hajri, CEO of Oman Cement Company said, "This tender has been floated for local companies operating in the Sultanate of Oman as part of OCC's interest in enhancing the added value of its projects and enriching the local markets. This targeted expansion will

be the biggest-of-its-kind in Oman's cement industry in order to achieve self-sufficiency by 2023."

This targeted expansion of the cement production line will be the biggest-of-its-kind in Oman's cement industry in order to achieve self-sufficiency by 2023

SALEM ABDULLAH AL HAJRI

The new production line will provide cement products at lower prices compared to the imported cement. The line will create business opportunities for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) operating in Oman to supply OCC with local raw materials, such as gypsum and iron ores.

The line will also bolster the construction sector and infrastructure projects by providing cement products at competitive prices.

ONA

ADX partners with FTSE Russell

Abu Dhabi, UAE - The Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange (ADX) and FTSE Russell have partnered to develop co-branded indices, supporting the exchange's recently launched derivatives market and bringing the exchange's stock performance measures into line with global standards.

As of January 10, FTSE ADX General Index is replacing the ADX General Index, and FTSE ADX sector indices will take the place of the existing sector indices, leveraging the Industry Classification Benchmark. ADX is the first exchange in the region to make FTSE Russell its index administrator. Further new indices will be co-developed under the partnership to support ADX's vision of introducing tradable new index products on its market. The exchange launched single stock futures in the fourth quarter of 2021 following a deal sealed in September with NASDAQ to deliver matching, real time clearing and settlement technology as ADX broadens its asset class offerings.

ADX's benchmark index, the ADI, crossed the 9,000-point threshold in 2021 for the first time. The benchmark gauge rose 68 per cent last year, making it one of the best performing exchanges in the world.

WAM

Al Maha Petroleum receives three ISO certifications

Muscat - Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company has announced that it has received a trio of certifications from the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). These include the ISO 9001:2015 certification for Quality Management System, ISO 14001:2015 for Environmental Management System, and ISO 45001:2018 for Occupational Health and Safety Management System.

The company received these prestigious certifications because of its commitment to adhering to the highest international standards of quality, environment, health, and safety in an endeavour to ensure its



consistent and sustainable growth, according to a press release.

Sharing his thoughts on Al Maha receiving the ISO certifications, Eng Hamed al Mahdri, CEO of Al Maha, said, "We are very proud to have received each of these certifications. Every one of them is a result of the great effort we have put into developing and updating our internal processes to meet international quality and management standards. These include all aspects of quality management and customer satisfaction, as well as detailed and rigorously enforced health, safety, and environmental protocols across the organisation."

The certifications each serve as specific requirements that organisations can use to improve

their quality, health, safety, and environmental performance.

As part of an effort to meet these requirements as well as to boost performance, Al Maha recently completed a comprehensive internal assessment across the organisation.

A team carefully assessed the company's various facilities and outlets, observed the work of departments across the company, assessed the performance of human resource teams, and most importantly, carefully analysed all health, safety, and environmental protocols, filling in any gaps and bringing them up to global standards.

Renaissance appoints Abdullah al Rashdi as chief people officer

Muscat - Renaissance Services has appointed Abdullah Mohammed al Rashdi as its new chief people officer. Rashdi, who took charge on January 2, brings his considerable international and local experience in human resource and talent management in sectors ranging from oil and gas and construction to real estate and consulting.

Rashdi holds a BSc degree in Electrical Engineering from California State University, a Master's degree in International Human Resource Management from Manchester Metropolitan University. He has a deep multi-industry and multi-discipline understanding of managing human resources in a global business.

Stephen R Thomas, CEO, Renaissance Services, in a press release said, "We are happy to have Rashdi on our leadership team. Young and innovative minds like Rashdi will



Abdullah Mohammed al Rashdi

be one of the driving forces as the company shifts gear to Renaissance 2.0. The Renaissance family welcomes him and wishes him the very best."

Rashdi has been part of significant milestones in each of the companies he has worked in and firmly believes that communication, approachability, and work ethics are the pillars of efficient and empathetic human resource management. "I'm thrilled to join a company that has healthy ingredients for

exponential growth and delighted to be part of a team that will take the company there," he said.

Renaissance is the leading accommodation, services solutions and IFM company in Oman, listed on Muscat Stock Exchange.

As of 2020, the company has invested over US\$500mn in Oman employing over 2,350 Omani nationals contributing to local growth, building potential and creating opportunities. Renaissance is committed to safety, efficiency, green awareness, and sustaining in-country value.

The company has built a strong local supply chain with over 60 per cent of procurement within Oman and is passionate about building a sustainable future by investing in substantial CSR programmes every year. Renaissance owns and operates Renaissance Village Duqm.

EU needs more time for 'green' nuclear energy, natural gas proposal

Brussels, Belgium - The European Commission said on Monday it would need more time to agree plans to label energy from nuclear power and natural gas as 'green' investments, amid fierce disagreement.

The proposal by the EU executive aims to support the 27-nation bloc's shift towards a carbon-neutral future and gild its credentials as a global standard-setter for fighting climate change.

Brussels needs to agree which energy sources are clean, to unlock hundreds of billions of euros in private spending and counter 'greenwashing' by businesses that falsely promote investments as sustainable.

The commission quietly distributed a text to member states in the final hours of 2021 after the much-delayed document had been twice promised earlier in the year, highlighting the rocky road to draft it.

The EU executive had said it

would give itself until January 12 to consult with member states and MEPs on the proposal, but on Monday added that it would need another nine days to complete the process.

Given the recent holiday break, 'it's only natural that we provide a bit more time', said EU spokesman Eric Mamer, confirming a tweet by a German official that the new deadline was January 21.

The opinions collected may lead to changes in the text with the final version published by the end of the month.

If a majority of member states fail to oppose it within four months after that, it will become EU law, coming into effect from 2023. The European Parliament can also oppose it within that time with a simple vote.

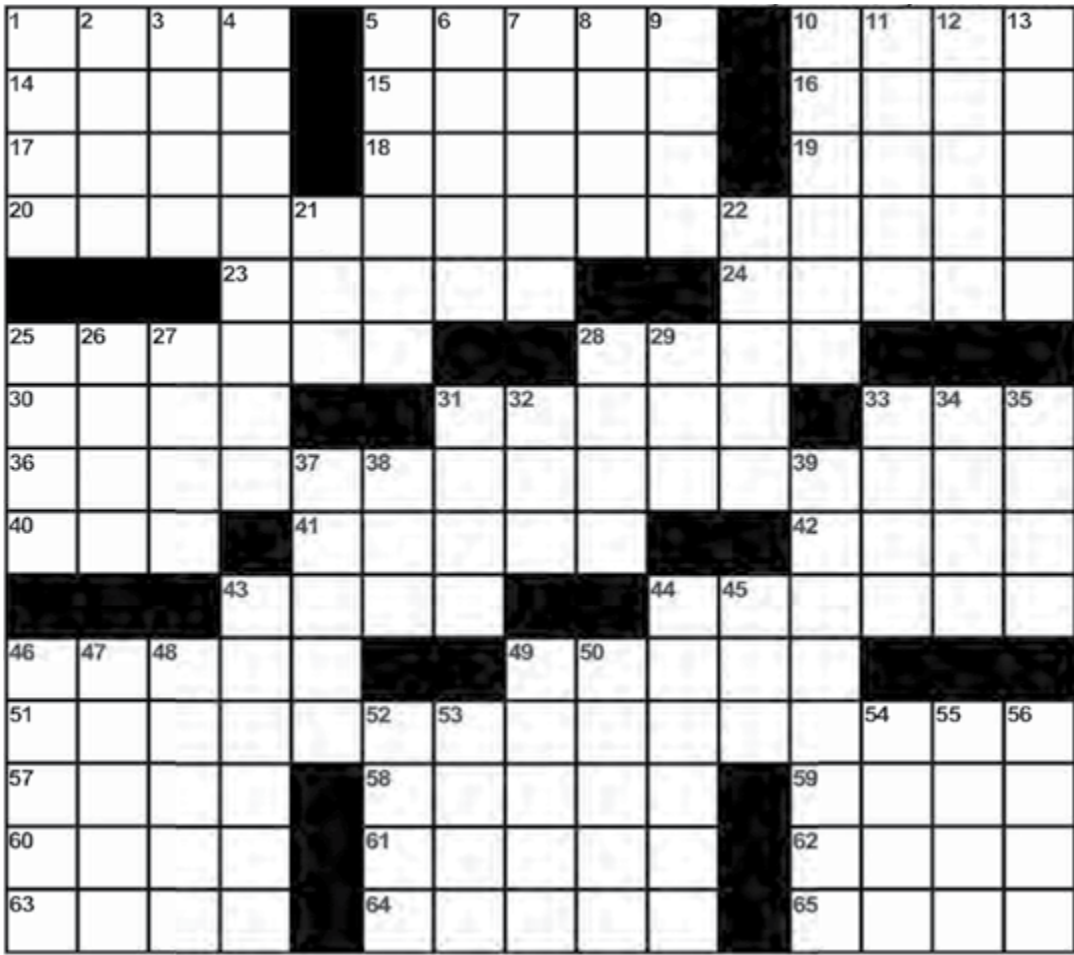
France has led the charge for nuclear power to be included, despite robust opposition from Austria and Germany.

AFF



Offices at Muscat, Salalah, Sohar & Sur

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Be volcanic
- 5) People in Toyland
- 10) Prolific Roman love poet
- 14) Spelling of TV
- 15) Cut short, as a flight
- 16) "Give that, cigar!"
- 17) Fleshy seed covering
- 18) Word with "tire" or "fuel"
- 19) Flamboyant flair
- 20) School of fish
- 23) Give a false impression of
- 24) Before the deadline
- 25) Annuls
- 28) Catty sounds
- 30) Gilbert of "Roseanne"
- 31) Positive thinker
- Norman Vincent
- 33) West, the vamp of old Hollywood
- 36) School of fish
- 40) Noisy disturbance
- 41) Throat projection
- 42) Do-others tie
- 43) Iowa State University location
- 44) Doing a lousy job
- 46) Lip-puckering

- 49) Earthshaking event
- 51) School of fish
- 57) Detective's discovery
- 58) Emulate a ghost
- 59) Simple
- 60) National League baseball team
- 61) Daddy Warbucks' charge
- 62) Trade jabs or barbs
- 63) Aid a felon
- 64) Singer Frampton
- 65) Overdo it in a bar

DOWN

- 1) "Make a new plan" guy, according to Paul Simon
- 2) Epidermal opening
- 3) Pennsylvania city
- 4) Tusked beast
- 5) Rolls with holes
- 6) Calculator with no batteries
- 7) Ancient Greek legislature
- 8) Cogito, _ sum
- 9) Burgoon, for one

- 10) Some fraternity men
- 11) Courage under fire
- 12) Counting everything
- 13) Fine's partner
- 21) Jerry_ Lewis of music
- 22) Handrail post
- 25) Pre-1991 world power
- 26) Military alliance gp. since 1949
- 27) Sketch
- 28) Poet Angelou
- 29) Santa subordinate
- 31) Added bonus
- 32) Wing of a mansion, sometimes
- 33) Revealing skirt
- 34) Pismires and others
- 35) Bruised or inflated items
- 37) Egg size
- 38) Forbidden-fruit eater
- 20) Most pleasing to the palate
- 43) Police action
- 44) Civil disturbance participant
- 45) Mind reader's specialty, for short
- 46) African coastal capital
- 47) Moses' spy in Canaan
- 48) Piano piece

- 49) Knievel specialty
- 50) Bert's "Sesame Street" buddy
- 52) "Old" British buddy
- 53) Batman co-creator Bob

- 54) It tightens around the neck
- 55) "Now!" to an exec.
- 56) Early stringed instrument

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

It's hard to convince people you don't know well that you mean what you say even if you've said it (and meant it) a thousand times before and all those others can vouch for you. The first time a new person hears it from you and then sees you keep the promise you've made, that's what really counts. For now, don't worry if someone you want to impress isn't quite ready to be impressed.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

You're much fonder of making things public, regardless of the issues, than of keeping them a secret. Still, every now and then it's absolutely essential to let things out in the right way, and this is one of those times. The good news is that someone has been working behind the scenes for you without you having any inkling that anything was going on.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Family or not, your people have always struck you as being a bit on the loony side. Still, they're close, so you've been patient and working the smiles, nods, and shrugs whenever you're questioned. Of course, there's a certain type of brilliance that goes along with that kind of eccentricity. Expect it to show up soon and for you to wonder if you were lucky enough to have inherited it.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

When you first learnt to ride a bike, there came a moment when your parent had to let go of the bike and let you go forward on your own. It was a moment of fear and independence. Today, life will give you that same feeling when you finally let go of something you've been watching over carefully. This could be a person or a project. You have to realise that things are fine on their own and you should step out of the picture.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You are all about getting stuff done right now, with a huge supply of energy backing you up. This is a great time to start working on a big project, reorganising the garage, or tackling a major household repair job. Making things work properly is something you're good at right now, and that includes relationships. You're able to patch things up and get back on track with someone you miss more than you'd care to admit.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Public displays of affection just aren't your style. Occasionally, a tear or a grin you weren't expecting might slip by you unnoticed, by you, that is. The rest of the world pretends not to see, but they're amazed and astounded. The good news is that you're feeling so good right now that you don't care who sees. While you're at it, why not let it all out and get it over with?



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

When something fails to go as it should with an authority figure, it's too easy to blame it on them. Aren't they just there to irritate, aggravate, and annoy us anyway? You know better, though. To some, being in charge isn't just their job, it's their life's work. To others, being in charge is the way they give back to the community. You might be working under someone who wants you to work with them on that project.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You can tell what's really going on by the way that one person has been making excuses to walk by you, by the glances they've been tossing your way across rooms and by the comments they've made behind your back you've heard through well-meaning friends who'd like nothing better than to see you two get together. What do you do now? There's no better time. That's for sure.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Your eyes have been opened in many ways, the biggest of which is the fact that your current relationships need some tweaks. You may even be thinking that it's you, not the others, who needs to make those changes. You've been thinking of little else since, and you're willing to put step one into operation yourself. Asking for help with steps two, three, and four certainly couldn't hurt and might be part of the solution.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You're currently wrapped up in making some kind of relationship work. Platonic, romantic, or professional, it really doesn't matter. You want to make and keep a promise, and be sure that the promise that's been made in return was given with equally honest intentions. There's only one thing for it, and that's time. Wait, watch, and see. It's one of the things you do best!



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

It's tough for you to listen when someone offers advice on a subject you're sure you know everything about. That's the case now, or at least that's how you feel at the moment. Believe it or not, though, you may not know absolutely everything on this particular issue. Just in case, give this person the opportunity to share what they know too.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Every now and then everyone feels insecure. It could be because someone whose loyalty we're unsure of says or does something that makes us feel doubtful. That doesn't mean we're right about it everything, though. It might just mean that we're just having a needy moment. If you're feeling that way now, think it over first, then do something vitally important. Call a relationship meeting and talk it out.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. The national museum of India is located in

- Mumbai
- Lucknow
- New Delhi
- Pune

2. The News Agency "Associated Press" is of

- Indonesia
- America
- Bangladesh
- China

3. The Olympic Flame was lit for the first time at the Amsterdam stadium in

- Lumbini (Nepal) where Buddha was born
- Bodhi Gaya (Bihar) where Buddha received enlightenment
- Kusinagara (UP) where Buddha attained Nirvana
- All of the above

Answers: 1. c 2. b 3. b

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

F	T	A	E
F	Y	E	S
E	A	N	S
I	S	B	D

Each game will present you with a matrix filled with letters. The objective is to form words by linking adjacent letters - to the left, right, on top, bottom, or diagonal to each other. The Boggles Classic game uses a 4 x 4 matrix. Words are valued at one point for each letter in excess of two letters. A three letter word is worth one point, a four letter word is worth two points, and so on. Valid words must be at least three letters long.

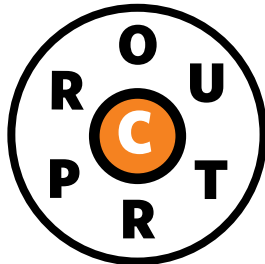
Solution 20-25 words: Excellent, 15-20 words: Very good, 10-15 words: Good, 5-10 words: Average

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY: Fill in the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9 and only one instance of each number

5	9			4	2
8		7			
2	7	1		5	
1	6	8			
9		3		6	
			1	9	5
		7	9	5	6
		1		8	
2	6		8	4	

WORD BUILDER



You have three minutes to find all the words contained in this word.

Rules: Words should be at least four letters long, proper nouns and duplicates don't count

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

1	4	7	8	6	9	2	6
2	8	6	9	1	4	7	3
9	5	3	6	2	7	8	1
6	6	8	1	9	2	3	7
4	9	1	7	3	6	2	8
3	7	2	4	6	8	9	1
8	9	5	4	1	6	7	2
6	1	5	2	7	4	8	3
2	4	7	3	8	1	5	9

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

India begins booster drive as cases soar

New Delhi, India - India began a COVID-19 booster shot campaign for frontline workers and vulnerable people aged 60 and above on Monday as authorities grapple with a rapidly escalating outbreak driven by the Omicron variant.

Daily case numbers are approaching the enormous figures seen last year, when thousands died each day and workers maintained round-the-clock funeral pyres for the mass cremation of virus victims.

Nearly 180,000 new infections were recorded overnight, up nearly six times from a week earlier, with several urban centres imposing night-time curfews and restrictions on public gatherings.

"We've seen the number of cases increasing," said Sheetal Vaishnav, a doctor helping



A health worker inoculates a woman with a third 'booster' dose of the Covaxin vaccine, as the country sees an Omicron-driven surge in COVID-19 cases, at a vaccination centre in New Delhi on Monday (AFP)

oversee Monday's vaccinations at a clinic in the capital New Delhi. "It's necessary that we start protecting our population more."

People aged 60 and above with pre-existing medical conditions, health professionals, and other essential workers are all eligible for a booster nine months after their second jab.

"I want to keep myself safe in this pandemic, that's why I got it," said Sunil, a municipal worker who received his latest shot on Monday. "Nothing happened in the first one, and nothing in the second one, what can go wrong with the third one?"

Positive signs

India appears better placed to weather the Omicron strain than it was ahead of the calamitous Delta wave it suffered last

year. During that period, more than 200,000 people died within a few weeks, according to official figures.

We've seen the number of cases increasing. It's necessary that we start protecting our population more

SHEETAL VAISHNAV

In the time since, Indian health workers have injected more than 1.5bn vaccine doses, with teens aged 15-18 eligible since last week.

As in other countries, deaths

are a fraction of those during the Delta wave - with 146 fatalities recorded on Sunday, compared with more than 4,000 per day during last year's spike.

But experts fear the number of new infections to come could test the country's hospitals.

"This could potentially stress out health care systems," Gautam Menon, a professor at India's Ashoka University who has worked on COVID-19 infection modelling, said last week.

After a similar surge in cases, neighbouring Nepal has closed schools until the end of January and is considering limiting public gatherings. The Himalayan nation's 75-year-old prime minister, Sher Bahadur Deuba, is currently in isolation after other senior politicians tested positive for the virus.

AFP

China detects more Omicron cases as cities tighten restrictions

Beijing, China - China reported more cases of the highly transmissible Omicron coronavirus variant on Monday, with authorities on high alert over flare-ups in major cities just weeks ahead of the Beijing Winter Olympics.

The emergence of the fast-spreading variant is yet another test of China's zero COVID strategy, with authorities already battling several outbreaks - including in Xi'an, where 13mn city residents were in their third week of lockdown.

Fears grew about a cluster of infections in the northern city of



Residents queue up to undergo nucleic acid tests for COVID-19, in north China's Tianjin city on Sunday (AFP)

Tianjin, which was linked to two Omicron cases reported on Monday in the city of Anyang around 400km away.

On Monday, Anyang official Li Chao told reporters that sales

of train and long-distance bus tickets out of the city have been suspended, while checkpoints have been set up on all highways out, to 'ensure that the outbreak does not spill over into outside areas'.

Meanwhile, city officials said in a statement on Sunday that 'the general public should not leave Tianjin unless essential to do so'.

Those who need to leave must obtain official permission and test negative for the virus within 48 hours of their departure, they added.

Schools and university cam-

puses have been closed, and trains into Beijing from Tianjin have been cancelled.

Road checkpoints have been set up for vehicles entering the capital.

Tianjin - just 150km from Beijing - has already ordered the testing of all 14mn residents.

Another 21 cases were reported in the city on Monday, although the strain of virus wasn't confirmed.

Gu Qing, director of the Tianjin Municipal Health Commission, told a press briefing on Monday that the city has so far detected 31 domestic virus

cases in the latest outbreak, adding that close contacts have been quarantined.

Footage from state broadcaster CCTV showed masked people in Tianjin's Nankai district queueing for virus tests on Sunday from medical workers in white hazmat suits.

Gu told reporters at the weekend that the new cases are 'mainly students and their parents who go to the same nursery and school'.

The world's most populous nation - where the coronavirus was first detected in late 2019 - slowed the spread of the virus

to a trickle through its zero COVID strategy, which includes targeted lockdowns, border restrictions and lengthy quarantines.

While China's total reported cases are far lower than other virus hotspots such as the United States and Europe, there is widespread concern about the impact of Omicron.

Authorities in the city of Anyang in central Henan province also announced the testing of all residents - more than five million people - over the weekend.

AFP

Defeated 'coup', Russian troops will leave: Kazakh leader

Almaty, Kazakhstan - Kazakhstan's President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said on Monday that his country had defeated an attempted coup d'etat during historic violence last week, and insisted that Russian-led troops called in to help quell the unrest would go home 'soon'.

During a video-conference of leaders from several ex-Soviet countries in a military alliance that sent in the troops, his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin confirmed they would leave as soon as their mission ended.

The Central Asian country has been left reeling in the wake of the worst violence in its recent history, but life in Kazakhstan's largest city Almaty appeared to be returning to normal Monday, with internet coverage restored as the nation observed a day of mourning for dozens killed in the clashes.

Tokayev told the video-conference that 'armed militants' had used the backdrop of protests to try to seize power.

"The main goal was obvious: The undermining of the constitutional order, the destruction of



Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev (centre) during a meeting in the wake of the worst violence in its recent history, at the counter-terrorism headquarters in Almaty on Friday (AFP)

government institutions and the seizure of power. It was an attempted coup d'etat," Tokayev said.

The Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) has deployed just over 2,000 troops and 250 pieces of military hardware, the Kazakh leader said, vowing that the detachment would leave the country 'soon'.

Some have voiced concerns that Moscow could leverage the mission to shore up its influence in ex-Soviet Kazakhstan, with US

Secretary of State Antony Blinken warning last week that 'once Russians are in your house, it's sometimes very difficult to get them to leave'.

Temporary deployment

"A contingent of CSTO peace-keeping forces has been sent to Kazakhstan - and I want to emphasise this - for a limited time period," Putin said during the meeting.

He said Kazakhstan was facing a threat from 'international

terrorism' and that measures taken by the CSTO showed that its members would not allow 'so-called colour revolutions' to break out in the region.

Authoritarian Kazakhstan has accused 'armed bandits' and terrorists of being behind the unrest, which began with protests over a fuel price hike.

The government said on Monday that foreign media reports had created 'the false impression that the Kazakhstan government has been targeting peaceful protesters'.

'Our security forces have been engaging with violent mobs who were committing brazen acts of terror,' the Foreign Ministry said in the statement.

Tokayev said in the meeting that his country's security personnel 'have never fired and will never fire on peaceful demonstrators'.

Internet restored

Almaty, the country's main city and former capital, had been nearly completely offline since Wednesday, but local and foreign websites were accessible again on Monday morning.

AFP correspondents saw public transport operating there for the first time since the violence, which left government buildings burned and gutted and many businesses looted.

Lyudmila, a pensioner waiting for a bus in central Almaty, said she learned the Internet was back when she received a call online from relatives in Ukraine.

"I had no idea that we were back online again," she said, giving only her first name.

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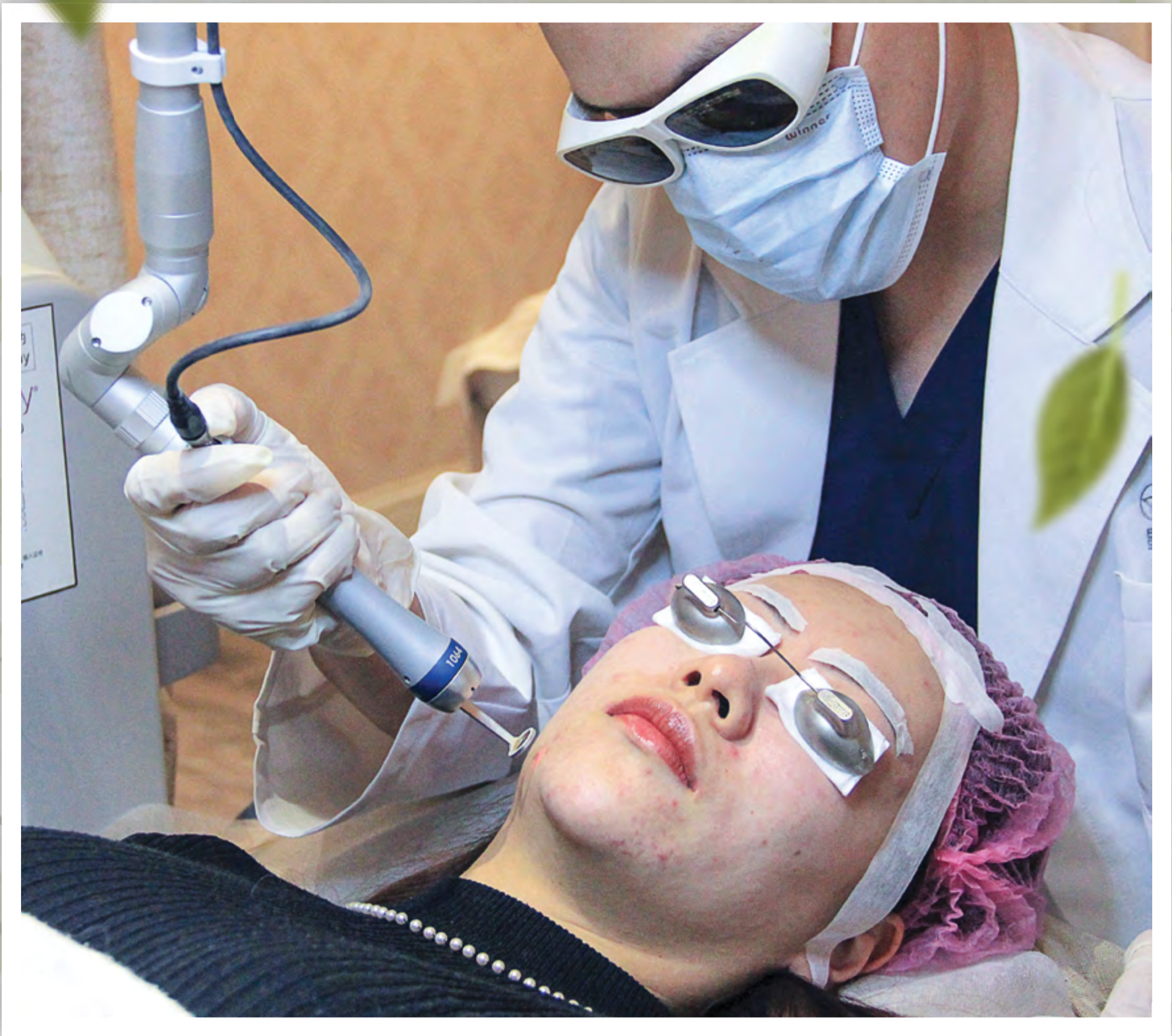


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ONLY SKIN DEEP

Midday queues snake out to the street in an upmarket Shanghai neighbourhood, but it's not lunch at the city's hottest restaurant that people are lining up for - it's cosmetic 'micro-procedures', which are surging in popularity in China.

The 'lunchtime facelift' and other 'medical aesthetics' procedures are booming as a new generation of Chinese consumers grapple with the pressure to look good on social media as well as in person.

Kayla Zhang has never actually gone under the knife for cosmetic reasons, but she's had laser treatments, injections and a thread lift - a barbed string inserted under the skin and pulled up to 'lift' the face.

"I'm not changing my nose or my eyes, which would be an extreme change in my looks," the 27-year-old told AFP, adding that she's seeking a 'better version' of herself rather than 'a totally new face'.

Already popular in the West because they are less invasive and more affordable than traditional cosmetic surgery, micro-procedures - from laser facials and

fillers to thread lifts - are fast becoming the norm in China's cities where disposable incomes have jumped in the past decade.

The Chinese Association of Plastics and Aesthetics estimates, overall, the cosmetic industry will grow to US\$46bn this year compared to around US\$6.5bn in 2013.

Micro-procedures are now an expanding segment of that market, while traditional surgery's growth rates slow, according to data from consulting firm Frost and Sullivan.

Changing values

But a government crackdown looms over the boom.

The ruling Communist Party is pushing a broad campaign to 'purify' social values, which includes taking aim at mounting youth pressure to go under the knife.

The government has banned industry advertising practices that contribute to 'appearance anxiety' such as before-and-after images, and has levied tens of millions of dollars in fines this year over various infractions.

Model Li Li already gets monthly laser treatments to correct skin blemishes but admits she feels social pressure to contin-

“Good-looking people will have more opportunities than others. If you don't look good on the outside, even if you have an interesting personality, people might not get the chance to see it

KEN HUANG

ually fix her appearance.

After friends said her face was out of proportion she opted for a 'chin filler', which makes the chin more prominent.

"I went to get it immediately," the 27-year-old confessed.

But Li and Zhang insist that micro-procedures - which can cost on average a third of the price of cosmetic surgery, according to research by Deloitte - are a less-invasive alternative to traditional surgery and are being unfairly stigmatised.

"Everyone had the same standard of beauty before, but now it feels like this norm is being tipped over," added Zhang, who likens micro-procedures to skincare, but faster.

A decade ago, cosmetic doctor Yang Kaiyuan said customers often came to him with a picture of a celebrity, telling him: "I want to look like this."

"Nowadays, people just hope to make slight improvements on what they already have," Yang explained.

Unrestrained growth

But the government is concerned by the rise in unlicensed, unregulated providers.

In 2019, 15 per cent of the 13,000 licensed beauty clinics in China were oper-

ating outside of their business scope and only 28 per cent of doctors in the industry were certified, according to iResearch.

Its report added that for every up-to-standard needle used, two unapproved ones were in circulation.

Earlier this year, a Chinese actress shared cautionary photos online of a botched operation that left her nose badly infected.

But Ken Huang, CEO at beauty clinic PhiSkin, says the societal factors pushing young Chinese to seek cosmetic adjustments to advance their careers or to boost social media popularity remain strong.

"Good-looking people will have more opportunities than others," Huang said.

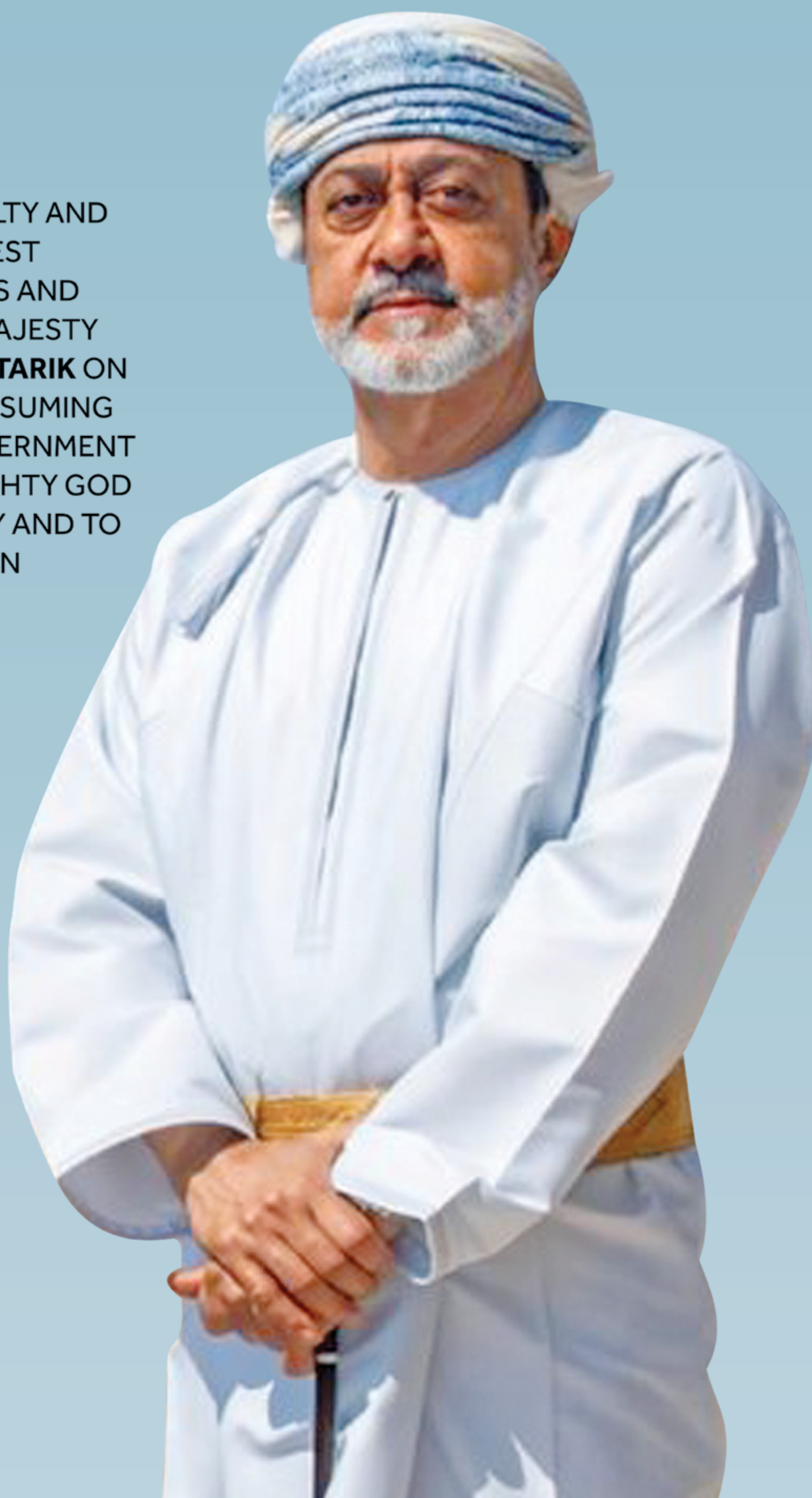
"If you don't look good on the outside, even if you have an interesting personality, people might not get the chance to see it."

Still in her twenties, Zhang already opts for monthly micro-procedures and will keep this routine until she feels her appearance leaves her 'no choice but to go under the knife'.

She explained: "Then I may need stronger methods to be able to return to a younger state."

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