

No severe sandstorms expected: Met

The Sultanate of Oman may not witness sandstorms and low visibility issues as reported in other countries in the region such as Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. An official at Oman Meteorology indicated that horizontal visibility may reduce due to dust aerosols and fog formation along the Arabian Sea coast and the western coast of Musandam. However, there are sandstorm warnings for Marmul and other open areas. **SEE ALSO P4**



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OMAN BAG TWO SHOOTING GOLD IN GCC GAMES



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OMAN FISHERIES STRIKES DEAL WITH IRISH FIRM



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EGYPT COMPOSER'S STAR RISES WITH 'MOON KNIGHT' FAME



Decree ratifies Oman-Iran agreement

MUSCAT: His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has issued a Royal Decree No 29/2022 on the ratification of an agreement of cooperation between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran on maritime transport, signed in Tehran on December 8, 2019, and after presenting the same before the Majlis Ash'shura.

Article (1) ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version attached to this Decree.

Article (2) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue.

— ONA

Oman ranks 40th in global food security

OHOOD AL JAILANIYAH
MUSCAT, MAY 18

The Sultanate of Oman ranked fourth among the GCC countries in the Global Food Security Index (GFSI) 2021, published by the Economist Impact. The Sultanate of Oman ranked first among the GCC countries in Food Affordability and Availability, Natural Resources and Resilience indices and third in the Quality and Safety of Food index.

The report indicated that Oman ranked 40th globally, Qatar 24th and first among the

GCC countries, followed by Kuwait in 30th place and the UAE at the 35th global ranking. Bahrain ranked 43rd and Saudi Arabia 44th.

The report indicated that the GCC countries represent the first six positions at the Arab level with Oman ranking fourth at the level of the GCC states, securing 70.0 points. Qatar claimed the highest ranking among the GCC countries with a score of 73.6 points, followed by Kuwait with 72.2 points, the United Arab Emirates with 71.0 points, Bahrain with 68.5 points and

QATAR	24
KUWAIT	30
UAE	35
OMAN	40
BAHRAIN	43
KSA	44

Saudi Arabia with 68.1 points.

The report highlighted the basic issues of food security. In the Food Affordability index, Denmark and Ireland ranked first and second globally. The ranking of the GCC countries ranged from 18-59, with Oman topping the GCC countries in this index and ranking 18th globally securing 88.8 points followed by Qatar in the 31st place globally, Kuwait in the 44th place, Bahrain in the 46th place, the UAE in the 50th place and Saudi Arabia in the 53rd place.

In the index of Natural

Resources Availability and Resilience, Norway and Finland topped globally. The Sultanate of Oman topped the GCC countries with 45.2 points and ranked 76th globally followed by Saudi Arabia in the 84th place globally with 44.3 points. The UAE came in the 88th place globally with 43.6 points, Qatar ranked 91st, Kuwait ranked 93rd and Bahrain 107th.

The Global Food Security Index (GFSI) considers the issues of food affordability, availability, quality and safety, and natural resources and resilience across a set of 113 countries.

Freedom of expression guaranteed by Law

MUSCAT: The Basic Law of the State in the Sultanate of Oman secures freedom of expression and opinion. Article (35) in Chapter Three of the statute states that “The freedom of opinion and the right to articulate it orally or in writing or by all means of expression is guaranteed within the purview of law”.

In all his Royal speeches, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has reaffirmed freedom of expression advocated by the State of Institutions.

A programme aired recently by Oman TV codenamed “Your News” highlighted freedom of expression and described it as “a national shield that secures accomplishments and engenders the will to build”. The programme indicated that the means of Omani media establishments — in print, audio, visual or electronic form — provide a truthful content that underlines national accomplishments and enshrines them within the original Omani precepts. In this

Besides legislations freedom in different countries are associated with religious values and social norms, which in themselves as misinterpreted by some as forms of limitation of freedom of expression

DR AISHA BINT HAMAD AL DARMAKIYAH

respect, Dr Aisha bint Hamad al Darmakiyah, Head of the State Council's Committee for Culture, Media and Tourism, said that freedom of expression and opinion constitutes an inseparable part of citizens' basic civil rights and rapports to human rights.



A LOCALLY-FAVOURED HONEY!

Omanis since ages have made beekeeping a very important craft and this has enabled them to provide the best quality of honey used for different purposes. Natural Omani honey is very popular among consumers, and there is a great demand for it in the market. **DETAILS ON P20**

Dhofar braces for khareef season

SALALAH: The office of the Minister of the State and Governor of Dhofar held a meeting to review the preparations for this year's khareef season, under the chairmanship of Sayyid Mohammed bin Sultan al Busaidy, Minister of State and Governor of Dhofar, on Wednesday.

The meeting reviewed the preparedness level of the relevant authorities to serve visitors during the tourist season. The topics discussed included the provision of adequate police presence to organise traffic movement on all roads leading to Dhofar, securing green spaces and beaches with rescue teams, and maintaining security and safety for visitors.

Also discussed at the meeting were the ways for enhancing various municipal services including readiness of road signs on internal roads and roads...

MUSCAT

FIRST E-LOCKER PARCEL NETWORK

Asyad Group, represented by Oman Post and Asyad Express, and in partnership with several distributors of petroleum products and real estate developers, launched an e-locker parcel network across Oman. The MoUs reinforce Oman Post and Asyad Express' plan to expand customer accessibility to its wide range of e-commerce and postal services, by deploying multiple outlets and increasing the number of parcel service delivery points throughout the Sultanate of Oman.

DETAILS ON P5

INSIDE



LANDSLIDES, FLOODS KILL 10 IN INDIA

P6



PREPARING FOR CLIMATE OVERSHOOT

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Global pollution kills 9 million people a year, says study

PARIS: Pollution caused some 9 million people to die prematurely in 2019, according to a new global report published on Wednesday, with experts raising alarm over increasing deaths from breathing outside air and the “horrific” toll of lead poisoning.

Human-created waste in the air, water and soil rarely kills people immediately, but causes instead heart disease, cancer, respiratory problems, diarrhoea and other serious illnesses.

The Lancet Commission on pollution and health said the impact from pollution on global

health remains “much greater than that of war, terrorism, malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, drugs and alcohol”.

Pollution is an “existential threat to human health and planetary health, and jeopardises the sustainability of modern societies,” it added. In general, the review found, air pollution — accounting for a total of 6.7 million deaths globally in 2019 — was “entwined” with climate change because the main source of both problems is burning fossil fuels and biofuels.

“If we can't manage to grow in



a clean and green way, we're doing something terribly wrong,” said the report's lead author Richard Fuller, of the Global Alliance on Health and Pollution, adding that chemical pollution also harms biodiversity — another major global threat.

“These things are terribly connected and strategies to deal with one have ripple effects all the way through,” he said.

Overall, one in six premature deaths globally — or nine million — were caused by pollution, a figure unchanged since the last assessment in 2015.

Researchers noted a reduction in mortality linked to indoor air pollution, unsafe drinking water and inadequate sanitation, with major improvements seen in Africa.

But early deaths associated with industrialisation — outdoor air and chemical pollution — are on the rise, particularly in southern and eastern Asia. Ambient air pollution caused some 4.5 million deaths in 2019, according to the study, published in Lancet Planetary Health, compared with 4.2 million in 2015 and just 2.9 million in 2000. — AFP



IFJ to facilitate better ME-West ties: US scribe

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There is still more room left for bilateral cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and the West, according to an American journalist who is currently visiting the country.

During his visit to the Oman Journalists Association, Tim Constantine of The Washington Times interviewed Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak al Araimi and Salim al Jahwari. Constantine, who hosts the Capitol Hill Show, said the Sultanate of Oman defies the western perception of the Arab world, and he "is to take home fond memories about the country."

"This is my first visit to the Sultanate of Oman, and I feel there are many good things in the region that Americans are probably not aware of, and there is a lot of opportunity in tourism here. I want to take this message home," said Constantine, who has come to take part in the IFJ Congress scheduled to be held from May 31 to June 3.

He appreciated the country's developments over the past few decades. "The state of well-being is reflected on the people here."



"I look at things from different angles. People are very friendly and hospitable, whether it's a clerk or a senior official and people in between are quite nice. People being happy reflects on any society."

He opines that the most important focal point in his meetings with senior journalists was that there is a lot to work together, cooperate, coordinate and put things together, however much simple they might seem, regular communication is quite possible.

"I personally feel that The Washington Times has great potential to work with OJA. Bilateral collaboration is possible in terms of knowledge and expertise sharing."

According to him, as the Sultanate of Oman is to host the IFJ Congress from the end of

this month, there is an enormous opportunity for the Congress.

"The meeting and sessions of the people in communication, the media people, are of great importance, and as they go home, they take with them the message that it is a great country with great people and share a positive message with the rest of the world." Constantine is popular for using his unique background in politics and radio to provide communications strategy for issues, high profile individuals and select political candidates. He landed his first radio gig at age 13, working in Rock and Pop formats through college.

About the freedom of the press in the Sultanate of Oman, Constantine said he was learning more about it as he spent more time in the country.

Tim Constantine has already prepared a story on his days in the country, the first piece being 'My Vacation in Oman', which, according to him, can change the perceptions of Americans about the Middle East.

He was first elected to public office at the age of 27, beating a two-term incumbent Chairman of the GOP, and re-elected four years later with 70 per cent of the vote.

OMAN, BAHRAIN REVIEW HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT



The Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Bahrain discussed ways of improving heritage aspects at a meeting held on Wednesday between Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed al Khalifa, Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (ARC-WH) and Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism. — ONA

OCCI seeks to improve economic competitiveness of governorates

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Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) unveiled its plans for the second half of 2022, which will include trade visits to several countries and programmes to boost economic development in several governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Speaking at a press conference on Wednesday, Eng Ridha bin Juma al Saleh, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said that the chamber as the official representative of the private sector in Oman has contributed to supporting our national economy considering the renewed Renaissance led by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

He said that OCCI will be leading commercial delegations to a number of new destinations, including Kuwait, Saudi Arabia,



African countries, Bangladesh, the United States and Brazil.

The Chamber is preparing a study to raise the competitiveness of the Sultanate of Oman in the fields of investment and the establishment of projects in various economic sectors, in cooperation with one of the specialised consulting offices.

OCCI is trying to maximise the comparative advantages of each governorate when it comes to implementing various economic projects.

The Chamber also contributed to the establishment of closed joint-stock companies in Al Buraimi, Musandam, Al Dhahirah and South Al Sharqiyah to boost investment in these governorates and encourage Omanis, whether business owners or individuals, to invest in such companies.

"We look forward to establishing similar companies in the rest of the governorates in line with the directions of the future vision 2040," Al Saleh said.



تنبيه
NOTICE

With Reference to the Nama Holding tender EHC/2022/12 Group Legal Panel for Nama Group which was announced in local newspapers and Nama Group website in 11 May 2022, Nama Holding would like to bring to your attention the following amendments:

1. The tender fees OMR 1,000 plus VAT OMR 50=OMR 1,050/-(Non-Refundable).
2. Last date for collecting the tender documents is 24 - May- 2022.

For more information or clarification, do not feel hesitated to contact Nama Holding procurement department.

Nama Holding

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بالإشارة إلى المناقصة رقم [EHC/2022/12] المتعلقة بتقديم خدمات استشارة قانونية والمعلنة في الجرائد داخل السلطنة وفي الموقع الإلكتروني لمجموعة نماء بتاريخ ١١ مايو ٢٠٢٢، نود إفادتكم بأنه تم تحديث بعض الشروط كالتالي:

١. رسوم شراء مستندات المناقصة ١٠٠٠ ريال عماني بالإضافة إلى ٥٠ ريال عماني ضريبة. إجمالي الرسوم ١٠٥٠ ريال عماني فقط (غير قابلة للاسترجاع)

٢. آخر موعد لشراء مستندات المناقصة بتاريخ ٢٤ مايو ٢٠٢٢. للمزيد من المعلومات أو الاستفسار، يمكنكم التواصل مع قسم المشتريات للمجموعة.

نماء القابضة

بنية «بيتش وان» الطابق الثالث (٣٠٧-٣٠٥) شاطئ القرم
ص.ب. ٨٥٠ الرمز البريدي ١١٦ سلطنة عمان
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WHO cautions against MERS-CoV, calls for strong surveillance

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The World Health Organization (WHO) has cautioned against the sporadic case of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) and re-emphasised strong surveillance for acute respiratory infections and carefully review any unusual patterns.

The caution from the WHO came after the international health agency was notified in late April about a case of MERS-CoV in a 34-year-old male from Al Dhahirah Governorate in the Sultanate of Oman.

According to the WHO, "The case had a history of direct contact with animals including dromedaries, sheep and goats at his family farm. As of April 28, a total of six close community and 27 healthcare workers had been listed as contacts and were followed for 14 days from the date of last exposure with the case. No secondary cases have been reported to date."

The epidemiology of the disease suggests MERS is a viral respiratory infection caused by a coronavirus called Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV). Infection with MERS-CoV

can cause severe disease resulting in mortality.

The WHO report called for strict surveillance as mild cases of MERS-CoV may be missed by existing surveillance systems.

The report called for infection prevention and control (IPC) in healthcare settings. "Human-to-human transmission of MERS-CoV in healthcare settings has been associated with delays in recognising the early symptoms of MERS-CoV infection, slow triage of suspected cases and delays in implementing IPC measures. IPC measures are therefore critical to prevent the possible spread of MERS-CoV between people, particularly in healthcare facilities."

"There was no history of contact with similar cases, no history of travel nor previous hospitalisation. However, the patient has a history of direct contact with animals including dromedaries, sheep and goats at his family farm."

"Humans are infected with MERS-CoV from direct or indirect contact with dromedary camels, who are the natural host and zoonotic source of the MERS-CoV infection. MERS-CoV has demonstrated the ability to transmit between humans," the report says.



Over 100K visit museums in 2021

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The number of museum visitors in the Sultanate of Oman in 2021 reached 113,600. Among them, 49 per cent visited the National Museum, according to the latest data from the National Centre for Statistics and Information.

Oman is rich in museums distributed in different areas of the Governorate of Muscat and other governorates. They constitute an attractive factor for tourists, whether residents of Oman or tourists from abroad.

In terms of the age of the artefacts, most of them are more than 100 years old, and as per antiquities laws, they are registered in the world record and include various wonderful and important holdings reflecting the rich history of the country.

The National Museum is the most prominent museum established by Royal Decree No 2013/62. It is located opposite the Al Alam Palace in Muscat. The museum specialises in highlighting the cultural heritage of Oman as the appearance of the



human impact on the country's present.

The museum aims to achieve its educational, cultural and humanitarian mission by consolidating noble Omani values, activating belonging, and raising public awareness among citizens, residents and visitors, and by developing people's creative and intellectual abilities, especially in the areas of preserving evidence, collectibles, and highlighting the cultural dimensions of the country.

It also seeks to achieve its mission by employing and adopting the best practices and standards in the fields of museum sciences.

The museum displays are distributed in 14 halls with more than 7,000 distinctive, carefully selected pieces.

It has 33 digital interactive display systems. It is considered the first museum in Oman to include a learning centre equipped with the highest international standards. It is also

the first museum in the Middle East to employ the Braille system in the Arabic language.

MUSEUMS DAY

Represented by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, the country on Wednesday joined other countries of the world in celebrating the International Museums Day, which falls on May 18. The day is observed under the theme 'Power of Museums'.

The celebration, organised by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), seeks to raise awareness about the significance of museums as institutions that promote cultural exchange and develop mutual understanding and cooperation among nations.

On this occasion, the ministry launched a digital contest for youth focusing on innovation and the development and application of new technologies in everyday life. The contest tackles ways to enrich the experience of visitors to museums in Oman, with the prime aim of enabling the public to understand the role of museums.



SAF Chief receives US official

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Wednesday Brigadier Tina B Boyd, Director, Communication and Information Affairs, US Central Command.

The two sides reviewed areas of military cooperation between Oman and the US. They also exchanged views on several matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by

Brigadier Abdulaziz al Mantheri, Assistant SAF Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning, Brigadier Mohammed bin Saleh al Farsi, Chief of Cyber Defence, and the Military Attaché at the US Embassy in Muscat.

Brigadier Tina B Boyd also visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

The delegation was greeted at the MSC by Commodore Mohammed bin Hamoud al Zedjali, Head of the MSC.

— ONA



CTF-150 Commander received

MUSCAT: Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF), received in his office at Muaskar Al Murtafaa on Wednesday Commodore Waqar Muhammad, Commander of the Combined Task Force (CTF-150). The two sides exchanged views on several military matters of common interest.

The meeting was attended by Brigadier Abdulaziz bin Abdullah al Mantheri, Assistant SAF Chief of Staff for Operations and Planning, and the Military Attaché at the Pakistani Embassy in Muscat.

Rear Admiral Saif bin Nasser

al Rahbi, Commander of the Royal Navy of Oman (RNO), also received in his office Commodore Waqar Muhammad. The two sides reviewed several naval matters of mutual interest. The meeting was attended by Commodore Tariq bin Issa al Raisi, Senior RNO Staff officer, senior RNO officers and the Military Attaché at the Pakistani Embassy in Muscat.

Commodore Waqar Muhammad also visited the Maritime Security Centre (MSC).

The guest was greeted upon his arrival at the MSC by Commodore Mohammed bin Hamoud al Zedjali, Head of the MSC. — ONA

Dhofar braces for khareef season

FROM PAGE 1

leading to the Dhofar Governorate through the Wilayat of Thamrait and the coastal road through the Wilayat of Shaleem and Al Halaniyat, and the readiness of venues to host the events and activities inside and outside the Wilayat of Salalah.

In the field of health services, the meeting discussed the importance of extending working hours in some health centres to meet the increasing need for health services resulting from influx of visitors to the governorate and to enhance the medical staff in the emergency centres, as well as the availability of adequate medicines and ambulance services on the Adam-Thamrait road and the border posts.

The meeting discussed the readiness of housing and accommodation facilities in terms of availability, level of service and ability to accommodate visitors, availability of food supplies in the city of Salalah and the other wilayats, readiness of telecommunications and electricity companies, preparedness of the roads leading to tourist sites in the governorate and the readiness of rest houses along the Adam-Thamrait road.

The meeting discussed ways of increasing the number flights operated by Oman Air and SalamAir to transport tourists and visitors during the tourist season, in addition to following up on adherence to the precautionary measures issued by the Supreme Committee tasked with tackling the developments resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

The minister of state and governor of Dhofar called for coordination among the relevant authorities to ensure the provision of quality services to citizens and residents during the season. — ONA

OHRC discusses mechanisms to promote and protect human rights



MUSCAT: The role of national mechanisms in promoting and protecting human rights figured high in the agenda of Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC) and constitutes the topic of a symposium to be organised in June 2022.

Through the symposium,

OHRC will explore the best practices of activating national and international cooperation to promote human rights. This includes a review of success stories in the field.

This was unveiled during OHRC's first meeting of the 4th annual sitting (Fourth Term),

held under the auspices of Shaikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of OHRC.

The meeting discussed a workshop scheduled to be organised by the OHRC about three human rights agreements that Oman joined recently.

— ONA

Freedom of expression guaranteed by Basic Law

FROM PAGE 1

Dr Aisha pointed out that — besides legislations — freedom in different countries are associated with religious values and social norms, which in themselves are misinterpreted by some as forms of limitation of freedom of expression. Accordingly, writers using means of modern information have a duty to manage the huge flow of misleading data. They have to command necessary skills needed to cross-check such information.

Dr Aisha's statement comes in response to an unfair report issued by Reporters Without Borders organisation. She said that the report was based on wrong

information and inaccurate elements.

Dr Aisa underscored the significance of partnership between government and private establishments and civil society institutions and the importance of providing real and truthful facts.

On his turn, Jamal bin Salim al Nabhani, Director of the Legislation Department at the Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, said that the Basic Law of the State elevated the value of freedom of expression and made it a constitutional diction that does not distinguish between individuals - be they citizens or residents - in the Sultanate of Oman. It states that all individuals have a right to express opinion by all means.

Al Nabhani added that the Basic

Law of the State defined the parameters of freedom of expression, saying that "freedom of expression should not disrupt the public order or violate public ethics or infringe the supreme interests of the rights of others."

Al Nabhani laid emphasis on the Sultanate of Oman's interacting with international organisations and addressing human rights reports which, he said, require specialised experience to handle.

Al Nabhani stressed that practical reality affirms that human rights in Oman is much better than reported and that the country has positive things valued both by citizens and residents, but ignored at an international level. — ONA

OMAN ATTENDS EGYPT'S STATE COUNCIL ANNIVERSARY



A delegation from Administrative Judicial Court led by Shaikh Al Mukhtar bin Abdullah al Harthi took part in the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and the 75th anniversary of the founding of the State Council of Egypt (administrative judicial court of Egypt) held under the auspices of President Abdel Fattah el Sisi in the presence of councils, courts, chiefs of administrative courts from many countries.

Tender of treasury bills worth RO 27.9m issued

MUSCAT: A tender of government treasury bills, issue number 139, worth RO 27.9 million was issued this week.

Treasury bills are short-term highly secured financial instruments issued by the Ministry of Finance, and they provide licensed commercial banks the opportunity to invest their surplus funds. The Central Bank of Oman (CBO) acts as the Issue Manager and provides the added advantage of ready liquidity through discounting and repurchase facilities (Repo).

The results of the said issue are as follows: The total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO 27.9 million, for a maturity period of 28 days, from 18 May 2022 until 15 June 2022. The average accepted price reached 99.939 for every RO 100, and the minimum accepted price arrived at 99.930 per RO 100.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 0.79336 per cent and 0.79386 per cent, respectively.

It may be noted that the interest rate on the Repo operations with CBO is 1.50 per cent while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with CBO is 2.00 per cent.

— ONA



JOURNEY DURING A DUST
STORM CAN BE LONG AND
TIRESOME FOR THE PEOPLE
IN THE REGIONS IT PASSES
THROUGH. ACCORDING TO
HEALTH EXPERTS, DUST
STORMS CAN BE OF MAJOR
CONCERN FOR INDIVIDUALS
WHO SUFFER FROM ASTHMA
AND SEASONAL ALLERGIES

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Known as Ghubar in the local language, the dust storm has become a regular feature in the Sultanate of Oman. Ghubar triggers mainly with the northwesterly wind.

The journey during a dust storm can be long and tiresome for the people in the regions it passes through.

Winds that cause dust rising bring sand to the roads in some areas. People in Al Buraimi have complained of living with dust in the air for a while. Through the satellite images, the spread of dust could be seen in different parts of the Sultanate of Oman this week.

The Shamal wind (northwesterly winds) is a distinct feature of the weather system in the region, blowing across Iraq, Iran and the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, and in recent days, it has been at play churning out dust storms.

The Science Direct, in its article titled, ‘Dust Storms in the Middle East’, stated, “The seasonality of dust storms can be related to the generating meteorological processes. The main season of occurrence for most of the area is spring or summer. The dust haze experienced off the southeastern Arabian coast from June to August is related to a large scale dust flow that is thought to originate over the Horn of Africa and is part of the southwest monsoon circulation.”

While some debate if the frequency of this particular weather condition has gone higher, the elders in the community used to say rains usually follow the dust storm.

At the practical level, lifestyle can be impacted in many ways. One person who was to travel to Musandam said he had to postpone his trip because the authorities told him to come back tomorrow as the flight was cancelled due to the dust storm. The horizontal visibility is often affected, making motorists extremely cautious on the road.

The current dust storm was moving south to Yemen. On Wednesday, it was still having an impact on Khasab, Adam and Ibri, said the weather expert at Oman Met Office, The National Early Multi Hazard Warning Centre of Civil Aviation Authority.

“Khasab had recorded 1,500 metres in horizontal visibility. What

we mainly have in our atmosphere is haze. It all depends on the wind. Currently, the satellite images show the wind is pushing the dust towards the south of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Yemen,” she said.

This current journey of the dust storm began in Iraq, which resulted even in the cancellation of flights, then moved on to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Qatar and, of course, the Sultanate of Oman.

“The dust particles are stuck in the upper level of the atmosphere,” she explained. “But it should clear out by Wednesday evening,” she added.

It has not been easy for many countries; there have been many incidents of respiration issues and hospitalisation in other countries. According to health experts, dust storms can be of major concern for individuals who suffer from asthma and seasonal allergies. Wearing a mask is extremely important during dust storms and is considered one of the safety measures. What is also important is complete cleaning off the dust after the storm has passed through.

In most cases, the direct impact of the dust rising winds is desert and open areas, which is why Adam and Ibri tend to be on the receiving end.

As the dust clears out, mainly clear skies are expected over most of the governorates in Oman with the existence of dust aerosols and chances of late night to early morning low-level clouds or fog patches over parts of South Al Sharqiyah and Al Wusta governorates.

Along with the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea, the wind will be southerly to southwesterly, moderate to fresh and along the coastal areas of the Oman sea, winds will be northeasterly light to moderate during the day, becoming variable light at night while over the rest of the governorates it will be northwesterly light to moderate.

The sea state is expected to be moderate along the coastal areas of the Arabian Sea and the western coast of Musandam Governorate with a maximum wave height of 2.0 metres and slight along the rest of the coasts with a maximum wave height of 1.0 metres.

Weather experts continue to alert the public to the fact horizontal visibility may reduce due to two factors — dust aerosols and fog formation.

STORMED BY THE DUST



Forum debates steps to improve nursing leadership skills, services

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 18

The three-day 'Nursing Future' forum, which concluded on Tuesday, stressed the need to improve the basic skills of nursing leaderships with a view to providing safe and quality care. The forum was organised by the Ministry of Health (MoH), represented by the Directorate General of Nursing Affairs.

The opening ceremony was held on Sunday under the auspices of Dr Ahmed bin Mohammed al Saeedi, Minister of Health, in the presence of Dr Mohammed bin Saif al

Hosni, MoH Under-Secretary of Health Affairs, Dr Fatma bint Mohammed al Ajmiah, MoH Under-Secretary for Administrative, Financial and Planning Affairs, along with directors general and nursing section heads from various governorates.

The forum aimed to improve the basic skills of nursing leaderships to be able to innovate in nursing care for providing safe and quality care. It also aimed to promote the essential nursing care among the nursing groups, as well as the importance of scientific research and strategies in improving the nursing

care practices and beneficiary satisfaction.

The forum included scientific sessions that highlighted the nursing future, strengthening the capacity of nursing groups in research and studies and expanding their roles in providing basic nursing services.

In all, 24 health institutions from various governorates across the country participated in the forum.

During the event, 11 nursing directors from different governorates, 13 hospitals and 6 retirees from nursing leaderships were honoured by the Minister of Health.

CAA TAKES PART IN ACAO MEETING



The Civil Aviation Authority took part in the 65th session of the Executive Council of the Arab Civil Aviation Organization (ACAO) held in the Moroccan capital, Rabat, on Tuesday and Wednesday. Naif bin Hamad al Abri, President of the Civil Aviation Authority, participated in the session. The session discussed several topics, the most important of which were air transport, air navigation, air safety, aviation security and environment.

Arab scholars attend philosophical conference

STAFF REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 18

The first edition of the Bait Al Zubair Philosophical Forum, being held from Monday to Thursday, is participated by several Arab intellectuals, philosophers and researchers.

The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of His Highness Sayyid Dr Fahd bin Al Julanda al Said, Vice-Chancellor of Sultan Qaboos University. The forum was aimed at creating an interactive and communicative atmosphere between researchers and specialists from various philosophical institutions and bodies.

The forum included an exhibition of philosophical and intellectual books, with the participation of several Omani libraries.

The Omani Art Exhibition, which was another attraction, displayed abstract works of 14 Omani artists: Mohammed Nizam, Hassan Mir, Maryam al Zadjali, Rabha Mahmoud, Abdulkarim al Maimani, Naelah al Maamari, Saleh al Alawi, Radhika Hamlai, Inaam Ahmed, Nadia al Balushi, Zahra al Jamali, Aliah al Farsi, Yasser al Dinki and Mohammed al Zubair. The opening of the forum was preceded by a philosophy workshop for children entitled 'Big Ideas for Young Ages' presented by Dalia Tounsi from Saudi Arabia, who is the Director-General of the Baseera Al Afkar Foundation for Educational Consultations.

The first day of the forum included the inauguration of the Philosophy Project for children.

First e-locker parcel network launched



MUSCAT: Asyad Group, represented by Oman Post and Asyad Express, and in partnership with several distributors of petroleum products and real estate developers, launched an e-locker parcel network across Oman.

The strategic Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) that underpin this partnership were signed with Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman), Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) and Al Maha Petroleum Products Marketing Company (Al Maha), as well as the real estate developer Al Mouj Muscat.

The MoUs reinforce Oman Post and Asyad Express' plan to expand customer accessibility to its wide range of e-commerce and postal services, by deploying multiple outlets and increasing the number of parcel service delivery points throughout the Sultanate of Oman. The arrangements also translate the signatories' aligned visions towards leveraging emerging technologies to transform their operations, generate new efficiencies and optimise customers' experience and convenience.

At the forefront of this cooperation is the introduction of the Oman Post and Asyad Express e-locker Parcel Machine network across Oman. This will

be the first e-locker network of its kind, which offers customers ultimate flexibility on where and when to receive their parcels and documents. These e-lockers will be placed in selected OOMCO, Shell and Al Maha service stations, as well as in Al Mouj Muscat to allow customers to pick up their items easily and securely at a time convenient to them. The e-lockers will be deployed in several pilot projects before being installed in other key sites across Oman.

Nasser ql Sharji, CEO of Oman Post and Asyad Express, said, "We always look to provide our customers with increased flexibility and access to all our logistics and postal services, utilising the latest technologies to make customer experience as seamless as possible. Our investment in the new e-lockers is a prime example of this. Our customers will have 24/7 access to pick up and drop off their parcels and documents at multiple locations across Oman. The e-locker concept also supports environmental sustainability."

Oman Post and Asyad Express plan to sign additional strategic partnerships and explore further cooperation opportunities with the private sector, all in line with Asyad Group's comprehensive private sector partnership strategy. — ONA

Curtains on forum activities of Nizwa Club's Al Somoud team

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, MAY 18

The activities held in connection with the 7th Ramadhan Forum of Al Sumoud team of the Nizwa Club have concluded at the Creativity Centre for Culture and Innovation in Nizwa.

The forum had continued throughout the holy month with many events that varied from

religious to cultural, artistic and social aspects. It also included a series of lectures, competitions, workshops, and sporting events.

The valedictory function was held under the auspices of Eng Hamad bin Said al Rabkhi, head of the Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The ceremony began with verses from the Holy Quran recited by

Mohammad bin Hamad al Kindi.

Abdullah bin Suleiman al Shukaili, a member of the Al Somoud team organising committee, delivered the keynote address. "The team has been organising Ramadhan forums for several years. The 7th edition of the forum has facilitated interaction among the participants with cultural, religious, sports, scientific, intellectual and health

programmes. This year's forum included 18 activities ranging from religious to cultural lectures, presented after Friday prayers. The cultural competition and the exploration of talents included the Creative Voices competition and elocution contest," he said.

There were sporting events, including table tennis, night mountain walks, and volleyball. A chess competition was also

organised. There were workshops on film direction, artificial intelligence, and the Internet of Things. A blood donation campaign in cooperation with the blood bank at Nizwa Hospital was also organised, he added.

"Through this forum, we were keen to achieve several goals, including instilling social, cultural, religious values and sportsman spirit in children

and youth, encouraging them to nurture positive habits and behaviour.

Ahmed bin Masoud al Rashidi presented a visual presentation of the activities and events organised by the forum.

Eng Hamad bin Said al Rabkhi honoured the forum's sponsors, the leaders of workshops and the winners of competitions among others.





China calls for urgent boost to virus-hit economy

BEIJING: The Chinese Premier called for greater “urgency” in rolling out measures to support the country’s virus-battered economy, state media reported on Wednesday, days after data highlighted the stark impact of Covid-19 restrictions.

China — the last major global economy sticking to a rigid zero-Covid policy — is contending with an economic slump due to prolonged virus lockdowns that have constricted supply chains, quelled demand and stalled manufacturing.

“All localities and departments should step up their sense of urgency, and new measures that can be used should be used,” Li Keqiang said at a symposium on Wednesday, according to state broadcaster CCTV.

He added that efforts to support the economy should bring it “back to normal quickly” after admitting that economic indicators have “weakened significantly” since March, with a particular dip in April. On Monday, the country said retail sales and factory output had slumped to the lowest figures since the start of the pandemic while unemployment edged back toward its February 2020 peak.



Workers wearing protective gear stack up boxes over a cart to deliver in a neighbourhood during a coronavirus lockdown in Shanghai. — AFP

Beijing has targeted full-year growth of around 5.5 per cent. Li also called for support for tech companies to list domestically and abroad, a day after Communist Party leaders doubled down on

support for the tech sector in a rare meeting with executives. China’s economic woes appear to have motivated a softer approach toward the vast, money-spinning tech sector, after

an 18-month crackdown driven by fears its massive internet companies control too much data and expanded too quickly. Vice Premier Liu He and other Communist leaders addressed

executives, including Robin Li of Baidu — universally used for its search engine and mapping service — and Zhou Hongyi of internet security firm Qihoo 360, state media reported late

Chinese Premier says efforts to support the economy should bring it ‘back to normal quickly’ as economic indicators have ‘weakened significantly’

on Tuesday. Liu offered support for “the sustainable and healthy development of the platform economy and the private economy,” CCTV said. During the tech crackdown, overseas IPOs from Alibaba’s Ant Group and Didi Chuxing — China’s Uber — were spiked, while millions of dollars of fines over anti-trust and data breaches were ladled out to tech giants.

Chinese tech shares surged late April after officials pledged support for internet firms at a Politburo meeting.

Tech giants including Alibaba, Tencent and Baidu were marginally lower on Wednesday morning, with e-commerce behemoth JD slumping over 4 per cent after it recorded a 3 billion yuan (\$444 million) loss in first-quarter earnings. — AFP

Sri Lanka honours Tamil war-dead

COLOMBO: Thousands of Tamils killed in Sri Lanka’s decades-long separatist war were commemorated on Wednesday for the first time outside the minority’s heartland in the north and east of the country.

Clergy from Buddhist, Hindu and Christian communities offered prayers in Colombo and lit a clay lamp for those who perished between 1972 and May 2009 when the fighting ended.

The ceremony coincided with the 13th anniversary of the ending of hostilities. “This is highly symbolic and very important for Tamils,” Tamil legislator Dharmalingam Sithadthan, an MP from the northern Tamil heartland of Jaffna said.

“In previous years, there were private memorials held in secret, but this public event is highly welcome.”

Any remembrance of Tamil war victims had been banned under Sri Lanka’s powerful Rajapaksa family which is currently under siege over the country’s dire economic crisis.

The head of the separatist Tamil Tiger movement, Velupillai Prabhakaran, was shot dead by security forces on May 18,

2009, bringing a formal end to the bloody ethnic war. Current President Rajapaksa led the government’s military campaign against the Tigers as the head of the defence ministry under his president brother Mahinda.

Mahinda stepped down as prime minister last week after weeks of protests over severe shortages of food, fuel and medicines. The government defaulted on its \$51 billion foreign debt last month as it ran out of dollars to finance even the most essential imports.

Volunteers offered porridge to passers-by as a symbol of the humble food that tens of thousands of Tamils were left with during the final stages of the war. “The porridge was the life-saving food for Tamil people in the last stages of the war,” a Hindu priest said at the ceremony.

“They struggled in the midst of shelling and bombing and underwent untold suffering,” Government forces imposed an economic embargo, ordered civilians into what they called “no-fire zones” and allegedly bombarded them killing an estimated 40,000 Tamils.

— AFP

Landslides kill at least 10 in India

GUWAHATI: At least 10 people including a four-year-old child have died in floods and landslides this week after unusually heavy rains pummelled several parts of India, as forecasters warned on Wednesday of more deluges.

Experts say extreme weather around the world is being driven by climate change, made worse in South Asia by damming, deforestation and over-the-top development projects.

The Indian Meteorological

Department has warned of extreme weather conditions, with a heatwave in northern parts of the country recently triggering water shortages and power cuts.

The departments simultaneously warned of heavy rainfall in several

other areas, including Assam and other northeastern states, and Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala in the south.

A seasonally unusual deluge ahead of the annual monsoon in the northeastern state of Assam has left at least eight people dead and displaced more than 400,000 as of Wednesday. Four of the victims were killed when their house was buried in a remote village in Dima Hasao district, where landslides undermined railway lines in several areas, making it difficult for authorities to send relief material.

One train was pushed off the tracks by muddy debris from surrounding hills.

The Indian Army, which has been brought in for rescue operations, said in a statement that it had rescued around 300 villagers as of Wednesday.

In Karnataka in southern India, at least two people were found dead late on Tuesday, according to media reports.

The labourers had entered a pipeline construction site in Bengaluru when it started to rain but could not escape as the water level increased, the *Indian Express* newspaper reported.

— AFP



People wade through the flood waters in Nagaon district of India's Assam state. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

UNITED NATIONS

UN envoy calls for extension of Yemen truce

The United Nations envoy to Yemen called for extending a long-sought truce between the government and Ansar Allah fighters which is set to expire in two weeks.

The renewable two-month truce that went into effect in early April has made a “considerable positive impact on the daily lives of many Yemenis,” Hans Grundberg said at the end of a closed UN Security Council meeting. “Over the past six weeks, civilian casualties have dropped con-



siderably, fighting has sharply reduced with no aerial attacks from Yemen across its borders and no confirmed airstrikes inside Yemen,” Grundberg said. — AFP

SEOUL

North Korea reports thousands of fever cases

North Korea reported that 232,000 cases of people suffering from fever had been registered the day before, as a wave of Covid-19 rips through the country.

Citing the country’s epidemic prevention centre, the national media also reported six further fever-related deaths, taking the total to 62.

According to experts, the country does not have sufficient testing capacities to ascertain whether people are suffering



from Covid-19 and therefore reports fevers instead. According to the report, Tuesday’s numbers take the country’s total fever infections to more than 1.7 million. — dpa

DJERBA

Pilgrims back in Tunisia after Covid absence

Hundreds of Jewish worshippers flocked to Africa’s oldest synagogue in Tunisia, reviving an annual pilgrimage after a two-year hiatus due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Pilgrims passed through airport-style scanners and passed a heavy, armed police guard to enter the whitewashed Ghriba synagogue on the southern Tunisian resort island of Djerba. Inside, they lit candles, prayed and handed each other sweets and nuts. Many took photos and filmed relatives



and friends inside the intricately decorated synagogue. Others sat praying or reading scripture on their own, before leaving with their friends and family. — AFP



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In brief

■ MADRID



SPAIN, PORTUGAL DETECT SUSPECTED MONKEYPOX CASES

Spain and Portugal have detected around 30 suspected cases of monkeypox, officials said after British authorities found several cases of the viral infection which is rare in Europe. Health officials have noted some of the UK infections may be through body contact which would be a new development in understanding transmission of the virus. The WHO said it was coordinating with UK to investigate the outbreak. In Portugal, 20 suspected cases of monkeypox -- endemic in parts of Central and Western Africa -- have been detected in the Lisbon region, the health ministry said in a statement. — AFP

■ ROME



ITALY SLAMS RUSSIA'S ENVOY EXPULSION

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi condemned as a "hostile act" Russia's decision to expel a wave of European envoys, including Italians, but said diplomatic channels must remain open. "This is clearly a hostile act, it's also a reaction to our expulsions," he told a press conference with Finland's premier, as news of the expulsions emerged. He added: "The most important thing is that it must not in any way lead to a reduction of diplomatic channels because it's through those channels that, if possible, peace (in Ukraine) will be achieved. And that is certainly what we want." — AFP

■ DUSHANBE



NINE DEAD, 24 WOUNDED IN TAJIKISTAN CLASHES

Clashes between Tajik security forces and 'terrorists' killed nine people and wounded two dozen in a restive region bordering Afghanistan and China, the interior ministry said. The ministry said members of "organised criminal groups" armed with weapons and Molotov cocktails attacked security officials in the eastern region of Gorno-Badakhshan which has long been a flashpoint of tensions. One security officer was killed and 13 were seriously injured in the attack, it said. The attack came during an "anti-terror operation" launched earlier. — AFP

Finland, Sweden apply to join Nato

BRUSSELS: Finland and Sweden on Wednesday submitted a joint application to join Nato as Russia's war of Ukraine forces a dramatic reappraisal of security in Europe.

The reversal of the Nordic countries' longstanding policy of non-alignment came as Ukraine opened the first war crimes trial of a Russian soldier since the war began.

Vadim Shishimarin, 21, from Irkutsk in Siberia, pleaded guilty to killing an unarmed 62-year-old man in Ukraine's Sumy region on February 28 -- four days into the assault.

"By this first trial, we are sending a clear signal that every perpetrator, every person who ordered or assisted in the commission of crimes in Ukraine shall not avoid responsibility," prosecutor general Iryna Venediktova said.

Russia's government has no information on Shishimarin, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said, adding that many such cases reported by Ukraine are "simply fake or staged".

Peskov further accused Kyiv of a "complete lack of will" towards peace talks, after Ukrainian negotiator Mykhaylo Podolyak said stop-start dialogue was "on hold", having failed to yield any breakthroughs. At Nato headquarters in Brussels, alliance chief Jens Stoltenberg formally received the applications from the Finnish and Swedish ambassadors, calling them "an historic step".

"All allies agree on the importance of Nato enlargement. We all agree that we must stand together and we all agree that this



Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg with documents during a ceremony to mark Sweden's and Finland's application for membership in Brussels. — AFP

is an historic moment which we must seize," he said.

The membership push could represent the most significant expansion of Nato in decades, doubling its border with Russia, and President Vladimir Putin has warned it may trigger a response from Moscow.

But the applications face resistance from Nato member Turkey, which accuses the Nordic neighbours of harbouring anti-Turkish extremists.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan demanded "respect" from Nato over his government's concerns.

Western allies remain optimistic they can overcome

Turkey's objections and for now, several including Britain have offered security guarantees to Finland and Sweden to guard against any Russian aggression.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the Nordic applications would not have been expected a short time ago, "but Putin's appalling ambitions have transformed the geopolitical contours of our continent".

On the ground, in Ukraine's ruined port city of Mariupol, a unit of soldiers had been holding out in the Azovstal steelworks, but Moscow said on Wednesday that 959 of the troops had surrendered this week.

Kyiv's defence ministry said it

would do "everything necessary" to rescue the undisclosed number of personnel still in the plant's tunnels, but admitted there was no military option available.

"The evacuation mission continues, it is overseen by our military and intelligence," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his nightly address.

"The most influential international mediators are involved."

Those who have left Azovstal were taken into Russian captivity, including 80 who were heavily wounded, the Russian defence ministry said.

— AFP

EU presents €9 bn loan for Ukraine

BRUSSELS: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen (pictured), on Wednesday proposed to provide Ukraine with another €9 billion (\$9.5 billion) in loans until the end of this year. "We will continue to be by their side throughout this war and when they will rebuild their country," von der Leyen said in a speech in Brussels. Since Russia attacked Ukraine, the European Union has issued €4.1 billion in funding to support the country's economy and society as well as provide humanitarian assistance, according to the commission. Additionally, member states have approved around €2 billion for the financing of weapons and military equipment to Ukraine.

The 27 EU member states and the European Parliament have to agree to the proposed loan intended to cover, among



other things, public expenses. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ukraine has said it requires around \$5 billion a month, over the next two to three months, to continue running the government and important state institutions.

— dpa

Climate change indicators hit record highs in 2021: UN

GENEVA: Four key climate change indicators all set new record highs in 2021, the United Nations said on Wednesday, warning that the global energy system was driving humanity towards catastrophe. Greenhouse gas concentrations, sea level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification all set new records last year, the UN's World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said in its "State of the Global Climate in 2021" report.

The annual overview is "a dismal litany of humanity's failure to tackle climate disruption", UN chief Antonio Guterres said.

"The global energy system is broken and bringing us ever closer to climate catastrophe."

The WMO said human activity was causing planetary-scale changes on land, in the ocean and in the atmosphere, with harmful and long-lasting ramifications for ecosystems.

WMO chief Petteri Taalas said the war in Ukraine had been overshadowing climate change, which "is still the biggest challenge we are having as mankind".

The report confirmed the past seven years were the top seven hottest years on record. Back-to-back La Nina events at the start and end of 2021 had a cooling effect on global temperatures last year. Even so, it was still one of the warmest years ever recorded, with the average global temperature in 2021 about 1.11 degrees Celsius



**Ukraine war has been
overshadowing climate
change, which 'is still
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we are having as
mankind'**

PETTERI TAALAS
*World Meteorological
Organization chief*

above the pre-industrial level. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change saw countries agree to cap global warming at "well below" 2C above average levels measured between 1850 and 1900 — and 1.5C if possible.

"All major climate indicators are quite frankly heading in the wrong direction and without

much greater ambition and urgency, we are about to lose the narrow window of opportunity to keep the 1.5-degree goal alive," Guterres' climate action adviser Selwin Hart told a press conference. Taalas said the climate was changing "before our eyes". "The heat trapped by human-induced greenhouse gases will warm the planet for many generations to come."

Sea level rise, ocean heat and acidification will continue for hundreds of years unless means to remove carbon from the atmosphere are invented," he said.

Four key indicators of climate change "build a consistent picture of a warming world that touches all parts of the Earth system", the report said.

Greenhouse gas concentrations reached a new global high in 2020, when the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO2) reached 413.2 parts per million globally, or 149 per cent of the pre-industrial level. — AFP

Greece to drop mask restrictions from June 1

ATHENS: Greece will drop most mask restrictions from June 1 to mid-September, a period coinciding with the height of its vital tourism season, the health minister said on Wednesday.

Thanos Plevris said masks will no longer be mandatory in most areas including on planes and intercity travel, though they will remain in force in hospitals, elderly care homes and city transport.

While the failure to wear a mask will no longer carry a fine, their use is still recommended, the minister said.

Education facilities and ferries will be subject to a later announcement, he said.

Plevris said last month that Greece was trying to "coexist" with Covid-19.

The government early this year began removing restrictions to boost tourism, which accounts for around a quarter of national income.

Mandatory screening tests for travellers who hold a European vaccination certificate were scrapped in February, before the tourism season launched in March.

Vaccine passes in restaurants, bars and shops have also been dropped.

Over 29,000 people in Greece have died from causes attributed to the virus, with over 3.4 million cases recorded so far.

Another 19 deaths were announced on Wednesday. Meanwhile, a former mayor



Pedestrians walk in the street wearing protective face mask in the centre of Thessaloniki, northern Greece. — AFP

of Bucharest was arrested on a European warrant in Athens late on Tuesday on corruption charges, Greek police said in a statement.

According to media reports, the detainee was Sorin Oprescu, the mayor of Bucharest between 2008 and 2015.

The person arrested "is a 71-year-old Romanian, former mayor of Bucharest, and he is accused of corruption, money laundering and forming a criminal group", a police statement said here yesterday.

The case will be brought before the public prosecutor, police said.

Oprescu's lawyer in Romania also had previously insisted his client had never wrongly asked for money from anybody "directly or indirectly".

— AFP

Art of diplomacy on hosting global meet of journalists



Dr Saadon bin Hussein al Hamdani
The writer is ex-diplomatic head of student affairs department, OCMT

The Sultanate of Oman hosting the 31st Congress of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) from May 31-June 3 is an achievement not only for Oman but also for the Arab World.

Over 350 journalists representing federations, associations, unions and press organisations from 156 countries will attend the meeting. The gathering is similar to that of the UN General Assembly meetings in September each year.

His Highness Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs, Personal Representative of His Majesty the Sultan, will patronise the opening ceremony on May 31 at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre (OCEC). The IFJ meeting assumes great significance as it is a recognition of Oman's high

position in the global arena.

Few may ask about the relationship between the art of diplomacy and international media gathering.

All international conferences reflect the level of protocols and etiquette by the organising country. Guests may have negative image if there is a protocol failure and etiquette of receiving guests or taking precedence over seating, as well as priority in entering the conference and meeting room or giving priority to the most important, or losing order and precedence in hotels and transportation and attending conferences, and discussions.

This also includes media cell, press coverage, art of managing speech, tact of choosing the word at the right time, good listening, principle of criticism and self-

THE IFJ MEETING ASSUMES GREAT SIGNIFICANCE AS IT IS A RECOGNITION OF OMAN'S HIGH POSITION IN THE GLOBAL ARENA

criticism, precedence of speaking on the podium and others.

These aspects and behaviour will be monitored and evaluated at this global event, starting from arrival of guests until their departure. Those involved in the organisation must be highly professional and experienced and delegate the tasks and duties and have in place both original and alternative plans avoiding any default.

The Oman Journalists Association (OJA) headed by Dr

Mohammed al Araiimi and the supporting staff and myself have made strenuous efforts to create an ideal atmosphere for the guests.

The members of the association were divided into groups responsible for implementing the protocol and standard etiquette. The groups were divided into teams such as the visa, travel tickets, exhibition centre, transportation, airport (reception and farewell), hotel, social media, follow-up, food, escorts, secretarial and translators for English, French and Spanish languages.

Besides the Association, the government ministries and private agencies expressed their willingness to provide all support to OJA to ensure the success of the conference.

The OJA began by holding practical and scientific workshops

to introduce diplomatic concepts related to the art of receiving VIPs, body language, communication skill, attending food banquets, handshakes, focusing on types and colours of clothing, providing 7-star service for guests instead of five stars, respecting punctuality and timing.

The etiquette of attending side meetings, round-table meetings, exchanging personal cards and gifts, using phone while attending guests, art of speaking and word choice, etiquette of walking and sitting was also practised.

Dr Araiimi and the members also submitted detailed reports about readiness to host this international conference. The approval was granted after a series of marathon meetings between the IFJ headquarters and the Muscat office.

Conservatives tipped to lose in Australian nail-biter poll

ANDREW BEATTY

Australians punch drunk after three crisis-ridden years of fire, flood and plague will go to the polls on Saturday, in a tight race narrowly tipped to end a decade of conservative rule.

Opinion polls have consistently shown centre-left Labor ahead, suggesting a government led by veteran party lawmaker Anthony Albanese that would be more climate-friendly and less antagonistic toward China.

But pugilistic Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who leads a conservative coalition, appears to be rapidly closing the gap as election day approaches.

The often-acrimonious campaign has been marked by fears about soaring prices, divisions over Morrison's leadership and anxiousness about tougher days to come.

The last three years have seen Australia's once-envied way of life upended by back-to-back bushfires, droughts, the Covid-19 pandemic and several "once-in-a-century" floods.

Australians — usually some of the world's most optimistic voters — have grown markedly more dissatisfied with their lives, more pessimistic about their future and more turned off by traditional political parties, according to polling by Ipsos.

For many Aussies, their unofficial mantra of gung-ho optimism — "she'll be right" — suddenly seems a bit wrong. "It has been a very difficult period for the country," said Mark Kenny, a professor at the Australian National University.

"There's a fair bit of dissatisfaction with this government, and the prime minister's standing has been called into question quite a lot."

Surveys show the malaise is pronounced among women and younger voters, who face the prospect of being poorer than their parents while inheriting a country at the pointy end of climate change and located in an increasingly tough neighbourhood.

Just over 17 million Australians are registered to go to the polls on Saturday, electing 151 representatives to the lower house and just over half the members of the Senate. Fifty-four-year-old Morrison is hoping for a repeat of his 2019 "miracle" come-from-behind election victory. But he will have to overcome the collective trauma of the last three years.

Within months of his shock victory, the "Black Summer" bushfires would cut through the east of the country, burning an area the size of Finland and choking Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne in a miasma of acrid smoke for weeks on end. — AFP

We keep falling for the same big talk



Thomas L Friedman
The writer is an American political commentator and author

It has long been said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. By that definition, we're the ones detached from reality if we keep accepting what the oil industry and the green movement keep telling us over and over again and expecting a different result.

The greens keep saying that because the price of wind and solar is now as cheap as, or cheaper than, fossil fuels, they've won the energy war.

Game, set, match — welcome to the green planet.

The oil companies say — as they have in each previous energy crisis since 1973 — that the only answer to this energy crisis is the one they've offered for the past 49 years: drill, baby, drill. Welcome to reality.

Well, they're both wrong, and accepting the repetition of either of these tired shibboleths is hurting us economically, environmentally and geopolitically — especially, of late, geopolitically.

Because our continued addiction to fossil fuels is bolstering Vladimir Putin's petro-dictatorship and creating a situation where we in the West are — yes, say it with me now — 'funding both sides of the war'. We fund our military aid to Ukraine with our tax dollars and some of America's allies fund Putin's military with purchases of his oil and gas exports. And if that's not

THE GREENS ARE TRYING TO FIX A REAL, PLANET-THREATENING PROBLEM, EVEN IF THEIR AMBITION EXCEEDS THEIR GRASP

the definition of insanity, then I don't know what is.

Have no illusion — these sins of the green movement and the oil industry are not equal. The greens are trying to fix a real, planet-threatening problem, even if their ambition exceeds their grasp. The oil and coal companies know that what they are doing is incompatible with a stable, healthy environment.

Yes, they are right that without them there would be no global economy today.

But unless they use their immense engineering talents to become energy companies, not just fossil fuel companies, there will be no livable economy tomorrow.

Let's look at both. For too long, too many in the green movement have treated the necessary and urgent

shift we need to make from fossil fuels to renewable energy as though it were like flipping a switch — just get off oil, get off gasoline, get off coal and get off nuclear — and do it now, without having put in place the kind of transition mechanisms, clean energy sources and market incentives required to make such a massive shift in our energy system.

It's Germany in 2011, suddenly deciding after the Fukushima accident to phase out its 17 relatively clean and reliable nuclear reactors, which provided some 25 per cent of the country's electricity.

This, even though Germany had nowhere near enough solar, wind, geothermal or hydro to replace that nuclear power. So now it's burning more coal and gas.

A 2019 working paper for the US National Bureau of Economic Research found that in Germany "the lost nuclear electricity production due to the phaseout was replaced primarily by coal-fired production and net electricity imports.

The social cost of this shift from nuclear to coal is approximately \$12 billion per year. "

"More than 70 per cent of this cost comes from the increased mortality risk associated with exposure to the local air pollution emitted when burning fossil fuels."

— The New York Times



Morocco ‘breathing again’ as tourists are back

KAOUTHAR OUDRHIRI

Moroccan snake-charmer Youssef watched as long-absent tourists again thronged Marrakesh’s famous Jamaa El-Fna square, ending a long pause forced by the Covid pandemic. “We’re breathing again,” he said.

The ancient southern city, famous for its views of graceful red buildings set against palm trees and snow-capped mountains, has long drawn visitors including celebrities from Madonna to Yves Saint Laurent.

But it was particularly hard hit by a two-year collapse in tourism that saw arrivals to the North African kingdom plummet to just a third last year from 2019.

For Youssef, taking a break from playing his oboe-like “ghaita” pipe before the seemingly mesmerised serpent, “it’s such a pleasure to be back here after these slow, painful months”.

Tourism — which accounts for some seven per cent of Morocco’s economy and creates hundreds of thousands of formal and informal jobs — was battered by Morocco’s tight restrictions during the pandemic.

Today, Marrakesh residents see signs of hope again as tourists have returned to the Unesco-listed old city’s narrow alleys. Cafe terraces are full and

foreigners browse shops and market stalls for traditional clothing, furniture and souvenirs.

“We’re not back to pre-pandemic levels but the situation has been improving over the past month,” said salesman Abdellah Bouazri, after serving an Argentinian customer in a Boca Juniors football top.

Bouazri, 35, said the coronavirus had forced him to temporarily abandon his shop and find alternative work as a security guard.

The father of two was one of many in the beleaguered industry forced to find an alternative income — including many informal workers without

contracts or social security.

But he said he was optimistic about the future: “It has been hard, but today I’m delighted to be going back to my real job.”

Morocco this week reopened land borders with the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, two years after they were shut due to Covid and a major diplomatic row.

That was the latest step in a slow recovery for the tourism sector, backed by the government which has launched a two billion dirham (190 million euro) support fund, on top of 95 million euros it released to prop up hotels.

“The recovery might be under way, but it’s incomplete,” said the FNIH national hotels federation’s chief Lahcen Zemat. According to the tourism ministry, Morocco last year earned some 3.2 billion euros in tourism revenue — less than half the figure for the year before the pandemic.

But revenue in the first quarter was up by 80 per cent on last year, according to official figures, and the finance ministry predicts a “more favourable outlook for 2022”.

That was reflected in the steady flow of tourists outside the Medersa Ben Youssef, a 16th-century Koranic school in Marrakesh.

“This place is magical — I’m impressed by all the detail,” said Nick, a 29-year-old Londoner visiting for the first time. “Since Covid I’ve been missing exploring new cultures.”

Nearby, other visitors queued up to the Yves Saint Laurent museum, one of the city’s top tourist spots.

“The museum was a must,” said Coco, a Chinese student living in Germany.

“We consider ourselves very lucky to be able to travel again, and we’re really charmed.” — AFP



A LONG WAIT

Motorists queue along a street to buy fuel at Ceylon petroleum corporation fuel station in Colombo on Wednesday. Sri Lanka is in the throes of its worst-ever economic crisis with its 22 million people enduring severe hardships to secure food, fuel and medicines while facing record inflation and lengthy power blackouts. — AFP

Preparing for climate overshoot



Pascal Lamy

The writer is President of the Paris Peace Forum, is a former director-general of the World Trade Organisation and EU trade commissioner

The latest report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change revealed what many had feared but were reluctant to admit: the continued failure to reduce greenhouse-gas emissions means that global warming will likely exceed 1.5° Celsius, relative to pre-industrial levels.

UN Secretary-General António Guterres has warned that this key goal of the 2015 Paris climate agreement is now on “life support.” Even if emissions “peak before 2025 at the latest,” notes the IPCC, and are “reduced by 43 per cent by 2030” (including a one-third reduction in methane), “it is almost inevitable that we will temporarily exceed this temperature threshold but could return to below it by the end of the century.”

If avoiding a breach of 1.5°C is still technically possible, we should of course not give up. But the window of opportunity is closing faster than we thought, and deepening geopolitical divisions – intensified by the pandemic, Russia’s war against Ukraine, and looming food, energy and debt crises – do not augur well for the kind of cooperation that we need.

By surpassing 1.5°C, but then taking measures to bring temperatures back below that threshold by the end of the century, we will be in what the IPCC calls an “overshoot” scenario. Although climate models have long accounted for this possibility, not much is known about how to reduce the risks – both environmental and political – that it would create.

Average global temperatures have already risen 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels, with significant environmental

HUMANITY’S CONTINUING FAILURE TO REDUCE GREENHOUSE-GAS EMISSIONS HAS SUBSTANTIALLY INCREASED THE LIKELIHOOD OF GLOBAL WARMING EXCEEDING 1.5°C WITHIN THE COMING DECADES

effects. Every additional tenth of a degree contributes further to the severity and frequency of extreme weather events and increases the risks to health, food, water, livelihoods, and biodiversity. By the time we reach 2°C, many human and natural systems will be under extreme stress; some ecosystems will struggle to survive, and others already will be gone.

Worse, overshoot increases the risk of what the IPCC describes as “cascading and irreversible climate impacts.” And the political consequences would be no less significant. For many, 1.5°C has become a line in the sand – a signifier of humanity’s ability and will to reduce climate risks. While breaching it could lead to a more forceful response to climate change, it also could invite despondency and fatalism. That is why we must start planning for it now.

To that end, I will be chairing a new Global Commission on Governing Risks from Climate Overshoot. Consisting of 16 eminent leaders with diverse backgrounds, we will consider how best to manage the physical and political

risks of a world beyond 1.5°C. Most of the commission is from the Global South, including several former heads of government, ministers, and senior officials. We will present an integrated strategy to tackle the possibility of climate overshoot ahead of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference.

As an independent commission, we will conduct this important work without the political and organisational constraints that so often hamper such discussions. We are ready to consider all the options, including ideas that are sometimes considered too controversial to broach in other fora.

For example, while reducing greenhouse-gas emissions is and should remain our primary goal, we must recognise that this is no longer enough. Additional approaches are now in order. For example, we will explore the potential of removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere on a large scale. This is unavoidable if we want to achieve net-zero emissions, let alone the net-negative emissions that are needed to start restoring our planet. But while there are many ways – both nature-based and technological – to remove CO2, none is ready at scale, and many elements of this strategy remain contested.

We also will explore avenues for improving and expanding adaptation efforts on the scale needed to address the growing effects of climate change, though the limits of what is feasible here remain unclear. Finally, we will examine the research on “sunlight reflection methods,” an intervention designed to reflect a small portion of incoming solar radiation back into space. This option appears to be viable, but it would pose global risks, implying significant governance challenges.

Our aim is to bring all these options together into one document for the first time, to weigh the risks of action against the risks posed by a rapidly warming world, and to recommend an integrated strategy based on independent scientific advice and stakeholder consultations. Our overshoot strategy will need to be effective, robust, and ethical, grounded in the best available evidence, and consistent with justice, equity, and respect for international law. As long as these principles apply, we will keep an open mind. At this 11th hour, we cannot afford to take any options off the table – at least not until we have investigated them fully.

It is tragic that we must confront the consequences of insufficient action and undertake this endeavour. But we have an overriding responsibility to be prepared if we fail to meet the Paris agreement’s targets. That means considering all potential responses that could minimise the damage and suffering to people and the planet.

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A stork flies over the Orangerie Park in Strasbourg, eastern France on Tuesday as temperatures in France this week could exceed seasonal norms by 10 degrees Celsius. — AFP

sport

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Oman bag two shooting gold in GCC Games



MEDALS TALLY					
Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1.	Bahrain	13	12	6	31
2.	Kuwait	11	12	11	34
3.	Oman	7	4	7	18
4.	Qatar	6	7	5	18
5.	Saudi Arabia	5	5	11	21
6.	UAE	3	4	5	12



ANUROOP
ATHIPARAMBATH
MUSCAT, MAY 18

Oman bagged two gold in shooting on the third day of GCC Games in Kuwait on Wednesday. In the Men's 10m Air Rifle final at the Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Shooting Complex, Omani shooter Salim al Naabi beat UAE's Ibrahim Ali by 17-11 in the gold medal match.

Oman's Olympic shooter Issam al Balushi came third with 254.5 points in the final elimination round to take the bronze medal. Salim (256.3) and Ibrahim (256.7) were neck-and-neck in the final elimination. The Sultanate of Oman earned its second gold at the shooting range one and half hours later in the Men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol. Muad al Balushi came on top to clinch gold with a score of 23

points ahead of Bahrain shooters Abdulmajid Abdulkhaliq (14) and Abdulla Rahma (5) who claimed the silver and bronze medals respectively. In the medals tally, Oman are third with seven gold, four silver and seven bronze. Bahrain are on top with 13 gold, while Kuwait are second with 11 gold. On Tuesday, Issam had won gold in the Men's 50m Rifle 3

Positions after he prevailed over Saudi Arabia's Abdulaziz al Anazi by 16-6 in the gold medal match. In Men's 10m Air Pistol, Oman's Suleiman al Rahbi took the bronze after coming third in the Final Elimination. Atallah al Anazi of Saudi Arabia edged UAE's Ahmed al Ameer 16-14 in the gold medal match. In the men's triple jump at the Ahmed Al Rashdan field, Oman's Salim al Rawahi clocked 15.85

metres to take silver while team-mate Salim al Yarabi bagged bronze with a distance of 15.53. Saudi Arabia's Hassan Dawshi won the gold after clearing a distance of 16 metres. In the men's 4x100m relay, Oman claimed the silver with a timing of 39.72 seconds. Saudi Arabia won the gold in 39.06 seconds and Bahrain took bronze with 39.73 seconds. The Oman 4x100m relay team

included Ali al Balushi, Barakat al Harthy, Ammar al Saifi and Mohammed al Saadi. In swimming, Oman clinched their first medal in the men's 200m freestyle when Olympic swimmer Issa al Adawi (1:54.79) finished third on Tuesday. UAE's Yousuf al Matrooshi (1:52.95) won the gold and Kuwait's Saud al Shamroukh (1:53.65) took the silver at the Sheikh Nasser Al Mohammed Aquarium Complex.

Oman futsal team makes strong start in Kuwait

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, MAY 18

Oman futsal team began their campaign at the GCC Games in style with a 2-1 win over UAE team in the opening game on Wednesday at Shaikh Saad Al Abdullah Multi Sports Complex B Stadium. Coach Younis al Fahdi started the match strongly as they were seeking for the opening goal to dominate the fixture. Mohammed al Lawati gave Oman the lead in the sixth minute as he netted the opening goal. The first half ended with Oman leading 1-0.

The opponents UAE bounced back immediately in the second half with Hammad Ahmed scoring the equaliser in the 31st minute. Zamil al Balushi then put Oman ahead in the 39th minute. This goal was enough for Oman to end the first fixture on winning note. Oman will take on Bahrain in their next match on Friday. In the other games, Saudi Arabia registered their first victory in the tournament after they beat Bahrain 3-1 on Monday. Hosts Kuwait defeated UAE team 3-0 in the second match of the opening day fixtures. The GCC Games will act as a vital preparation stage for the



Zamil al Balushi netted the winner for Oman against the UAE in the 39th minute. This goal was enough for Oman to end the first fixture on winning note

team's forthcoming assignment at AFC Futsal Asian Cup Kuwait 2022. Oman futsal team had booked their spot in the AFC Futsal Asian Cup Kuwait 2022 which will be held in September

this year after defeating UAE 5-3 in the West Asia play-off in April. Five teams from West Asia have qualified to the 2022 AFC Futsal Asian Cup Kuwait including Lebanon, Saudi Arabia from Group A, while Iraq and Bahrain made the finals from Group B and Oman entered through play-off. OMAN SQUAD: Hisham al Wahaibi, Abdulaziz al Raqadi, Mohammed al Lawati, Muhanad al Shibli, Khalfan al Maawali, Mansoor al Hadi, Zamil al Balushi, Essa al Balushi, Loai al Wahaibi, Motaism al Shamsi, Samer al Balushi, Salim al Mukhaini, Mohammed al Raisi and Waleed al Farsi.



England appoint Mott as men's white-ball coach

LONDON: England on Wednesday named the "outstanding" Matthew Mott as head coach of their men's white-ball team following his successful stint in charge of the Australian women's team.

Mott, 48, won Twenty20 world cups in 2018 and 2020 and the 50-over equivalent earlier this year during his seven-year stint with the Australian national side. He also guided the team to a record 26 successive ODI wins and victory over England in the recent Ashes series.

England's new managing director Rob Key said the Australian's mentality dovetailed with that of World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan. "It was always going to take something special to leave the role that I have loved for the past seven years with the Australian women's team," Mott said. "The idea of the split roles and the chance to work alongside Brendon McCullum in his red-ball role is an opportunity that I am incredibly enthusiastic about." — AFP

Mushfiquur ton guides Bangladesh to lead

CHITTAGONG, Bangladesh: Mushfiquur Rahim struck his eighth Test century and became the first Bangladeshi to pass 5,000 runs as the hosts took the upper hand in the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chittagong on Wednesday.

Bangladesh were all out for 465 runs with a first-innings lead of 68 when the last man Shoriful Islam was unable to carry on his innings after a blow to the hand while batting.

Sri Lanka then lost two wickets to reach 39-2 in 17.1 overs in their second innings before stumps were drawn on the fourth day, reducing their deficit to 29.

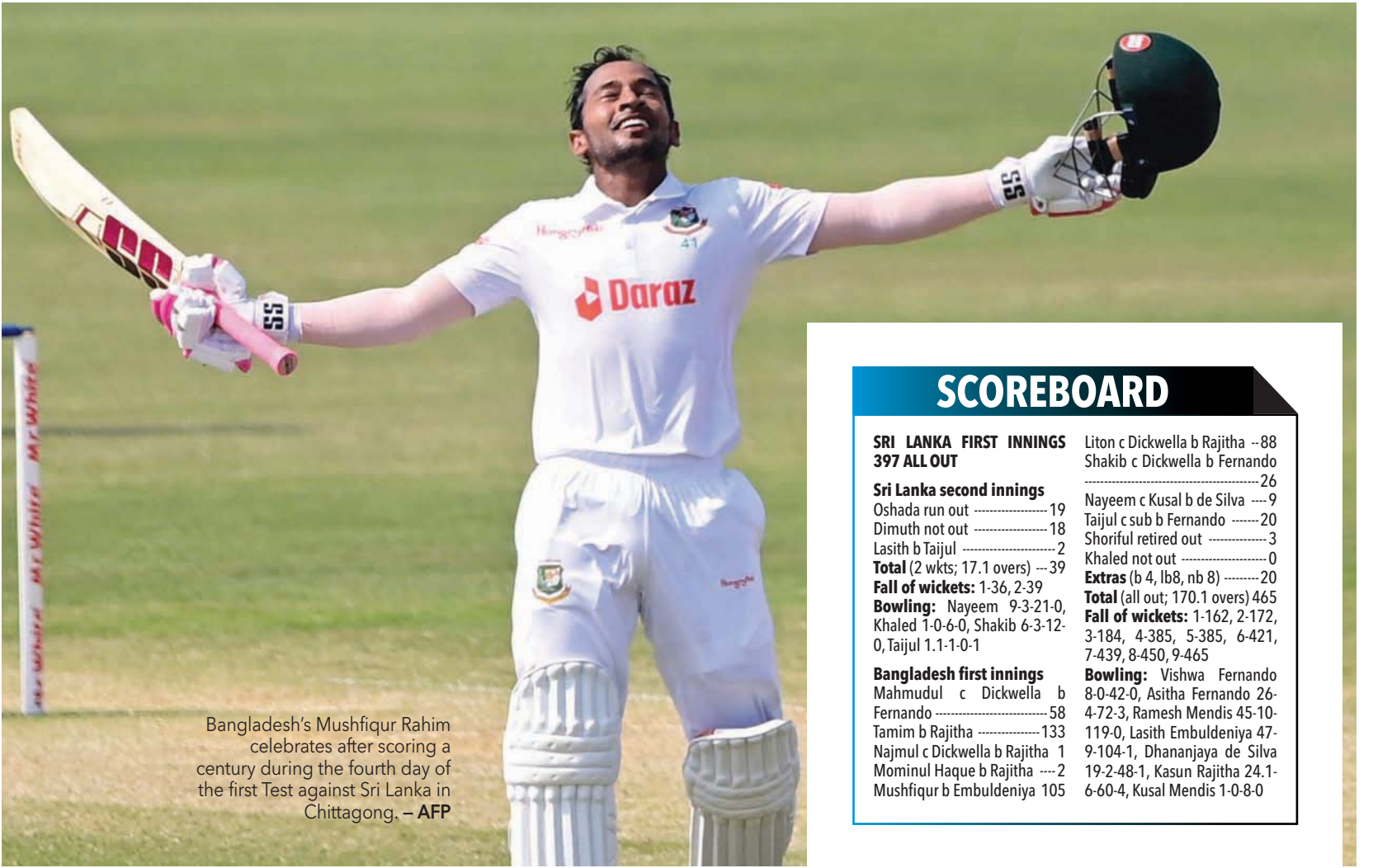
Oshada Fernando was run out for 19 with a direct throw by Taijul Islam from midwicket.

The left-arm spinner later bowled nightwatchman Lasith Embuldeniya for two and stumps were taken immediately after with Dimuth Karunaratne 18 not out at the other end.

Embuldeniya was earlier given out caught at silly point off Taijul on the same score but he survived on review.

Mushfiquur earlier made the most significant contribution in Bangladesh's innings on the day when he made 105 off 282 balls before Embuldeniya bowled him in the third over of the final session.

Pace bowler Kasun Rajitha led the Sri Lankan bowling attack with 4-60, playing the match as a concussion substitute for Vishwa Fernando.



Bangladesh's Mushfiquur Rahim celebrates after scoring a century during the fourth day of the first Test against Sri Lanka in Chittagong. — AFP

Rajitha dismissed Liton Das and Tamim Iqbal in the first two balls after lunch before Asitha Fernando removed Shakib Al Hasan for 26 to halt Bangladesh's progress.

The hosts were hoping for some quick runs before a possible declaration after Liton and Mushfiquur survived the opening session of the day to share 165 runs for the third wicket.

But Liton fell for 88 right after the break chasing a Rajitha ball

wide outside the off-stump only to edge to wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella.

Tamim, who retired after scoring 133 runs on the third day, returned after Liton's dismissal but survived just one ball.

Rajitha swung the ball sharply in to uproot the middle stump as Tamim ended his fine, 218-ball innings that featured 15 boundaries.

Shakib gave a catch at forward short leg on seven off Ramesh

Mendis which fell just short of the fielder.

He hit three quick boundaries to show some intent and just when he started looking dangerous, Fernando struck.

The right-arm pace bowler beat Shakib with a short ball which took a top-edge and became Dickwella's fourth catch in the innings.

Mushfiquur glanced Fernando for his fourth boundary to bring up his hundred, having passed

5,000 Test runs earlier in the morning session.

The 35-year old right-hander reached the milestone when he nudged Fernando towards fine-leg for two runs, to cheers from a sparse crowd at the Zahur Ahmed Chowdhury Stadium.

His dismissal was followed by Taijul's 20 off 45 balls.

Fernando, who returned figures of 3-72, removed Taijul before Sri Lanka wrapped up the Bangladesh innings. — AFP

SCOREBOARD	
SRI LANKA FIRST INNINGS 397 ALL OUT	Liton c Dickwella b Rajitha --88 Shakib c Dickwella b Fernando --26
Sri Lanka second innings	Nayeem c Kusal b de Silva ---9
Oshada run out -----19	Taijul c sub b Fernando -----20
Dimuth not out -----18	Shoriful retired out -----3
Lasith b Taijul -----2	Khaled not out -----0
Total (2 wks; 17.1 overs) ---39	Extras (b 4, lb8, nb 8) -----20
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-39	Total (all out; 170.1 overs) 465
Bowling: Nayeem 9-3-21-0, Khaled 1-0-6-0, Shakib 6-3-12-0, Taijul 1.1-1-0-1	Fall of wickets: 1-162, 2-172, 3-184, 4-385, 5-385, 6-421, 7-439, 8-450, 9-465
Bangladesh first innings	Bowling: Vishwa Fernando 8-0-42-0, Asitha Fernando 26-4-72-3, Ramesh Mendis 45-10-119-0, Lasith Embuldeniya 47-9-104-1, Dhananjaya de Silva 19-2-48-1, Kasun Rajitha 24.1-6-60-4, Kusal Mendis 1-0-8-0
Mahmudul c Dickwella b Fernando -----58	
Tamim b Rajitha -----133	
Najmul c Dickwella b Rajitha 1	
Mominul Haque b Rajitha ----2	
Mushfiquur b Embuldeniya 105	

Hyderabad end five-match losing streak

MUMBAI: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Kane Williamson said the team will take "a lot of learning" from their three-run win over Mumbai Indians on Tuesday as they ended a five-match losing streak to stay alive in the IPL.

Rahul Tripathi smashed a 44-ball 76 to guide Hyderabad to 193 for six after being put into bat first at Mumbai's Wankhede Stadium.

Speedster Umran Malik, who kept the speed gun busy and clocked the fastest of the match at 154.8 km/h (95.6 mph), then returned figures of 3-23 to restrict Mumbai to 190-7 despite a 18-ball 46 from Tim David.

The 2016 champions Hyderabad stay eighth in the 10-team table with a slim chance of making the final four.

"Nice to break the streak. But also nice to win the wrestle," Williamson said after the narrow win.

"Had a few games where momentum wasn't on our side and we couldn't wrestle it back. All in all a very good performance and a lot of learning to come out of it."

Rohit Sharma's Mumbai, the richest and most successful side in Indian Premier League history with five titles but the first to bow out of the play-off race this season, stay bottom of the table with 10 losses.

Tripathi put on big partnerships including a 76-run third-wicket stand with West Indies left-hander Nicholas Pooran, a wicketkeeper-batsman, who made a 22-ball 38.

Indian medium-pace bowler Ramandeep Singh attempted to check the Hyderabad surge with twin strikes in one over including Tripathi and South Africa's Aiden



Markram for two. Mumbai bowlers did pull things back and pace bowler Jasprit Bumrah gave away just seven runs in the 20th over and kept Hyderabad to below 200, a score that looked on the cards when Tripathi was batting.

Malik's learning curve Bumrah, called India's yorker king, bowled Washington Sundar on the final delivery to reach a milestone 250 T20 wickets.

In reply, Rohit, who made 48, and Ishan Kishan put on 95 for the opening wicket to raise Mumbai's hopes of a chase.

Sundar denied Rohit a fifty and Malik, a standout performer for

Hyderabad this season with 21 wickets, soon took over to rattle the opposition batting.

Malik, who hails from the Jammu region of Indian-administered Kashmir, started with a 17-run first over but came back strong with the wickets of Kishan (43), Tilak Verma (8) and Daniel Sams (15).

"Umran is on a steep learning curve," Hyderabad coach Tom Moody said of the 22-year-old speed demon.

"When it comes to international cricket then that's the path you need to take in time, whether that time is in months or years, only

time will tell"

David, an attacking middle-order batsman from Singapore, then smashed T Natarajan for four sixes in a 26-run 18th over to give Hyderabad a scare.

But David was run out and with Mumbai needing 19 off the final 12 balls, Bhuvneshwar Kumar bowled a maiden 19th over and took a wicket to help Hyderabad prevail in the thriller. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES: Sunrisers Hyderabad 193-6 (Rahul Tripathi 76, Priyam Garg 42; Ramandeep Singh 3-20) beat Mumbai Indians 190-7 (Rohit Sharma 48, Tim David 46; Umran Malik 3-23) by 3 runs.

Qatar Airways supports Sabco Sports' 'Kooora Wabas' project

MUSCAT: Qatar Airways were on Wednesday confirmed as the title sponsors for Sabco Sports' new 'Kooora Wabas' Project. It includes a series of football-related community activations that will take place across the major cities in Oman throughout 2022.

The project was officially launched on May 18, with the first event taking place in June and the full calendar for the year will be released on the Kooora Wabas (KWB) social media platforms.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Akbar al Baker, said: "The Kooora Wabas Project will act as a large-scale tool that will use the influence of the beautiful game to inspire the Omani youth and unite people of all backgrounds. The Sultanate of Oman is a stunning country with a rich culture and a destination always popular with our passengers. It is an honour for us to play a role in strengthening the core values we share."

Baker also added, "this is an initiative that we at Qatar Airways can identify with, making this partnership a natural fit. Over the year, we trust that the programme will offer the local community a variety of options such as



football camps, team building clinics and educational support to engage with this great sport. We look forward to promoting football and all its benefits across Oman."

Sayyid Khalid al Busaidy, Chairman at Sabco Sports, is pleased to be working with the team at Qatar Airways. "We have worked with Qatar Airways for a number of years now, their team are experts in the delivery of football projects, so we believe that they are the perfect partner for the Kooora Wabas project. In this World Cup year, the project has been designed to help more Omanis be involved in the sport and to use the benefits of football to improve people's health and well-being."

The KWB Project that takes place throughout 2022 will involve a wide range of football-related activations, including tournaments, e-sports, education and live events.

Sabco Sports are also the official non-exclusive sales agent of the Official Hospitality Packages for the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

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SAVE | 55.133%
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Fabric Softener
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New drive to put accent on fair competition, monopoly prevention

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAY 18

An awareness campaign will shortly get underway in the Sultanate of Oman signalling the Omani government’s intention to combat anti-competitive and monopolistic market practices.

The campaign, spearheaded by the Centre for Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention (CPMP) at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion, is also designed to assure consumers that their legitimate rights and interests, particularly with regard to consumer prices, will be safeguarded.

The drive will be underpinned by a hashtag campaign focusing on the message: ‘Protecting Competition for a Competitive Economy’.

Zahrán bin Salem al Mahrouqi, Director General of the Centre for Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention, said the awareness and education campaign seeks to familiarise people and the business environment with the work of the Centre and its prerogatives.

It will also introduce the salient features of the Law on



Protection of Competition and Prevention of Monopoly, and explain its importance in contributing to economic growth and enhancing economic competitiveness.

“The media campaign aims to raise awareness of the role of the Centre for Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention, introduce the services it provides, introduce the provisions of the Competition Protection and Anti-Monopoly Law and its executive regulations, as well as spread the philosophy behind protecting competition and preventing monopolies,” he said.

The campaign aims introduce the provisions of the Competition Protection and Anti-Monopoly Law and its executive regulations, as well as spread the philosophy behind protecting competition and preventing monopolies

ZAHRAN AL MAHROUQI
Director General, CPMP

Details about the initiative were shared by CPMP officials during a press briefing on the Sultanate of Oman’s hosting of the 3rd Arab Competition Forum next week.

His Highness Sayyid Dr Adham bin Turki al Said, Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Centre for Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention, said competition protection requires a regional approach given especially the explosion of e-commerce. In this regard, he stressed the importance of strengthening legislations to advance fair competition in the

marketplace.

Hamed al Busaidy, CEO of the Oman Centre for Governance and Sustainability, noted: “International organisations say that the issue of competition, its protection and the prevention of monopoly has not taken its rightful place in Arab countries and is weak in terms of legislation and procedures. The holding of the third conference in the Sultanate of Oman indicates the extent of the government’s keen interest on this front. This forum will benefit us from the experiences of participating countries and international organisations.

Oman Fisheries strikes deal with Irish firm



BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, MAY 18

Oman Fisheries Company (OFC), a subsidiary of Fisheries Development Oman (FDO), has signed a commercial fishing agreement with Irish firm Atlantic Dawn for the utilisation of its fishing vessels.

In a filing to the Capital Market Authority (CMA), publicly traded Oman Fisheries said the agreement will enable the Irish firm to utilise the fishing quotas granted by the Omani Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources.

The move will help Oman Fisheries “secure sustainable supplies, in addition to enhancing export operations”, said Sulaiman al Ghannami, CEO.

Under the deal, Atlantic Dawn will bring a small pelagic fishing vessel targeting 30,000 metric tonnes of small pelagics that, if achieved, will result in boosting Oman Fisheries’ financial performance and margins. The ship will be deployed in Omani waters by the next fishing season in 2022, the CEO added.

FDO, which groups Oman Fisheries, is wholly owned by Oman Investment Authority (OIA) – the integrated sovereign wealth fund of the Sultanate of Oman.

In March, Gulf Japan Food Fund (GJFF), an international private equity fund focused on the food and beverage industry, acquired 31.4 per cent of Oman Fisheries’ capital for a consideration of \$10 million.

GJFF said it would provide support and assistance to help Oman Fisheries achieve its long-term growth objectives.

(Image for illustration only)

Muscat to host 3rd Arab Competition Forum

Best practices: Key regional forum, backed by League of Arab States, to facilitate coordination in strengthen fair competition at the national and regional levels

QASIM AL MAASHANI
MUSCAT, MAY 19

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Centre for Competition Protection and Monopoly Prevention at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion (MoCIIP), will host on Tuesday, May 24, 2022, the 3rd Arab Competition Forum in cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

The two-day forum will take place at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre under the auspices of Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ).



Also in attendance will be the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States.

Taking part in the deliberations will be a number of experts and specialists from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the League of Arab States, the International Trade Centre, and various competition authorities from around the globe.

Their participation will contribute to improving economic growth and governance in the Arab region in line with the sustainable development goals,

strengthening cooperation and coordination between competition authorities in ESCWA member states, and guiding competition policy-making and enforcement in the Arab region, guided by international best practices.

The 3rd Arab Region Competition Forum serves as an annual platform to share knowledge about competition policy and its enforcement for Arab stakeholders. The forum will build on the momentum of the first and second forums.

During the two-day event, competition authorities, government officials, experts and academics will discuss ways

forward in competition policy. Competition authorities from the Member States will also benefit from the best practices offered by their counterparts from different countries.

A distinguished set of speakers will present on international best practices in the field of competition protection, anti-competition laws and policies in the Arab region, strategies and recommendations, and joint action plans to confront cross-border monopolistic practices.

Participants will also explore concerted efforts to promote competition policies within the framework of joint Arab economic

THE 3RD ARAB REGION COMPETITION FORUM SERVES AS AN ANNUAL PLATFORM TO SHARE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT COMPETITION POLICY AND ITS ENFORCEMENT FOR ARAB STAKEHOLDERS.

cooperation and integration.

Back in 2020, ESCWA, in partnership with the UNCTAD and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) launched the 1st Arab Region Competition Forum, with the aim of creating an annual platform for knowledge exchange on competition policy and its enforcement for Arab stakeholders, and to enhance knowledge and engage parties from Arab countries as well as building capacity on best practices in competition across the region, the Forum provides a common platform for dialogue and to facilitate coordination and cooperation on competition at the national and regional levels.

Nama Group joins 8th Global HSE Conference

MUSCAT: As part of the interest and keenness of the Group to empower the developmental factors in the HSE field in the Sultanate of Oman, and in order to achieve the objectives of Oman Vision 2040, Nama Group has participated, starting from Monday, in the 8th Global Health, Safety and Environment Conference and Exhibition, entitled: “Excellence in Health, Safety and Environment: Leadership, Sustainability and Technology”, for a period of four (4) days.

The event was held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre, under the supervision of Ministry of Energy and Minerals and by the initiative of Petroleum Development Oman, along with the participation of a number of indigenous and international establishments and those who are interested in practicing health and safety.

The pertinent conference was auspices by Eng Said bin Hamoud



bin Said al Maawali, the Minister of Transport, Communications and Information Technology , in the presence of Eng Omar al Wahaibi, CEO of Nama Group, in addition to the participation of other officials from the Sector's companies.

The Group's participation in this event comes as a commitment to achieving the objectives of the conference. The event aimed at

creating a sustainable platform in health, safety and environment to discuss various potential challenges that this sector and the local community may face, as it proposes solutions to protect the workers and the environment.

The conference also focuses on three Key pillars which are: Leadership and Commitment, Use of Technology and Sustainability Objectives that organisations

exercise in competitive markets while maintaining their ability to satisfy the legal requirements and expectations of the local communities.

The aims of the conference are in line with the objectives of the social pillar of the sustainability policy of Nama Group, which ensure that all customers have access to reliable, safe and sustainable electricity and water services across the country as well as mitigating the lost time injuries that may occur to its employees and contractors.

The Group participated with three work papers, as it discussed the first paper on the operational excellence presented by Eng Bader al Maawali from Oman Water and Wastewater Services Company.

As for the second paper, it touched on the main projects of HSE, presented by Fahad bin Nasser al Kiyumi, Acting Director of Health, Safety and Environment Department at Oman Electricity Transmission Company.

As regard to the third paper, it was presented by Mohammad bin Salem al Ghunaimi, Senior Manager of Asset Management at Mazoon Electricity Company, which highlighted the asset management and its compatibility with security and safety requirements.

Nama Group also hosted a session of discussion, under the participation of the higher education sector, to talk about the opportunities available for health, safety and security engineers in the public sectors.

It is worth mentioning that the Group has many contributions to the HSE field, most notably through NAQLA programme, which contributed to the training and qualification of Omani electrical technicians and supported them to obtain electrical connections licence.

Further, the programme helped the participants to incept and manage SMEs as well as encouraging and promoting the

local products and Omanisation. Under the slogan of 'Baiti Amin' which means 'My House is Safe', Nama Group's stall in the exhibition included a series of videos and posts on electricity safety at home.

This conference is construed as an ideal and perfect platform for the HSE professionals from all over the world to share their knowledge and cognizance through the conference theme of Leadership, Sustainability and Technology as the main components of the exhibition.

It is worth mentioning that Nama Group constantly seeks to support, sponsor and organise a number of events and programmes, concerned with developing the field of health, safety and environment in the Sultanate of Oman, through communication and cooperation with various development establishments locally and globally.

Ooredoo bags bronze Stevie Award for Excellence in Innovation



MUSCAT: Ooredoo was recognised for Excellence in Innovation at the 2022 International Business Awards, also known as the Stevies.

Taking the bronze award, the category recognises outstanding innovation achievements, and was given for their CSR initiative of building sensory rooms at social welfare centres across the country, the Ooredoo mobile app, and the introduction of the company's nationwide 4G and 5G fixed wireless routers, to complement its rich fixed wireless portfolio.

The Stevie Awards are widely considered to be the world's premier business awards and last year alone received more than 3,800 nominations from 65 nations.

Ooredoo has been recognised with a number of Stevie Awards in past years, including Corporate Social Responsibility Programme of the Year in 2021 and 2020. With people at the heart of what it does,

Ooredoo continues to stay ahead of the curve by introducing new ways to hone and improve communications, offer a fun and engaging digital-first customer experience, and create socio-economic value within the communities it serves.

Lulu customer wins Dodge Charger in Pringles promotion

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket Oman revealed that its customer was the lucky winner of a promotion organised by Pringles and Khimji Ramdas' Kellogg's division. The promotion, which was held from January 20 to March 31, 2022, gave customers a chance to win a brand new Dodge Charger on purchase of any Pringles can from stores across Oman.

It was Lulu customer Bader bin Salim bin Said al Shamakhi who was the lucky winner through a raffle draw held on April 15, 2022. To participate in the raffle draw, customers had to just buy a can of Pringles, scan the QR code and enter the details along with the receipt.

Shabeer K A, Regional Director — Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, said, "I congratulate the Pringles promotion winner Mr. Bader, who won the Dodge Charger. We are extremely happy that shopping at Lulu proved lucky for our customer to win this amazing prize. We participate in many promotions from several top brands for all seasons and occasions, in addition to our own promotions which are exceptional and is



ultimately focused on customer happiness and satisfaction when shopping with us. We appreciate the co-operation and long term association with Khimji Ramdas' Kellogg's division.

Representative of KR Kellogg's Division, stated "We thank Lulu for their continuous support and making this event a great success. We are happy to acknowledge the huge response received from customers all over Oman. We are sure this promotion was a special one for all Pringles lovers across Oman. Buying a can of Pringles

was all it took for customers to be a part of this promotion. Pringles has become the most popular snack among children and people of all ages these days. They are best known for their amazing aroma and taste," he added.

Lulu has always been committed to offer not only the highest quality products from around the world at competitive prices but also an exceptional shopping experience like none other and continues to be the favourite shopping destination for customers all over the country.

50 per cent discount on Talabat App for ahlibank credit card holders

MUSCAT: In an endeavour to continuously enhance the value-added products and services it offers to its esteemed clientele, ahlibank's ongoing collaboration with Talabat, the region's leading food delivery and q-commerce app, will enable ahlibank customers to avail even more exciting offers for purchases made through the App, starting on Thursday, May 19, 2022, to continue for a week.

The six-month long collaboration will offer credit card holders of ahlibank a discount of 50 per cent on orders made through the App. Scheduled to run the third week of each month from January, 2022 to June, 2022.

The promotion will be open for all customers making purchases using their credit cards. This initiative will enable the Bank to meet specific requirements of its customers, as part of its strategic approach to widen their access to a host of products and services that it offers.

Commenting on this new partnership, Muneer al Balushi,



AGM — Head of Retail Distribution, said, "We are always keen to communicate with our customers and take into account their feedback and suggestions.

We are constantly studying market trends, which has been reflected in a number of initiatives and offers that we have launched over the past period. This new offer, which targets the category of ahlibank's credit cardholders, approves our belief in the importance of keeping up with customers' needs and lifestyle, as the world is currently witnessing a marked shift towards digital services that ensure security, low cost and speed of delivery."

Experience pure luxury with the Lincoln Navigator

MUSCAT: Experience fine full-size luxury with the Lincoln Navigator SUV. Made to envelope passengers in thoughtfully defined interior and features, the Navigator offers some of the finest experiences one can enjoy.

The powerful Navigator is equipped with a twin-turbo V6 engine producing 450 horsepower delivered through a 10-speed transmission.

Navigator's lighter, high-strength aluminium-alloy body helps create a more refined ride. The Navigator is equipped with a clean and uncluttered interior layout, with a simple, soothing ambience.

At night, interior ambient lights sequentially illuminate each of the SUV's three rows. During the day, a panoramic roof fills the cabin with natural light. Inside, spaciousness comes in all three rows, including storage in each to keep the cabin clean and organised.

An available rear-seat entertainment system allows passengers to stream content wirelessly with an Android device to one of the 10-inch adjustable screens mounted on the rear of the front seats. The Navigator is designed to be intuitive and easy to use. A 12-inch configurable instrument cluster allows drivers to choose the



information they want displayed.

An available Head-Up Display can show selected information on the windshield instead of the instrument cluster.

This helps drivers keep their eyes on the road and hands on the wheel. It does not fade in the sunlight and is visible even with polarised lenses.

Occupants can enjoy available Revel Ultima audio with 20 speakers that work in concert with Navigator's interior design and acoustics. Standard SYNC 3 enables clients to manage audio, phone, navigation and more from the vehicle touch screen or steering wheel-mounted controls.

Second-row passengers have their own audio and climate control, while third-row seats feature power recline capability. While on the move, the Navigator is also easy to adjust to changing conditions. With the turn of a dial, the driver can adapt the Navigator to changing road or weather, and enjoy a smooth, confident ride.



Britain's annual inflation jumps to 40-year peak

LONDON: Britain's annual inflation rate surged to a 40-year high last month on rocketing energy costs, official data showed on Wednesday, sparking opposition calls for the government to announce an emergency budget to combat a cost-of-living crisis.

Consumer prices index inflation hit 9.0 per cent in April from 7.0 per cent in March, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The ONS estimated that April was the highest level since 1982, and the fastest rate since the current data series began in 1989. Nations across the world are plagued by decades-high inflation as the Ukraine conflict pushes up energy and food prices, in turn forcing the Bank of England, the US Federal Reserve and others to ramp up interest rates.

The squeeze on UK household



A man buys fruits at a local fruit stand in central London. — AFP

budgets tightened further in April due to tax hikes, while wages are failing to keep pace with inflation.

"Countries around the world

are dealing with rising inflation," said British finance minister Rishi Sunak.

"Today's inflation numbers are

driven by the energy price cap rise in April, which in turn is driven by higher global energy prices. "We cannot protect people

NATIONS ACROSS THE WORLD ARE PLAGUED BY DECADES-HIGH INFLATION AS THE UKRAINE CONFLICT PUSHES UP ENERGY AND FOOD PRICES, IN TURN FORCING THE BANK OF ENGLAND, THE US FEDERAL RESERVE AND OTHERS TO RAMP UP INTEREST RATES

completely from these global challenges but are providing significant support where we can, and stand ready to take further action."

The main opposition Labour party, however, wants an emergency budget to help Britons cope with the cost-of-living crunch. Labour finance spokeswoman Rachel Reeves described the inflation data as "a huge worry for

families already stretched".

"Today, Labour force a vote for an emergency budget and for a plan for growth."

Labour is also calling for a windfall tax on the energy sector, which has been boosted as gas and oil prices rocketed on supply worries following key producer Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Bank of England governor Andrew Bailey on Monday warned of an "apocalyptic" situation surrounding runaway food costs — which he said were fuelled by major wheat and cooking oil producer Ukraine finding itself unable to export its goods.

Bailey spoke also of a "very real income shock" coming from surging energy and food prices. Britain risks falling into recession with inflation expected to top 10 per cent by the end of the year, the BoE warned.— AFP

Omantel webinar to highlight role of 5G

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, MAY 18

Omantel will host on May 25 its third webinar under the theme '5G Technology from Consumer Perspectives'. The webinar aims at introducing 5G technology, its potentials, and its impacts on the telecom sector and consumers.

Omantel, the first to introduce 5G technology in the Sultanate of Oman, is hosting a series of webinars to focus on this frontier digital technology and the benefit it will bring to individuals and corporates.

The first webinar, "5G Beyond Speed", was held on November 23, 2021. The second webinar was held on March 9, 2022 under the topic "5G...Unlocking new potentials".

The interaction with the two webinars had been overwhelming



and witnessed the participation of a large number of officials from the public and private organisations, academicians, journalists and digital media influencers.

The third webinar will host speakers who will share their ideas, strategies and experience about the latest developments provided by 5G. Baran Yurdagul – General Manager of Consumer Marketing

at Omantel, will highlight the role of 5G in developing smart home technologies, whilst Huani Yao Experienced at Ericsson Consumer Lab will highlight the importance of 5G in providing broadband high speed for consumers. Mohammed al Murshid, Zain Group Network Director, will present on the usage of 5G in providing on immersive experiences.

CMA workshop focuses on Targeted Financial Sanctions

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, MAY 18

In continuation of its efforts to strengthen anti-money laundering and combating financing terrorism compliance in the regulated sector, the Capital Market Authority (CMA), in collaboration with Rakaiz International Consultancies and Training Institute, hosted a workshop on "Targeted Financial Sanctions" for the compliance officers of the companies regulated by the CMA in the capital market and insurance sectors.

The workshop acquainted



the participants with the basics of targeted financial sanctions and the standards applied in this regard, beside the preventive measures the institutions must take to combat money laundering and terrorism financing as well as

clarifications on enforcement and application of targeted financial sanctions.

The participants were acquainted with the risks of money laundering and terrorism financing with practical examples.

Oman-India Business Meet held on sidelines of 8th IDF Expo

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, MAY 18

On the sidelines of the 8th Interior, Design, Furnishing Expo Oman, an India-Oman Business Meet on Interior, Design, Furnishing and Construction Sector was organised by the Embassy of India on Wednesday.

The event saw the participation of 30 Indian companies which are in Muscat to take part in 8th IDF, as part of a delegation led by the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO). From the Omani side, representatives of more than 30 companies and business houses from the Interior, Design, Furnishing, Ceramics and Construction sector attended the event for B2B interactions with the Indian companies.

The Business Meet was addressed by Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman, who highlighted the vitality of India-Oman economic and commercial relations. He also mentioned about the recent concluded 10th India-Oman JCM and its

outcomes which would be helpful in achieving the new heights in bilateral trade and investment scenario.

He commended the Indian delegates for their timely visit to the Sultanate of Oman as most of the economic activities of Oman are reviving and it is the right time to tap the Omani market. He welcomed all Indian and Omani companies and assured full support of Embassy to facilitate their business related activities.

During the course of the event, participants shared their experiences and discussed business opportunities available to both sides in these sectors.

Indian participants displayed their strong credentials for enhancing exports to the Sultanate of Oman and sought partnerships with Omani counterparts.

Representatives of companies of both sides interacted with enthusiasm and were very optimistic about enhancing trade and investment cooperation and identified synergies for this purpose.

Japan Q1 GDP shrank as virus wave hit

TOKYO: Japan's economy shrank slightly in the first quarter of 2022, official data showed on Wednesday, hit by Covid-19 restrictions and higher prices.

The world's third-largest economy shrank 0.2 per cent quarter-on-quarter in the January-March period, slightly less than the market expectations of a 0.4 per cent contraction.

It followed a modest rebound in the final three months of 2021 that proved short-lived after Japan put Covid restrictions in place as an outbreak fuelled by the Omicron coronavirus variant took hold in January.

Growth was also hit by the rising cost of imports with energy prices surging and the yen falling to its lowest level against the dollar in 20 years.

Economists expect the economy to recover again in the April-June quarter now that virus restrictions have been lifted, but caution there are some caveats. "We see three headwinds to this expected recovery," said UBS economists Masamichi Adachi and Go Kurihara in a note.

"First is a rise in food and energy prices. Second is a drag from the lockdown in China," and third is the risk of a potential



The Japanese national flag flies in front of the container pier in Tokyo port. — AFP

resurgence in virus infections, they said.

Others point to ongoing uncertainties linked to "tensions in international relations and military conflicts", according to a survey among economists conducted by the Japan Center for Economic Research. During the current earnings season, major Japanese firms such as Sony and Nissan have offered cautious forecasts because of the uncertainty, particularly over supply chain disruption and the effect of Covid lockdowns in China.

Wednesday's data showed the economy's rebound in the last quarter of 2021 was 0.9 per cent, slightly weaker than an initial estimate of 1.1 per cent growth. Japan is battling a series of economic headwinds linked to the pandemic and Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has sent energy costs soaring.

The yen has also slumped against the dollar, with a widening gap between Japan's ultra-loose monetary policy and tightening in the United States as the Federal Reserve attempts to combat inflation.

Rising energy prices and other hikes are squeezing Japanese consumers and businesses, with household spending dipping 2.3 per cent in March from a year earlier. Analysts have warned that the pace of nominal wage increases in Japan is unlikely to track rising prices, dampening spending appetites.

Last month, the government unveiled a 6.2 trillion yen (around \$48 billion) economic package that included handouts for low-income families to help cushion the impact of rising prices and energy costs. — AFP

Fed wants to see US growth ‘moving down’

The US central bank wants to see economic growth slowing and “clear” evidence of inflation decelerating before it pulls back on efforts to slow the economy.

The world’s largest economy is facing the fastest inflation in four decades, prompting the Fed to go to battle to try to cool price pressures, announcing earlier this month the biggest interest rate increase since 2000.

Powell said policymakers agree another aggressive increase is “on the table” in June and July.

“What we need is to see... growth moving down from the very high levels that we saw last year, moving down to a level that’s still positive” but allows supply to catch up with demand, Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell said at an event with The Wall Street Journal.

Central bankers need to see “clear and convincing evidence that inflation pressures are abating and inflation is coming down. And if we don’t see that, then we’ll have to consider moving more aggressively,” he said.

But the outlook is highly uncertain, with the economy buffeted by unprecedented, simultaneous challenges, including the fallout from a once-in-a-century pandemic, ongoing supply chain issues, the impact on prices and commodities from the war in Ukraine, and an unexpected labour shortage, he said.

“We don’t know the path of the economy. There are many global events going on that can affect that are really not under our control,” Powell cautioned.

The Fed slashed the benchmark borrowing rate to zero at the start of the pandemic in March 2020 and pumped cash into the financial system to prevent a severe downturn, but with the economy roaring back, helped by massive government stimulus, the central bank started to pull back on its policies this year, including raising rates twice so far.

After plunging in the second quarter of 2020, US growth has recovered, surging 5.7 per cent last year, and despite a GDP contraction in the first three months of the year, consumer prices surged 8.5 per cent in the 12 months ended in March. — AFP

Central bankers need to see “clear and convincing evidence that inflation pressures are abating and inflation is coming down.”

JEROME POWELL
Chair, Federal Reserve



HIVES LINING

An aerial view shows two Syrian beekeepers picking honey from their hives in a field in the eastern countryside of Idlib, near the town of Afis which is close to the green line with government forces, in northwestern Syria. The country’s apiculture has been affected by the 10-year-old conflict in the country as well as the man-made climate change which has increased drought and wildfires worldwide. — AFP

Importance of an international expo showcasing the Sultanate of Oman



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The author is a Muscat-based economic analyst who previously worked for the CBO and OCCI.

Although five decades have passed since the Omani Renaissance, we have not been able to organise to date a huge international exhibition that characterises the Omani environment. The great many exhibitions that were held in the Sultanate of Oman over the past decades have been largely consumer events.

Today, there are calls for the Sultanate of Oman to specialise in holding an annual international expo that showcases its distinctive environmental components and the cultural appeal as reflected in the country’s tourism and environmental settings. The authorities concerned should study initiatives that would put Oman on the global map of the annual international exhibitions.

This importance of a grand expo was highlighted at the recent virtual session of Majlis AlKhonji, which was addressed by Amr Abdullah Baabood, CEO of the Arab House for Research Group, and the Oman International Trade & Exhibitions (OITE).

He was talking about efforts to organise the 31st COMEX expo during May 23 to 25 at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre. This event is one of the largest technology exhibitions in the Sultanate

of Oman and the second largest in the region due to the participation of a large number of government and private institutions who will showcase their most prominent achievements and steps towards technological progress and digital transformation.

In addition, a group of international and local companies specialised in technology, communications and information technology will be present at the exhibition as well. It aims to promote awareness about the use of information and communication technology and artificial intelligence.

Its goal is to evolve into one of the most distinguished exhibitions in the Sultanate of Oman, targeting professionals, experts and all segments interested in information technology and related developments in this sector. It also aims to drive growth and technological progress, and to become a platform for discussing the latest global trends in the field of technology.

The speaker noted that the government has identified the information and communication technology sector as a key pillar in the nation’s economic development strategy and Oman 2040 Vision. That strategy prescribes steps to be taken to advance the digital transformation

and provide electronic services through new portals, applications and platforms to achieve this goal.

COMEX has been organised in line with the objectives of the 2040 Vision and the designation of Muscat as the Arab Digital Capital for the year 2022. For its part, the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology has launched a road map and executive plan for the implementation of the government digital transformation programme 2021-2025.

Specialised exhibitions in any country can enhance capabilities and contribute to their economic growth, leading to value creation and GDP growth. It necessitates careful study to select to identify the best platforms to make the Sultanate of Oman a destination that can attract international participants as well.

This does not mean that we abandon the organisation of exhibitions in other sectors of oil and gas, transportation and logistics, education, health care, banking and financial services, tourism and others. All of them are in the interest of the Omani economy, but what we want is a powerful platform that will put an international spotlight on the country’s distinctive characteristics.

IMF still behind the times on capital controls



JOSEPH E STIGLITZ

The author is a Nobel laureate in economics, a professor at Columbia University, and a former chief economist of the World Bank, chair of the US President’s Council of Economic Advisers, and co-chair of the High-Level Commission on Carbon Prices

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) revised policy framework for managing cross-border financial flows, approved by its executive board last month, broadens the circumstances under which countries may restrict capital inflows.

Unfortunately, it also ties countries’ hands excessively and fails to contend with the myriad real-world contexts in which the proffered IMF advice is, or is not, appropriate. So, while volatile capital flows already pose an ongoing challenge for many emerging and developing economies, the IMF’s framework will reduce countries’ options for achieving their social objectives and may ultimately make the global economy less stable.

The previous IMF framework, approved in 2012 and known as the

Institutional View (IV), held that controls on capital outflows were legitimate only when a country was in the throes of a crisis, and that controls on inflows should be used only as a last resort when the country was experiencing a surge in foreign money.

The IV was a political compromise, reflecting deep divisions between IMF member states (including some of the largest shareholders) that favoured fully liberalised capital movements, and those (including many emerging and developing economies) that wanted the IMF’s blessing to adopt policies to mitigate volatility.

Some countries opposed the IV not because they disagreed with it, but because they saw it as overreach. They worried that the IMF was going beyond the remit defined by its constitution (the articles of agreement), which gives countries considerable latitude on

capital control policies, and that a future IMF Board might suddenly change course and try to constrain what countries could do.

The IMF’s job is to prevent national policies from generating negative international spillovers. The fund’s founding fathers, John Maynard Keynes and Henry Dexter White, deeply worried about the implications of competitive currency depreciations, emphasised rules against beggar-thy-neighbour policies in the IMF’s articles.

More recently, we have seen what can happen when one country’s financial problems spread to others, as occurred during the global financial crisis.

When the IMF’s articles of agreement were written, most countries — including today’s advanced economies — used capital controls extensively. The articles thus did not give the IMF

the authority to push for capital market liberalisation.

Moreover, the last attempt to extend the articles — at the IMF’s 1997 annual meeting in Hong Kong — came at the worst moment, just when the Asian financial crisis, precipitated by massive capital outflows, was erupting.

In any case, small countries without undervalued currencies neither generate negative externalities nor engage in beggar-thy-neighbour policies. Thus, when they are using capital controls, it is usually in circumstances that have little to do with the IMF’s remit.

Consider the social objective of ensuring affordable housing for the middle class, which many advanced and emerging-market economies have pursued by restricting foreign purchases of domestic real estate.

These restrictions do not fall within the IMF’s responsibility,

especially if they don’t significantly depreciate the exchange rate or cause salient cross-border financial spillovers.

Nonetheless, the IMF recently urged Australia to reconsider a small tax on real-estate inflows to Tasmania (population 541,000), even though the measure could not possibly be macroeconomically significant. And that is just one glaring example among many. Such advice, and related positions involving countries as diverse as Canada and Singapore, undermine the credibility of IMF surveillance (monitoring).

The IMF’s revised framework wisely allows for pre-emptive measures against inflows in some circumstances. The fund has come to realise that it is unwise to wait until financial imbalances reach a tipping point before doing something about them.

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BREAKING NEWS



Omani honey “Al Baram” favored locally

Natural Omani honey is very popular among consumers and there is a great demand for it from various segments of society who flock to buy it whenever it is available in the market, either for its various medicinal benefits or to add a unique flavour to their meals... **P20**

Cannes film fest launches with veterans and zombies

THE RED CARPET is ready for the opening of the 75th Cannes Film Festival on Tuesday, with Oscar winner Forest Whitaker as the first guest of honour and a French zombie comedy to kick off proceedings.

The masks are off, health passes are no longer needed and the world's leading cinema get-together is ready to party after two years in which the pandemic put a dampener on proceedings.

Whitaker, the 60-year-old star of “The Last King of Scotland” and cult films such as “Ghost Dog” and recent TV hit “Godfather of Harlem”, will pick up an honorary Palme d’Or at the opening ceremony on the Cote d’Azur.

He won an acting award at the festival back in 1988 for his role as jazz legend

Charlie Parker in Clint Eastwood’s “Bird”.

The opening film on Tuesday is “Final Cut”, a comedy love letter to filmmaking and Z-list zombie movies from the team behind the award-winning “The Artist”.

Its director Michel Hazanavicius said it was “a joyous celebration of film people, which I hope will encourage others to get involved.”

The 12-day festival will really turn on the jets on Wednesday with the arrival of Tom Cruise — his first trip to the festival in exactly 30 years — for the European launch of “Top Gun: Maverick”.

The sequel, long delayed by the pandemic, has been getting warm reviews from critics and gives Cannes a chance to honour Cruise, described by festival director



Thierry Fremaux as “someone who is devoted to cinema”.

Shadow of war

As well as the lighter fare playing out of competition — which also includes Baz Luhrmann’s much-anticipated rock’n’roll biopic “Elvis” next week — there are 21 films vying for the top prize Palme d’Or.

The first to be shown will be “Tchaikovsky’s Wife” by Russian director Kirill Serebrennikov, who left his country in March following a controversial embezzlement trial his supporters said was politically motivated.

The film is unlikely to win him any new admirers in the Kremlin given that it focuses on the legendary composer’s brief and tragic marriage that he entered into to disguise his homosexuality — a story that remains taboo for Russian conservatives.

Serebrennikov was unable to attend Cannes for two previous nominations due to the court case that banned him from leaving Russia for three years.

That will not be the only reminder of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine during the festival. The final film by Lithuanian director Mantas Kvedaravicius, who was killed in

Ukraine last month, will get a special screening.

He was filming a follow-up to his celebrated documentary “Mariupolis” about the conflict in Ukraine’s Donbas region, when he was reportedly captured and killed by Russian forces, according to Kyiv.

Ukraine’s beleaguered film-makers will get a special day at the industry marketplace and one of its most promising directors, Sergei Loznitsa, will show “The Natural History of Destruction”, about the bombing of German cities in World War II.

The jury charged with selecting the winners this year includes Indian superstar Deepika Padukone and Iran’s two-time Oscar-winning director Asghar Farhadi, and is headed by French actor Vincent Lindon.

Lindon starred in last year’s Palme-winning gore-fest “Titane”, the only time a Cannes jury has watched a woman being impregnated by a car.

It was the sort of brash and radical choice that has ensured Cannes has maintained its edge for three-quarters of a century, having held its first edition in the immediate aftermath of World War II.

The organisers have sought to refresh their image this year, partnering with TikTok, which is sponsoring an award for short films, and new media outlet Brut. — AFP

READ

FLOWERS ARE CALLING

BY RITA GRAY

This book shows us the marvel of natural cooperation between plants, animals and insects as they each play their part in the forest’s cycle of life.



ON RECORD

A Japanese woman believed to have been the world’s oldest person has died aged 119, public broadcaster NHK said on Monday, reporting the death of Kane Tanaka. — Reuters



ART SCENE

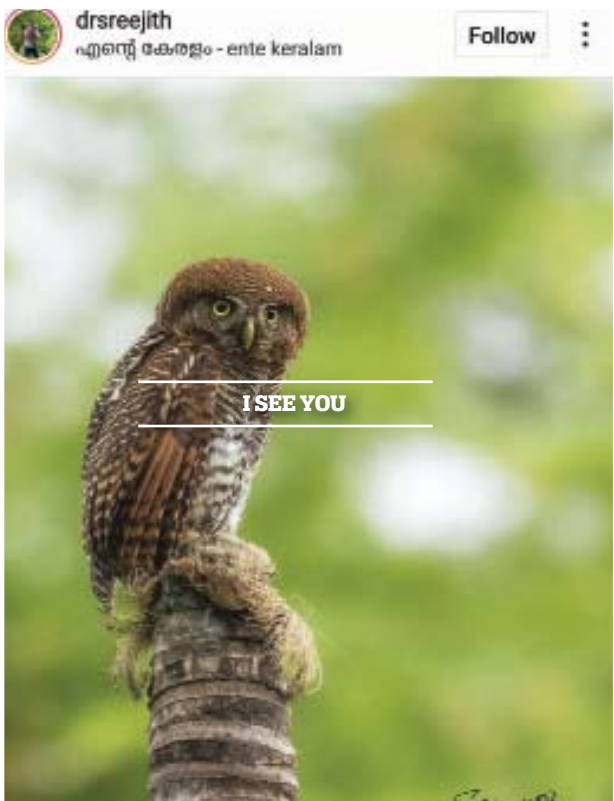
The famed Macklowe collection, subject of a bitter divorce battle between a New York property developer and his ex-wife, became the most expensive art collection ever sold at auction on Monday. Sotheby’s sold its second offering of works from the collection for \$246.1 million, bringing the total value of the group of paintings to \$922.2 million. That exceeds the \$835.1 million that the Rockefeller collection sold for in 2018, then the highest total ever made by a single private collection at auction. — AFP





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AROUND THE WORLD

ART

Picasso painting sells for \$67.5 million at New York auction



THE 1932 PABLO Picasso painting "Femme nue couchée" sold for \$67.5 million on Tuesday at its auction debut at Sotheby's in New York, the most recent large sale at auction for blue-chip art.

The eight-digit sale price comes a week after Andy Warhol's 1964 silk-screen portrait of Marilyn Monroe fetched \$195 million at Christie's, setting a record for a work by an American artist sold at auction.

Auction house Sotheby's had predicted the Picasso painting, a surrealistic depiction of his muse Marie-Thérèse Walter, to sell in excess of \$60 million. Tuesday's price falls short of other portraits of Marie-Thérèse, one of which fetched \$103.4 million at Christie's last year.



"Femme nue couchée," which translates from French to "Nude Reclining Woman," shows Marie-Thérèse as a many-limbed sea creature with her head tilted back in profile. Her love of swimming and her grace in the water inspired the allusion to the sea, as Picasso himself could not swim, according to Sotheby's.

Marie-Thérèse was 17 years old when she met the 45-year-old Picasso in Paris. They began a secret relationship while he was still married to his first wife, Russian-Ukrainian ballet dancer Olga Khokhlova. Marie-Thérèse became his model for a number of paintings and sculptures and gave birth to his daughter, Maya Widmaier-Picasso.

"Femme nue couchée" was born out of a particularly creative and pivotal year for Picasso. Newly 50, he had already achieved widespread fame by 1932 but ramped up his ambitions to silence critics who questioned "whether he was an artist of the past rather than the future," according to the Tate Modern museum.

Amy Cappellazzo, the former head of Sotheby's global fine art division, purchased the painting at Sotheby's Modern Evening Sale in New York. She left the auction house last year.

The seller acquired the work in 2008 from Picasso's heirs, who had held it for decades, according to Sotheby's. Industry publication Artnet identified the seller as hedge fund billionaire and New York Mets owner Steve Cohen.

A Claude Monet oil painting from 1908 showing a view of Venice, Italy, also sold for \$56.6 million on Tuesday. — Reuters

ENTERTAINMENT

Egypt composer's star rises with 'Moon Knight' fame



For nearly 30 years, his music has made its way to every young Egyptian's ringtone — but it's the country's ancient history that recently propelled composer Hesham Nazih to the realm of superheroes.

Riding the ancient Egypt high, the virtuoso was selected to compose the score for Marvel's Moon Knight, marking his first foray into Hollywood.

Helmed by Egyptian director Mohamed Diab, the series has proven massively popular among his compatriots — despite there being no way to legally stream the show there yet — due in no small part to Diab's insistence on the production being an Egyptian affair. In addition to a cast and crew that brings together the likes of Egyptian-Palestinian actress May Calamawy and Egyptian editor Ahmed Hafez, the series soundtrack has been peppered with popular Arabic songs, ranging from golden-era classics to modern electro street music known as mahraganat.

"I'm still processing all of it. Moon Knight is a whole other level for me," the composer said. "I was seeing reactions from so many different audiences and cultures."

But Nazih's latest experiments with ancient Egypt weren't the first time he has drawn from Egyptian heritage.

For the 2014 thriller series "The Seven Commandments", Nazih wove in spiritual Sufi chants, to massive success. The soundtrack was a hit on social media, achieving a long-held dream for the musician.

When he was nine, he explained, he stopped halfway down a street in Alexandria to watch a Sufi ritual in a small mosque, and was haunted by the "majesty" of the scene.

Decades later, he was finally able to channel it into a

abroad.

"The audience's reaction was very moving," he said, adding that the parade "holds a special place in my heart" as it showcased the talents of Egyptian artists.

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composition.

NO FORMAL TRAINING

"Music doesn't communicate information, it's pure emotion," according to Nazih, and it was emotion that took him from a career as an engineer to creating more than 40 soundtracks for film and TV over the past three decades.

Having first felt the impact of a great score as a child, he has been chasing that high ever since. "I knew then that I wanted to go into this field, to make people feel what I felt," he said.

His music has defined famous films including 2003's "Sahar El Layali" ("Sleepless Nights" in Arabic), which was almost tipped as Egypt's submission for an Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film that year.

In 2019, Nazih scored "Al-Fil al-Azraq 2" ("The Blue Elephant 2"), Egyptian cinema's highest ever grossing film, earning 100 million pounds (\$5.4 million).

Over his career, he says he has seen the once-stringent boundaries between music and film begin to dissolve.

"Film composers aren't recognised as true filmmakers by directors because they're musicians, but they're not recognised as musicians by their peers because they belong to the world of cinema," he said.

But things might be changing. In 2018, Nazih was the first musician to receive the Faten Hamama prize at the Cairo International Film Festival, which is awarded to renowned figures in cinema, but had previously only ever gone to directors and actors.

Three years later, he was also recognised in the musical world, winning a lifetime achievement award at the Cairo Opera House Arabic Music Festival. — AFP



Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla

Avoid being on a state of panic

AFTER THE Corona pandemic, people are more stressed and reactive than ever, so you see some of them are more emotionally volatile, more prone to strong negative emotions and often end up in confrontations that you prefer to avoid, perhaps with the people you love. Was that emotional reaction—when emotions are unstable in response to the stresses of normal life—increased during the pandemic?

From here, perhaps the best advice I can give is to tell you: Do not panic! On the other hand, we must know that panic states may occur with a certain frequency and at the present time it is an opportunity to understand the phenomenon in ourselves and learn how to better manage our emotions. If we do, we will be equipped with a skill that helps us be better friends and parents, even when the pandemic is just a distant memory.

However, that emotional flood, if can call it, may be an automatic physical and mental response to an unexpected negative reaction on the part of another person, usually someone close, to what we might consider a threat. It is true that emotional outbursts have helped people in an era to survive, but it is unable to adapt to most modern interactions. For instance, Interactions with our families are now rarely considered a threat. No father has ever slept before and said: I wish I had screamed more at my children today!

Thus, this leads us to search for the secret, which lies in managing your emotions so that they do not manage you! Perhaps the most important point, as mentioned by social scientists, is to be aware of your feelings and monitor them as

impartially as possible, so that you are less impulsive and more in control.

Hence, in moments of intense tension and difficult emotions, all of this requires training and being aware of it. For example, it requires allowing the time to pass between your feelings being raised and your feelings being expressed. This will give a step back into your executive mind and a chance to choose your reaction rather than fall into that panic or emotional reaction. Perhaps there are several practices to avoid this, including for example: When you get angry, count to ten, before you speak, this in one way or another reduces your aggression. And to manage feelings too, one must notice them as if they were happening to someone else. In this way, one can understand and let those feelings disappear naturally instead of letting them turn into something destructive.

On the other hand, be aware that your passions are like home improvement: you can educate yourself, but it's best to get some help when the job is particularly challenging. If the emotional flood is more like a crack in the foundation of the house, you might consider getting some professional help in the form of therapy.

In the end, Whether you're achieving that emotional control on your own or with therapy, learning to be a student of yourself is the most important step to becoming emotionally healthier and avoiding a lot of regret. So, next time someone upsets you, you'll be able to manage your emotions professionally.

Dr Yousuf Ali al Mulla is a physician, medical innovator and a writer.



art & life

Local Scene

f t i y l v @omanobserver

THURSDAY | MAY 19 | 2022

Omani honey “Al Baram” favoured locally

By Arwa al Hashimi
Photos by Riyadh al Hinaï

The importance of Omani honey to society is not just dictated by its association with the verses in the Holy Quran. Omanis, for as long as many beekeepers are aware, had been practised as a craft in the country for generations that allowed local producers to be experts on honey quality.

As a testament to its importance, every year, a dedicated event for honey is conducted in the capital where honey producers from the four corners of Oman come under one roof to showcase not just the latest but also some of the best products produced locally. This event allows local producers to not just network with each other but also reach out to potential buyers including those from abroad.

Natural Omani honey is very popular among consumers and there is a great demand for it from various segments of society who flock to buy it whenever it is available in the market, either for its various medicinal benefits or to add a unique flavour to their meals. Omani honey is known for its premium quality which is a result of the superb care taken by Omani beekeepers throughout the process of producing it.

In Oman, honey is named based on its source and some of the best-known types include the

Sidr, Sumur (Baram), and Zah'r (flowers). Each of these types is unique for its colour, thickness and flavour. Honey is harvested or collected throughout the year. Still, the best types of honey are those that are produced during the period from March until the end of May, when bees absorb the nectar of trees and wild herbs, especially the “Sumur”(acacia tortilis) trees that bloom during this period. The colour of honey is usually closer to black, unlike Sidr honey, which is light brown.

The Sumur honey season, which is known as Al Baram honey, begins with the flowering of the Sumur trees, which are widespread in different Omani regions. The Sumur is one of the desert trees with small leaves and flowers that help it adapt to the climate of dry areas without the need for large amounts of water.

The small flowers release an aromatic scent that can be smelled several metres from the tree. The bees are attracted to this smell and finally will feed on the nectar of the flowers which then produces high-quality Al Baram honey. It is characterised by the wonderful aroma of the Sumur flower, its heavy texture and its dark colour that turns black after a period of sorting the honey cells.

The taste of this type of honey is less sweet than other types of honey, and some attribute this to the low sugar amount in it, which is somehow lower than other

types of honey.

It is known that the rains that usually fall in March and April affect the honey season, as the small flowers of the Sumur trees are so light that heavy rainfall leads to their falling off the trees, which negatively affects the honey season, as the bees do not find sufficient quantities of nectar from the flowers which end up with the poor honey season.

With the beginning of the Al Baram season, beekeepers filter the honey cells in which the bees collected honey from other flowers such as Oat flowers and other trees. They are keen to make sure that the nectar of the Sumur flowers does not mix with any other type of flowers in order to obtain pure honey from the nectar of the Sumur flowers, which is reflected in the quality of the honey.

Citizens prefer this type of honey purely from the flowers of Sumur trees, which makes the production of this type of honey somewhat difficult, and beekeepers search for suitable pastures and move beehive boxes to areas where the flowers of Sumur trees abound and that is all to obtain pure and high-quality honey.

Omani Sumur honey which is known as Al Baram has won several awards including in international competitions such as the International Federation of Beekeepers' Associations (APIMONDIA) for its quality, purity, nutritional and therapeutic benefits.

