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Smart gates reduce wait time

Smart gates, faster travel counters are expected to ease summer travel. Long lines at immigration and check-in counters are becoming a thing of the past with the introduction of smart gates at Muscat and other regional airports such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai. According to airport officials, passengers can pass through the smart gates and clear immigration formalities within minutes by just scanning passports.

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ISHA - 08:21 PM



Established 1981. Editor-in-chief: Abdullah bin Salim al Shueili

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PROTECT HEALTH BY PROPERLY WASHING FRUITS, VEGETABLES



SECURITY COUNCIL TO VOTE ON GAZA CEASEFIRE PLAN

UNITED NATIONS: The United Nations Security Council will vote later on Monday on US-drafted resolution backing a proposal outlined by President Joe Biden for a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The US finalised its text on Sunday after six days of negotiations among the 15-member council. It was not immediately clear whether veto powers Russia and China would allow the adoption of the draft.

A resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes by the US, France, Britain, China or Russia to pass. Biden laid out a three-phase ceasefire plan on May 31 that he described as an Israeli initiative. Some Security Council members questioned whether Israel had accepted the plan to end the fighting in Gaza.

The draft resolution welcomes the new ceasefire proposal, “which Israel accepted, calls upon Hamas to also accept it, and urges both parties to fully implement its terms without delay and without condition.”

It also goes into detail about the proposal, and spells out that “if the negotiations take longer than six weeks for phase one, the ceasefire will still continue as long as negotiations continue.”

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al Maliki told a local radio station on Monday: “Until now, there are positive signals. We hope that this proposal is accepted” while commenting on Monday’s expected UN Security Council vote.

The council in March demanded for an immediate ceasefire and unconditional release of all hostages held by Hamas. — **Reuters**

RO 56M HOSPITAL TO COME UP IN AL SHARQIYAH NORTH



An artist’s impression of Al Nama Hospital in Ibra.

IBRA: The Ministry of Health on Monday celebrated laying of the foundation stone for Al Nama Hospital project in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. The project is currently being carried out at a cost of RO 56.05 million.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Sultan bin Salim al Habsi, Minister of Finance, and attended by Dr Hilal bin Ali al Sabti, Minister of Health.

Dr Ahmed bin Salim al Mandhari, Under-Secretary for Planning and Health Organization, said that the number of health establishments within the purview of the Ministry of Health at the end of 2023 stood at 193 health centres, 21 health complexes and 50 hospitals. He added that the facilities contain a total of 5,024 beds and provide citizens with top-quality healthcare.

Al Mandhari pointed out

NINE NEW HOSPITALS WILL ADD 1,799 BEDS ACROSS OMAN

AL NAMA HOSPITAL IN IBRA TO BE SET UP WITHIN 30 MONTHS WILL HAVE 152 BEDS

MOH WILL BREAK GROUND FOR RO 45M SAMAYIL HOSPITAL IN AL DAKHILIYAH GOVERNORATE ON WEDNESDAY

that the ministry is currently embarked on establishing nine new hospitals that will add 1,799 beds in different governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

Eng Yousuf bin Yaqoub bin Ambu Ali, Adviser to the Minister of Health, made a presentation about Al Nama Hospital which, he said, occupies a total area of 428,000 square metres. The main building consists of a ground floor and three floors comprising a total of 42,000 square metres, he explained. Ambu Ali added that Al Nama Hospital, to be set up within 30 months, will have 152 beds, outpatient clinics and all medical specialties (including an accident and emergency unit, a radiology unit, a physical therapy unit, a nephrology unit and a psychiatry clinic), in addition to a dental clinic, surgery wards and internal medicine units. — **ONA**

Military plane carrying vice president of Malawi missing

LILONGWE: A military aircraft carrying Malawi’s vice president Saulos Chilima (pictured) has been reported missing after it failed to make a landing on Monday morning, the government said.

“All efforts by aviation authorities to make contact with the aircraft since it went off the radar have failed thus far,” the government said in a statement. The plane, which took off just after 9:00 am local time (0700 GMT), was carrying 51-year-old Chilima and nine others. President Lazarus Chakwera has ordered regional and national forces to conduct an “immediate search and rescue operation to locate the whereabouts of the aircraft”, the statement said.

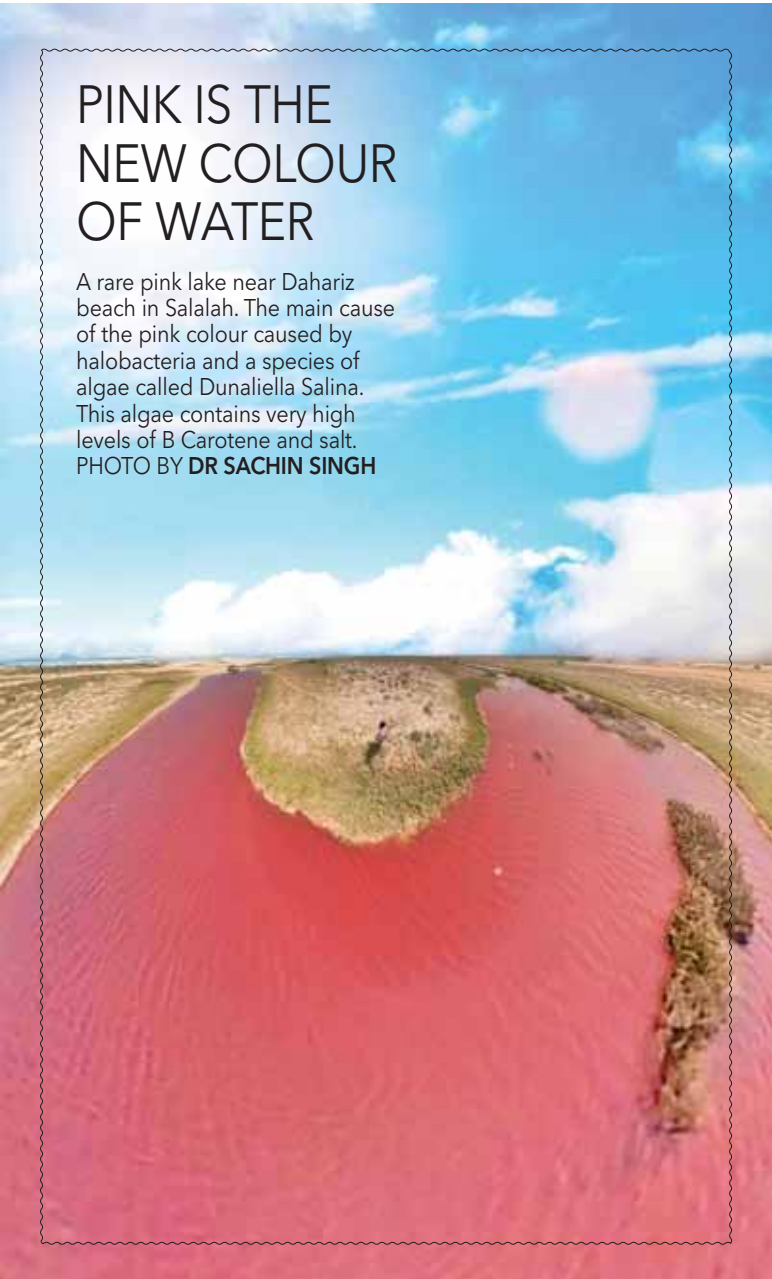
Chakwera, who was due to travel to the Bahamas for a working visit, has since cancelled his trip.

In 2022, Chilima was stripped of his powers when he was arrested and charged with graft over a bribery scandal involving a British-Malawian businessman. Last month, a Malawian court dropped the charges after Chilima attended several court appearances.

Chilima, 51, was aboard a Malawi Defense Force aircraft that left the capital Lilongwe it said, adding that search and rescue operations were ongoing. — **Agencies**

PINK IS THE NEW COLOUR OF WATER

A rare pink lake near Dahariz beach in Salalah. The main cause of the pink colour caused by halobacteria and a species of algae called Dunaliella Salina. This algae contains very high levels of B Carotene and salt. PHOTO BY DR SACHIN SINGH



Miraculous escape for passengers after hail rips off plane’s nosecone

VIENNA: A passenger jet miraculously landed on Sunday despite hailstones destroying the front of the plane and smashing the cockpit windscreen. Miraculously, the pilot was able to bring the plane down despite the damage to the windscreen, and everyone onboard escaped any injury.

The Austrian Airlines Airbus A320 was flying from Mallorca to Vienna when chunks of ice slammed into the plane and its front windows.

The plane’s pilot was forced to land blind, with passengers

only realising the true extent of the damage — and their narrow escape — after the plane touched down.

After issuing a distress call, the plane landed safely at Vienna airport.

None of the passengers or crew were injured in the incident. The airline did not say how many people were on board.

“According to the cockpit crew, the storm was not visible on the weather radar,” the airline said in a statement on Monday.

In recent weeks, torrential rains have led to flooding across



The Austrian Airlines Airbus A320 was flying from Mallorca to Vienna when chunks of ice slammed into the plane and its front windows



The aircraft was able to land safely at Vienna-Schwechat Airport. All passengers on the flight were unharmed. The technical team has already been entrusted with damage assessment

AUSTRIAN AIR

Austria, with firefighters carrying out more than 2,000 operations in several provinces.

Austrian Airlines said a Mayday call was made and that emergency crews rushed to the airport ahead of the aircraft landing.

“The aircraft was able to land safely at Vienna-Schwechat Airport. All passengers on the flight were unharmed,” the airline said. “The Austrian Airlines technical team has already been entrusted with the specific damage assessment of the aircraft in question. The safety of our passengers and our crews is Austrian Airlines’ top priority.”

The near-miss is the latest mid-air incident to hit headlines in recent weeks.

Last month, a Singapore Airlines jetliner hit severe turbulence leaving one man dead, and others seriously injured.

Flight SQ321 went through huge swings in gravitational force in less than five seconds, likely causing the injuries to people who weren’t buckled into their seats, according to a report by Singapore’s Transport Ministry released last month. — **AFP**



STONE LAID FOR RO 56M AL NAMA HOSPITAL IN AL SHARQIYAH NORTH

IBRA: The Ministry of Health on Monday celebrated laying of the foundation stone for Al Nama Hospital project in Al Sharqiyah North Governorate. The project is currently being carried out at a cost of RO 56.05 million. — ONA



RO 3m facelift for Bahla market



The concept and design will have a traditional Islamic character and will factor in Omani identity



AMAL AL RIYAMI
BAHLA, JUNE 10

More than 50-year-old Bahla market will soon get a face lift costing RO 3 million and turn into a tourist destination.

Marasim Tourism Company, responsible for the management and operation of Bahla Fort and Bahla Square, will redesign the market to align with urban and population growth. It will provide better access, more parking lots, a site for selling handicraft products, and more space for visitors Engineer Ali bin Ahmed al Shaqsi, the project's general manager, said: "There has become an urgent need to restore this market and work to develop it. The concept and design will have a traditional Islamic character and will factor in Omani identity. The additional buildings will cover an area of 5,000 square metres." Al Shaqsi said: "The project has many advantages, the most important of which is providing more parking for vehicles, improved market entry and exits point, ease traffic congestion, allocating a suitable site for livestock traders, an air-conditioned section for vegetables and fruits, a site for selling handicraft products, and another for selling dates date products." Al Shaqsi highlighted that the redevelopment will increase parking slots from 145 to 400, with 2,500 square metres of existing buildings being demolished and an additional 5,000 square metres added. Additionally, 1,500 square metres of green space will be incorporated.

Shaikh Said bin Ali al Nuaimi, Wali of Bahla, praised Marasim Tourism Company's efforts and the innovative ideas of its young leadership in serving the Wilayat of Bahla.

Diplomatic Affairs Under-Secretary receives UN Envoy to Yemen



The meeting discussed the developments in the Yemeni issue and reviewed efforts exerted with the parties involved to reach a peaceful solution. — ONA

MUSCAT: Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy , Under-Secretary of the Foreign Ministry for Diplomatic Affairs received in the general diwan of the ministry on Monday, Hans Grundberg, UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Yemen. The meeting discussed the

developments in the Yemeni issue and reviewed efforts exerted with the parties involved to reach a peaceful solution that serves interests of the Yemeni people and maintains security and stability in the region.

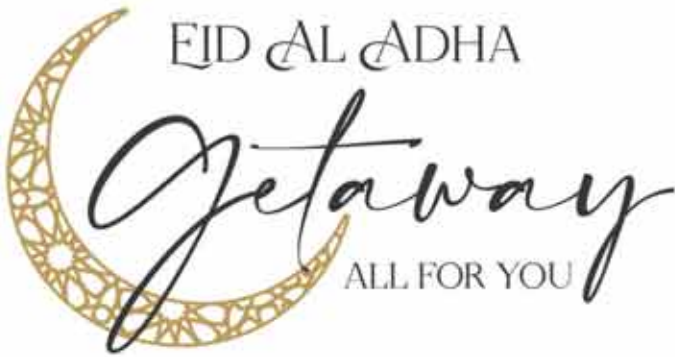
— ONA

OMAN, SRI LANKA SIGN MOU IN AGRICULTURE



COLOMBO: Oman, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, and Sri Lanka, represented by the Ministry of Agriculture and Plantation Industry, signed on Monday a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of Agriculture. It was signed by Ahmed bin Ali al Rashdi, Ambassador of Oman to Sri Lanka, and Mahinda Amaraweera, Sri Lankan Minister of Agriculture and Plantation Industry. — ONA

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Smart gates reduce wait times at airports

VINOD NAIR
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Smart gates, faster travel counters are expected to ease summer travel.

Long lines at immigration and check-in counters are becoming a thing of the past with the introduction of smart gates at Muscat and other regional airports such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

According to airport officials, passengers can pass

through the smart gates and clear immigration formalities within minutes by just scanning passports. “With the smart gates now operational, residents and expatriates can clear immigration by scanning their passports and registering their digital ID,” an official of Oman Airports told the Observer.

Sources in the Royal Oman Police (ROP) said, “Residents and citizens will be able to clear the immigration process by using the mobile (QR scan) after



Passengers can pass through the smart gates and clear immigration formalities within minutes by just scanning passports.

creating a digital ID on an ROP application. Inbound passengers coming to the country for the first time may use manual immigration counters at airports very soon.” Some passengers

at Muscat Airport encounter problems at smart gates, which force them to clear formalities at the conventional counters by standing in queues. The smart gates have been successfully implemented in Dubai and Abu Dhabi airports, where travellers have to just scan their faces and their passports to get in and out of the airports.

Besides smart gates, airports in the region are also moving towards self-check-in, self-bag drop, e-registration, e-border

gate, and self-boarding services.

These innovations are part of the One ID initiative, which aims to streamline passenger journeys with advance sharing of information and a contactless process at the airport based on biometric-enabled identification.

By obtaining all necessary authorisations and demonstrating admissibility to travel prior to departure, passengers will be ‘Ready to Fly’ before they arrive at the airport, according to IATA.



Al Dakhiliyah inks deals worth over RO 4m

AMAL AL RIYAMI
NIZWA, JUNE 10

The Al Dakhiliyah Governorate signed many agreements for a package of development and service projects worth over RO 4 million. These agreements align with the governorate's efforts to develop services and strengthen tourism.

The agreements included the project to establish Nizwa Public

Garden, which will be built on an area of 150,000 square metres, with an artificial lake of 4,542 square metres, fountains, a play area with rubber flooring, 25,000 square metres of green space with 3,920 including 520 shade trees, and 3,400 flowering plants.

Additionally, the design encompasses an educational medicinal garden for the community and students. It will also have a library, exercise gear among other service

components.

An agreement was signed with Bawareq Nizwa International Investment Company to develop several sites in Harat Al Aqur in the Wilayat of Nizwa which create jobs, support entrepreneurs and small and medium enterprises.

Other agreements were signed to tile walkways of Harat Al Aqur in the Wilayat of Nizwa and install light poles in the Adam-Sinaw Road (First Phase)



Zimbabwean, Omani officials discuss academic, training interests

MUSCAT: Maj Gen Hamid bin Ahmed Sakroon, Chairman of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies, received in his office at Bait Al Falaj a delegation from Zimbabwe National Defence University.

The visiting delegation is headed by Brigadier Francis Chakawia.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed several matters of mutual interest, especially in the academic and training fields.

The meeting was attended by Air Commodore Abdullah bin Faiz al Dhafri,

Director General for Administrative and Financial Affairs and several senior officers of the Academy for Strategic and Defence Studies.

The delegation of Zimbabwe National Defence University also visited the Joint Command and Staff College.

Upon their arrival at the college, the guests were received by the Acting Commandant of the college.

The guests watched a presentation about the college, its curricula and various training programmes. They also toured its

facilities and different departments.

Moreover, the delegation of Zimbabwe National Defence University visited the National Defence College (NDC).

Upon their arrival at the college, they were received by Rear Admiral Ali bin Abdullah al Shidi, Commandant of the NDC.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed matters of mutual interest.

The guests were briefed about the NDC and its various facilities. They also toured its departments.



The visiting delegation and the Omani side discussed several matters of mutual interest, especially in the academic and training fields. – ONA

Yemen governor praises Oman for support, charity



The governors laid emphasis on realising their peoples' aspirations for security, stability and exchange of benefits. – ONA

SALALAH: HH Sayyid Marwan bin Turki al Said, Governor of Dhofar, held a meeting in his office in the Wilayat of Salalah on Monday with Mohammed Ali Yasser, Governor of Al Mahra in the Republic of Yemen, who is currently visiting the Sultanate of Oman.

HH Sayyid Marwan welcomed the Governor of Al Mahra and commended the deep-rooted historical ties and social bonds between peoples of Oman and Yemen.

HH Sayyid Marwan stressed the importance of the meeting in consolidating areas of joint cooperation between the two sides. He added that the two sides laid emphasis on realising their peoples' aspirations for security, stability and exchange of benefits, including the electrical grid project and other development projects.

For his part, the Governor of Al Mahra expressed the appreciation of the Yemeni government and people for the support extended to Yemen by the government of the Sultanate of Oman through Oman Charitable Organisation (OCO). This support covered developmental and humanitarian aspects and benefited the Yemeni people in general and Al Mahra Governorate in particular, he said, noting that it is a gesture that reflects fraternity and good neighbourliness.

The Governor of Al Mahra added that Yemen is looking forward to more cooperation and support, notably amid exceptional circumstances prevailing in Yemen. The meeting was attended by Mohsin Ali Mohammed Balhaf, General Manager of Al Mahra Oil Company's branch in Yemen, and officials from both sides. — ONA

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HAJ

IS A JOURNEY OF FAITH AND CULTURAL UNITY



AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Every year, the Haj pilgrimage showcases a remarkable spectacle of unity amid cultural diversity. Millions of Muslims from across the globe, representing many cultures and

languages, converge at Mecca to perform Haj, raising their hands in prayer in a unified act of faith that transcends differences and fortifies bonds of brotherhood and love.

Haj is not only a profound spiritual journey but also a vibrant cultural experience. It provides Muslims worldwide with the opportunity to interact, exchange experiences and traditions, and learn about diverse cultures and civilisations. This cultural diversity is vividly displayed through the variety of clothing, languages, customs, and traditions that distinguish

the pilgrims. In the expansive Grand Mosque, Muslims from Asia, Africa, Europe, and the Americas, each with their unique cultures and customs, come together, creating a cultural mosaic that embodies the unity of the Islamic nation.

Despite language differences, the shared language of faith unites the pilgrims, enabling seamless communication and interaction. The feelings of piety and reverence that fill the hearts of the pilgrims draw them closer, dissolving cultural and linguistic barriers.

Haj significantly promotes understanding and coexistence among Muslim peoples. Through their interactions, pilgrims learn to respect

the diverse cultures and traditions of others, recognising Islam as a universal religion that embraces all. This pilgrimage fosters communication bridges among Muslims worldwide. By sharing experiences and memories, pilgrims forge lasting friendships that enhance communication and cooperation among Islamic countries.

Rashid al Jabri, who has performed Haj three times, remarked, “The Haj is a universal message that demonstrates the unity and tolerance of Muslims. In the spaciousness of the Grand Mosque, Muslims stand in one row, equal before God, without discrimination based on race, nationality, or language.” Al Jabari further noted, “Haj brings together Muslims from all over the world, with all their sects, religious practices, skills, and cultures. It is a tremendous opportunity for every Muslim to learn about the culture of their fellow Muslims. Among the

positives of this gathering is the fusion of cultures and the spiritual communication, which strengthens brotherly relations.” Khalid al Balushi, a participant in the General Security of the Omani Haj delegation, highlighted, “The cultural diversity among the pilgrims was evident in the languages spoken and the universal language of humanity, mercy, and compassion for the elderly. The diversity in clothing — from Arab, African, and Asian attire — was unified by the ihram, identical in colour and style. Our customs varied in food, drink, and social practices, but the rituals of Haj, such as takbeer, tahlil, and talbiyah, unified us.” He added, “Despite cultural and linguistic differences, everyone came for one purpose: to perform the Haj pilgrimage. This reinforces the concept of Islamic unity, tolerance, coexistence, and acceptance of one another. Discovering various customs and traditions during our journey has contributed to strengthening mutual understanding between cultures and enhancing human relations based on respect and cooperation.”



Military Haj Mission leaves for Saudi Arabia

MUSCAT: The Military Haj Mission left here on Monday for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to perform the pilgrimage on a number of transport aircraft of the Royal Air Force of Oman (Rafo).

The mission was seen off upon departure at Seeb Air Base by Major General (retired) Said bin Nasser al Salmi alongside senior officers of the Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) and other military and security forces.

Al Salmi delivered a speech in which he said that Haj is one of the pillars of Islam and it brings together Muslims from all over the world. He noted that the military Haj mission receives great attention and generous care from His Majesty the Supreme Commander.

Al Salmi congratulated the pilgrims for making the journey of faith, urging them to cooperate and support each other and to be ambassadors of goodness for their country. He prayed to Allah the Almighty to facilitate their Hajj rituals wishing them a safe return to the homeland after completing the pilgrimage. Noteworthy, dispatching the Military Haj Mission comes in response to the



The Military Haj Mission left Muscat for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to perform the pilgrimage.



Royal orders of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces for the benefit of working personnel and the retirees of the Sultan's Armed Forces and other military and security forces.

— ONA

Expo highlights products of craftswomen and SMEs

SIHAM AL SAIDI
SUHAR, JUNE 10

The Omani Women's Association (OWA) in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah recently organised an exhibition showcasing the products of local craftswomen and small business owners. The event was held under the auspices of HH Sayyidah Hujaija bint Jaifer al Said. The expo highlighted comprehensive support and training provided by the association to help women develop businesses and improve their income.

Through a series of targeted workshops and training, OWA has equipped women with essential skills in creating strong business identities, product development, and smart marketing.

Moza bint Abdullah al Hosniyah, head of OWA Al Khabourah, says: "Our strategic goals focus on empowering Omani women. We aim to help women become reliable sources of steady income. By offering training, mentorship, and development programmes, we strive to create an environment where women entrepreneurs can thrive and contribute significantly to their communities."



OWA in the Wilayat of Al Khabourah organised an exhibition showcasing the products of local craftswomen and small business owners

Participants also learnt on ways to develop unique brand names and logos that reflect the essence of their products and appeal to their target audience.

An entrepreneur said, "I started selling bakhoor burners online. Then I took many courses and have learnt a lot through the association. Now I have my own brand and a shop with well-planned goals."

An exciting aspect of the association's efforts is the opportunity for craftswomen to network and learn from established business owners. The exhibition included sessions where successful entrepreneurs shared their experiences, offered mentorship, and provided

insights into overcoming challenges. Another craftswoman said: "Thanks to the association, which organises workshops and then showcases our products in the local exhibitions."

The impact of these initiatives was evident in the diverse range of products displayed at the exhibition. From intricate hand-woven textiles and jewellery to innovative home decor and organic skincare products, the creativity and dedication of Al Khabourah's craftswomen were on full display. Visitors were impressed by the high quality and originality of the products, many of which have already gained recognition and demand in the market.

EXHIBITION IN SUR DISPLAYS SOME RARE METEORITES OF OMAN

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
SUR, JUNE 10

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MoHT) opened the Meteorites Exhibition in Sur, under the auspices of Dr Shaikh Hilal bin Ali al Habsi, Wali of the Wilayat of Sur, as part of the activities of the Executive Programme to make Sur the Arab Tourism Capital for 2024.

The exhibition introduces the importance of meteorites and their sustainable investment and diversifies the museum system, which contributes to enhancing heritage and tourist destinations in various governorates.

The expo displays some rare meteorites of global scientific importance and exceptional value,



The exhibition introduces the importance of meteorites and their sustainable investment and diversifies the museum system



including meteorite samples that are considered one of the largest falls. It also includes a presentation of the meteor monitoring devices project in the Sultanate of Oman, through which the MoHT works to monitor and document meteorites as they enter the airspace and determine

their fall locations, thus facilitating their direct capture.

Saeed bin Harib al Obaidani, Director-General of Museums, stated that the General Directorate of Museums, represented by the Department of Geological Heritage, is making efforts in researching and

monitoring these meteorites by studying them and then displaying them to visitors in exhibitions and museums.

The exhibition held its third session in Al Sharqiyah South Governorate, in the Wilayat of Sur, the Capital of Arab Tourism. The

exhibition will be available to the public until January 12, 2025.

Engineer Hussein bin Ali al Ghafri, Director, Geological Heritage Department, added that the MoHT was able to monitor several meteorites the moment they entered the atmosphere in Oman through the meteorological monitoring project, which is implemented in cooperation with the Natural History Museum in Bern in Switzerland and Curtin University in Australia, and technical support from Omantel.

The MoHT announced the first results of the project by documenting the 'meteorite,' which is the smallest mass found among 40 meteorite falls that were monitored by meteorite monitoring devices

around the world.

The meteorite monitoring devices were able to determine the geographical location of the meteorite (two samples weighing 8.2 grammes and 13.8 grammes) and calculate the path of the fall, which made it easier for the Omani-Swiss scientific team to quickly reach the sample, as this achievement is evidence of the possibility of searching for and finding the observed meteorites using modern technology.

The MoHT has completed the stage of chemical analyses, the study of the correlation between data from monitoring devices, and the analysis of short-lived radioactive isotopes of meteorites at the University of Freiburg in Germany.

KNOWLEDGE OMAN BOOK RELEASED

MUSCAT: Knowledge Oman (KO), the leading community knowledge-sharing platform in the Sultanate of Oman, released the book 'Perspectives on Leadership: A Knowledge Oman Story'.

Authored by Dr Mythili Kolluru, Assistant Professor, College of Banking and Financial Studies, and an active member of KO community, the book illustrates compelling narrative of the platform's impactful journey and its contributions to the community over the past 16 years. The aim of the book is to inspire individuals to unlock their potential and create positive change in their communities and beyond. "I am thrilled to share the journey of Knowledge Oman through the book which is a testament to the power of community and the incredible achievements that can be realised when people come together from various backgrounds with a shared purpose. Proceeds



Dr Mythili with KO Book

from the sale of this book will be directed towards community initiatives and good causes that furthers our mission to empower individuals and promote lifelong learning," says Dr Kolluru.

A distinguished educator and scholar, she is recognised with the national award for 'Outstanding Women Educator and Scholar in Strategic Management' and has extensive global experience. Holding a PhD from Andhra

University and certification as a Strategic Planning Professional, she combines academic excellence with practical insights.

Dr Kolluru ignites a passion for strategy, international business, and organisational studies in her students. With high-quality research, published in top-tier journals and business magazines, her dedication to community development is evident in the book's insightful narrative, capturing the essence of KO's transformative journey with depth and clarity.

The KO's book traces the platform's evolution from its humble beginnings to its current status as a beacon of community-driven change.

The book is a testament to 16 years of belief, resilience, and collective action, showcasing pioneering efforts, diverse leadership, committed team members, and the spirit of volunteerism that have shaped the platform's identity.



كلية عُمان
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إعلان طرح مناقصات
TENDERS ANNOUNCEMENT

تعلم لجنة المناقصات الداخلية بكلية عمان للإدارة والتكنولوجيا عن طرح المناقصات التالية:

The Internal Tenders Committee of Oman College of Management and Technology announces the following tenders:

رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	قيمة المستند بالريال العماني (لا ترد)	تاريخ بدء استلام كتيب العطاء	آخر موعد لاستلام العطاء
Tender Number	Tender Title	Value of document in Omani Rials (Non-Refundable)	Starting date of Receiving Tender Booklet	Deadline for Receiving Tender Booklet
OCMT-2024 /1	تأمين تعويض العمال، تأمين على النقود، تأمين ضمان الأمانة Work Injury Insurance & Money insurance and Fidelity Guarantee Insurance	٣٠ ريالاً عمانياً R.O 30	٢٠٢٤/٦/١١	٢٠٢٤/٧/١
OCMT-2024/2	صيانة أنظمة مكافحة الحريق والإنذار Maintenance Firefighting and alarm systems	٥٠ ريالاً عمانياً R.O 50	٢٠٢٤/٦/١١	٢٠٢٤/٧/١
OCMT-2024/3	صيانة نظام استئناف التشغيل في حالات الكوارث Maintenance Disaster recovery system (Quorum)	٢٥ ريالاً عمانياً R.O 25	٢٠٢٤/٦/١١	٢٠٢٤/٧/١
OCMT-2024/4	صيانة أنظمة التكييف Maintenance A/C systems	٥٠ ريالاً عمانياً R.O 50	٢٠٢٤/٦/١١	٢٠٢٤/٧/١

تودع العروض في صندوق المناقصات بالكلية في موعد أقصاه ٢٠٢٤/٧/١٠

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Blinken, in Middle East, pushes Gaza ceasefire



Palestinians children search through the rubble of their home a day after an operation by the Israeli Special Forces in the Nuseirat camp. – AFP

CAIRO: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in the Middle East on Monday hoping to deliver the ceasefire that President Joe Biden proposed last month, in an all-out push by Washington to secure an end to the Gaza war.

Speaking after meeting Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi in Cairo on the first stop on his trip, Blinken said Palestinian groups were the only side that had yet to agree to Biden's ceasefire proposal, which Washington says Israel has already accepted.

Palestinian officials said 40 more bodies arrived in hospitals over the past 24 hours. Thousands more dead are believed buried under rubble

"My message to governments throughout the region, to people throughout the region, is if you want a ceasefire, press Palestinians group Hamas to say yes," Blinken told reporters before departing Egypt to visit Israel where he

was due to meet Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Sisi said it was important to lift obstacles to humanitarian aid for Gazans. Ahead of his trip, Israel and Palestinians both doubled down on hardline positions that have scuppered all previous attempts to end the fighting, while Israel has pressed on with assaults in central and southern Gaza, among the bloodiest of the war.

Palestinian Hamas, for its part, said Washington must push its ally Israel to halt the fighting. "We

call upon the US administration to put pressure on the occupation to stop the war on Gaza, and the Hamas movement is ready to deal positively with any initiative that secures an end to the war," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters.

Israel launched an assault on the Gaza Strip that has killed more than 37,000 Palestinians and reduced most of the enclave to wasteland.

Palestinian officials said 40 more bodies arrived in hospitals

over the past 24 hours. Thousands more dead are believed buried under rubble.

In Rafah, the city on the southern edge of Gaza where Israel launched an offensive last month in defiance of White House pleas, residents said on Monday tanks had been trying to thrust deeper towards the north in the early hours of the morning. They were on the edge of Shaboura, one of the most densely populated neighbourhoods at the heart of the city.

Around half of the Gaza Strip's 2.3 million people had been sheltering in Rafah before last month's assault and a million have had to flee again.

Since last week, Israel has also launched a large assault in the central Gaza Strip, around the small city of Deir al-Balah, the last population centre yet to be stormed.

On Monday, residents said the Israelis had pulled back from some areas there but were keeping up air strikes and shelling. — Reuters

Brutal war shatters pilgrimage dream

KHAN YOUNIS: Palestinian couple Mahmoud and Fatima Jarghoun sold their jewellery so they could perform the Haj pilgrimage to Mecca - a journey they have been yearning to make for years. But with no way out of the Gaza Strip, their dream has been dashed.

"We are living inside a prison. Without the Rafah border, there is no way in and no way out," said Mahmoud Jarghoun, 67, referring to the crossing to Egypt that has been shut since Israel seized it in May during its Gaza offensive.

Jarghoun said the deep disappointment of being unable to make the pilgrimage had compounded the pain inflicted by the war, speaking at his shattered home in Khan Younis, where the floor was strewn with rubble and masonry.

"Unfortunately, we lost our house," he said, estimating repair costs at some \$20,000. "Then came the closure of the border and we can't go to Haj, we can't go to it. It was two blows at once," he said.

"The pain of the war, the pain of the destruction, the pain of the siege and the pain of not being able to go to Haj."

The Haj is one of the five basic obligations of a Muslim and every believer who has the means should perform the pilgrimage at least once in his or her lifetime. It begins



Palestinian couple Mahmoud and Fatima Jarghoun sit inside their damaged home, in Khan Younis. – Reuters

on Friday.

Palestinians typically wait years for their turn after registering their names with the Palestinian authorities. Jarghoun said they had been waiting almost 18 years.

He said they had "sold everything in our possession, so that we can perform this duty. We are at the end of our lifetime.

Unfortunately, the border was closed, closing with it all our hopes to perform this duty."

Fatima Jarghoun, 65, said the couple had been very happy when their names were approved for the Haj. But "at the end, all our dreams were gone. We were very, very upset", she said.

Israel has besieged and laid

waste to much of the Gaza Strip since launching an offensive in retaliation for the Oct. 7 attack that killed some 1,200 people in Israel, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel's offensive has killed more than 37,000 people in Gaza, according to the Palestinian enclave's health ministry.

— Reuters

Israel under mounting pressure as Gantz quits

GAZA: Israeli war cabinet minister Benny Gantz on Sunday announced his resignation after the rescue of four captives from war-torn Gaza in a raid that Palestinians say killed hundreds.

Gantz's resignation is the latest sign of sharpening domestic dissent over Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's handling of the eight-month war, and is the first major political blow to him during the conflict.

It came after special forces fought gun battles with Palestinian groups on Saturday in central Gaza's crowded Nuseirat refugee camp area as they swooped in to free the four captives. The Israeli military said the extraction team and captives came under heavy gun and grenade fire, which killed one police officer, while Israel's air force launched strikes that reduced nearby buildings to rubble.

Gantz's resignation comes after he had issued an ultimatum to Netanyahu to present a post-war plan for Gaza by June 8.

Netanyahu responded by telling Gantz it was "not the time to abandon the battle".

While Gantz's resignation will not bring the premier's right-wing government down,



Benny Gantz

it reflects growing domestic pressure over Netanyahu's failure to return the remaining captives.

A senior military commander, Brigadier General Avi Rosenfeld, also resigned on Sunday over what he called his failure to prevent the October 7 attack.

Palestinian Hamas's armed wing, the Ezzedine Al-Qassam Brigades, said that other captives were killed during the rescue operation and warned that conditions would worsen for the remaining captives.

Dozens were exchanged in a November truce for Palestinian prisoners. After Saturday's rescue operation, 116 captives remain in Gaza, although the army says 41 of them are dead. — AFP



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In brief

■ MEXICO CITY



6 ARRESTED IN MEXICO AFTER VIOLENCE UPROOTS 4,000

Six people carrying unlicensed firearms were arrested in Mexico's crime-plagued southern Chiapas state, prosecutors said, following days of violence that displaced more than 4,000 people.

The Chiapas prosecutor's office said that authorities had "rescued 4,187 people" who "were hiding in their homes following acts of violence" and transferred them to shelters.

It said two people were found dead. More than 20 vehicles were also burned or vandalised. The prosecutor's office confirmed late on Sunday that six people carrying unlicensed firearms had been detained in the area. — AFP

■ LONDON



UK'S SUNAK SCOTCHES RESIGNATION TALK AFTER D-DAY ROW

UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak on Monday dismissed rumours that he would quit before the July 4 general election, as criticism about his early departure from D-Day commemoration events rumbled on.

The Conservative leader issued an apology after outrage from veterans' groups that he declined to join other world leaders at an event in northern France to mark the 80th anniversary of the invasion. "The reality is I'm not going to stop going, I'm not going to stop fighting for people's votes, I'm not going to stop fighting for the future of our country," he added on a campaign stop. — AFP

■ SEOUL



NORTH KOREA SENDS BALLOONS WARNING OF NEW COUNTERACTION

North Korea sent hundreds more trash-carrying balloons over the border, Seoul's military said on Monday, after Kim Jong Un's powerful sister warned of responses if the South keeps up its "psychological warfare".

Kim's sister and key government spokeswoman Kim Yo Jong said that South Korea would "suffer a bitter embarrassment of picking up waste paper without rest and it will be its daily work".

She slammed the activists' leaflets as "psychological warfare" and warned that unless Seoul stopped and called off the loudspeaker broadcasts, the North would hit back. — AFP

Macron urges French to make 'right choice'

PARIS: President Emmanuel Macron said on Monday he was confident the French would make the "right choice" in snap elections he called after the far right crushed his centrist alliance in Sunday's EU ballot.

His surprise move came after mainstream centrist parties kept an overall majority in the European Parliament in Sunday's poll, but the far right notched up a string of high-profile victories in Italy, Austria and France.

In Germany, where the three ruling coalition parties also performed dismally, centre-left Chancellor Olaf Scholz's spokesman on Monday ruled out a snap poll.

Analysts say the French leader has taken the extremely risky choice of dissolving the national parliament in a bid to keep the far-right National Rally (RN) out of power when his second term ends in 2027.

"I am confident in the capacity of the French people to make the right choice for themselves and for future generations," Macron wrote on X on Monday morning.

"My sole ambition is to be useful to our country that I love so much."

Macron's announcement of elections for a new National Assembly on June 30, with a second round on July 7, has sparked widespread alarm, even from within the ranks of his own party.

"By playing with fire, the head of state could end up by burning himself and dragging the entire country into the fire," *Le Monde* wrote in an editorial.

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo, a Socialist, described the prospect of elections just weeks before the start of the Paris Olympics as "extremely unsettling".

But International Olympic Committee chief Thomas Bach played down any direct impact



French President Emmanuel Macron walks with his wife Brigitte Macron and Daniel Fasquelle, mayor of Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, as they arrive to vote during the European Parliament election, outside a polling station in Le Touquet-Paris-Plage, France. — Reuters

I am confident in the capacity of the French people to make the right choice for themselves and for future generations. My sole ambition is to be useful to our country that I love so much

EMMANUEL MACRON

French President

on the event.

Macron warned of the danger of "the rise of nationalists and demagogues" for France and its place in Europe.

He noted that, including the RN, far-right parties in France had managed to take almost 40

per cent of the EU Parliament vote.

Macron hopes to win back the majority he lost in France's lower house in 2022 legislative elections after winning a second term.

But some fear the anti-immigration RN could instead win, forcing Macron to work in an uncomfortable coalition with a far-right prime minister.

RN vice-president Sebastien Chenu on Monday said the party's 28-year-old leader Jordan Bardella would be its contender for the post.

Bardella's mentor Marine Le Pen, who was runner-up in the last two presidential elections, has remained party leader in parliament and is largely expected to tilt for the top job again in 2027.

The far right came out on top in France, Italy and Austria, and second in Germany and the Netherlands. — AFP

Sudan fighting shuts last hospital in Darfur city

PORT SUDAN: The last operating hospital in western Sudan's El-Fasher has been closed after an attack by paramilitaries trying to seize the key Darfur city, medical charity Doctors Without Borders has said.

War has raged for more than a year between the regular military under army chief Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces led by his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo.

El-Fasher in North Darfur is the only state capital in the vast western region not under RSF control, and is a key humanitarian hub for a region on the brink of famine.

"On Saturday, MSF and the ministry of health suspended all activities in South Hospital, El-Fasher, North Darfur, after RSF soldiers stormed the facility, opened fire and looted it, including stealing an MSF ambulance," said the NGO in a statement posted late Sunday on X.

El-Fasher has seen sporadic clashes since the war broke out in April 2023, but fierce fighting reignited on May 10 in what UN chief Antonio Guterres has called "an alarming new chapter" in the conflict.

Since then, "at least 192 people have been killed and more than

1,230 wounded" in the city, according to a conservative estimate by the medical charity.

MSF said that "intensified fighting" around the hospital earlier this week had triggered its evacuation, and by the time of the paramilitary attack "there were only 10 patients and a reduced medical team" there.

"Most patients and the remaining medical team... were able to flee the RSF shooting," MSF added.

It noted that "due to the chaos, our team was unable to verify if there were any killed or wounded" in the latest attack.

Michel-Olivier Lacharite, head of emergencies at MSF, said it was "outrageous that the RSF opened fire inside the hospital".

The war across Sudan has killed tens of thousands of people, including up to 15,000 in a single West Darfur town, UN experts say.

Nearly nine million people have been forced from their homes. Both warring sides have been accused of war crimes including deliberately targeting civilians, indiscriminate shelling of residential areas and blocking humanitarian aid. Rights groups and the United States have also accused the paramilitaries of ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity. — AFP



Sudanese children wait for their turn during a campaign responding to the polio epidemic launched with the support of UNICEF, in Gedaref state in eastern Sudan. — AFP

Russia claims capture of Ukraine village

MOSCOW: Russia on Monday claimed the capture of a village in the south of the eastern Donetsk region. The defence ministry said its troops "continued to advance into the depths of the enemy's defence and liberated the settlement of Staromaiorskoye" (Staromaiorske in Ukrainian), located southwest of the Russian-held city of Donetsk.

Ukrainian troops retook the village, close to the southern Zaporizhzhia region, in July last year during its summer counter-offensive, which had limited success but enabled it to retake some territory in the south.

Staromaiorske is located on the southern front on the southwestern edge of the Donetsk region, where there is now fierce fighting following a successful ground assault in the Kharkiv region last month.

Russian President Vladimir Putin told an economic forum last week that Russia has taken 47 Ukrainian towns and villages so far this year.

US President Joe Biden's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said on Sunday that Russia's advance on the Kharkiv border region has "stalled out"



Ukrainian servicemen do maintenance on their T-72 tank at an undisclosed location in the Donetsk region. — AFP

after Washington partially lifted restrictions on using US-donated weapons to strike inside Russia.

Russia has shifted its focus to two strategic towns in the Donetsk region, Ukrainian soldiers fighting there said at the weekend.

"The fiercest fighting is taking place in this area: Pokrovsk and Chasiv Yar. This is the direction they really want.

Meanwhile, four people were wounded on Monday when a mine exploded in a Russian town close to the border with Ukraine,

while Ukrainian shelling hurt another three, the regional governor said.

The people were wounded in the town of Shebekino in Russia's Belgorod region, which often comes under attack from the Ukrainian side.

Staromaiorske is located on the southern front on the southwestern edge of the Donetsk region, where there is now fierce fighting following a ground assault in the Kharkiv

The area is just a few kilometres from Ukraine's northeastern Kharkiv region, where a Russian offensive last month aimed to create a "security zone" to prevent Ukrainian strikes.

"Four people — three self-defence fighters and an employee of the Rossiya-24 TV station — were blown up by a mine in the town of Shebekino," Governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said in a post on Telegram.

The journalist, a cameraman for the state-run TV channel, was in a serious condition and was undergoing surgery following shrapnel wounds to his abdomen and shoulder, Gladkov said.

Shebekino is often hit by shelling and earlier this month, six civilians were wounded in bombardment of the town of 40,000 people. — AFP

Who will end Israeli aggression, and how?



THE world is losing count on the number of people killed in Gaza every day, including innocent children who are paying the price for being born innocent.

The Sultanate of Oman has been consistent with its stand and has raised concern at all possible platforms, including during bilateral meetings.

The Sultanate of Oman stands with Palestine at times in their adversity and the whole world must stop this genocide that the Israelis are inflicting against the Palestinian people.

It is not just casualties but also losing count on the strictures passed by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and United Nations Security Council (UNSC) against Israel and ordering it to immediately end all aggression and allow unconditional passage of aid to the residents of the Gaza strip.

The reason for this scepticism is understandable and obvious because the aggression that started in the morning hours of October 7 last year continues unabated and seems to get worse with each passing

day. Efforts to have a ceasefire to allow passage of relief and aid to the residents of Gaza have failed again only because Israel has shown no intention to slow down its aggression and accept any proposal despite pressures and demands from its close allies.

On Sunday, it condemned the brutal attack that targeted the Al Nuseirat camp in Gaza which resulted in a massacre and killed over 200 Palestinian civilian victims.

The Foreign Ministry affirmed that the continued commission of systematic war crimes against the Palestinian people is a clear and explicit violation of international conventions and international humanitarian law, which requires urgent intervention by the international community to put an end to these crimes against humanity, protect civilians, and hold the Israeli occupying state responsible for its actions.

Israeli forces have advanced into further areas of Rafah in an apparent bid to seal off many parts of the southern city.

Saturday's death toll was the worst over of the Gaza war after Israeli special force commandos

THE SULTANATE OF OMAN HAS BEEN CONSISTENT WITH ITS STAND AND HAS RAISED CONCERN AT ALL POSSIBLE PLATFORMS, INCLUDING DURING BILATERAL MEETINGS

stormed into the densely populated Al Nuseirat camp to rescue four hostages held since October last by Hamas.

Only a few days before, Israeli forces bombed a United Nations-linked school in central Gaza where displaced Palestinians were sheltering.

Hamas termed the attack on Thursday as a 'horrible massacre' and said many women and children were among those killed and wounded.

"This horrible massacre committed by the Israeli occupation is clear evidence of genocide, ethnic cleansing against civilians, including women and children and displaced people in the Gaza Strip," Hamas said.

It is not just politicians who have been making efforts to end this aggression. Even concerned ordinary people have been taking part in protests, like university students in the United States and elsewhere.

Businesses with links to Israel and its allies have also been suffering big losses due to boycotts by consumers. However, all these efforts seem to be far too little and futile.

Ukraine summit set to thrash out path to peace

AGNES PEDRERO

Switzerland will stage a conference on Ukraine this coming weekend, with world leaders set to discuss how to reach an eventual peace process — although Russia is not taking part.

The gathering comes immediately after the G7 summit in southern Italy, running from Thursday to Saturday, during which the wealthy democracies will also discuss Ukraine in the presence of its president, Volodymyr Zelensky.

The G7 will look at ways to use frozen Russian assets to provide fresh aid to Ukraine, which was attacked by Russia in February 2022.

Zelensky will then head to Switzerland, to be joined by G7 and other leaders for the summit.

What is billed as the first "Summit on Peace in Ukraine" will take place at the luxury Burgenstock resort on a mountain ridge overlooking Lake Lucerne. French President Emmanuel Macron, US Vice President Kamala Harris, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida are among those so far confirmed to be attending. The aim "is to inspire a future peace process and to develop practical elements as well as steps towards such a process", the Swiss foreign ministry said. "All states present at the summit should contribute their ideas and visions for a just and lasting peace in Ukraine."

Swiss President Viola Amherd, set to hold a press conference on preparations later on Monday, characterised it as a "first step" in a process towards a lasting peace.

Switzerland invited more than 160 delegations, including countries at heads of state and government level, and international organisations.

Bern says more than 80 confirmations have been received so far, mostly from Europe.

Organised at Ukraine's request, the outcome of the conference remains uncertain, even if Switzerland is working hard to strike a potential final declaration. "It is very important to avoid exaggerated expectations," a German government source stressed, calling it a "building block for a peaceful settlement of this conflict". "But there will be further building blocks," the source added.

Ukraine hopes to gain broad international support on its conditions to end the war with Russia. "The inaugural peace summit could become a format that would bring closer a just end to this war," Zelensky said on June 7. The conference was envisaged to involve plenary sessions with all heads present and discussions in smaller formats on various topics.

The programme, developed by Bern, draws on Zelensky's 10-point peace plan but may focus on territorial sovereignty, a just peace in Ukraine and upholding the United Nations charter. — AFP



Dr Ahmed Mahmood Al Lawati

The writer is Team Leader in PDO

Innovative enhancements to key concepts in modern leadership



T here is no doubt that the science of leadership has evolved significantly in its history after World War II.

In the last decades of this century, leadership specialists have developed ordinary concepts into innovative concepts, that made them needed for current days.

For instance, the need for transformational and situational leadership, the servant leadership and so on.

Also, leadership specialists developed measurable and tangible tools to measure ability and behaviour of leaders accurately.

For example, I mention here some measures (but not exclusively) such as Thomas, Hogan, podium, etc.

Modern leadership also focused on important concepts such as transparency, governance, building alliance and advocacy for value leadership.

However, some of the concepts put forward needs further clarifications and reconsideration.

For example, modern leadership focuses on the principle of forming allies, it calls on the successful leader to focus a lot of his focus on turning enemies into allies, or at least putting them on neutrality, so that he can reach his goal.

It is true that an outstanding leader

is the one who can keep his allies, but the process of change cannot always be so.

In many situations a true leader will find himself between the choice of preserving his allies or remaining alone in the arena victorious for his values.

What I am trying to emphasise here is that the compass and true north should be the values, not building allies only.

The leader has to educate himself to be ready for unity and to feel alienated in bringing change to the process especially in big change initiatives.

There are many examples and

IT IS TRUE THAT AN OUTSTANDING LEADER IS THE ONE WHO CAN KEEP HIS ALLIES, BUT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE CANNOT ALWAYS BE SO

testimonies from ancient and modern history, whether at the level of individual leaders or groups, we have namely Givara, the Prophet (PBUH) and Hussein bin Ali.

These are the best examples of the leader's courageous who sacrificed their lives to stand in the face of many enemies for the values of justice and

humanity.

In current days, we see how those who are killed for the defence of their homeland are left alone, where the only motivator are their values, despite the brutality of the enemies and the letdown of any helpers.

While the concept of expanding network is a good concept, and indeed an excellent principle that prompts the leader to the long-term reform process, it reminds the leader to be aware about two fundamentals.

The first is that the end does not justify the means, namely, the use of relationships for illegal causes.

The other thing is that relationships and their expansion should not become the primary concern of the leader where it consumes the energy and efforts.

This is because many relationships are, because of the nature of relationship, quantitative rather than qualitative, so as a result, the goal of expanding relationships may lead to turning down some values.

The motive might change here, and it could lead to satisfaction some of the network and relationships with the substitution of values.

It's an invitation to govern these concepts with a valuable perspective to enable the person to be ready to get the medal of the true leader immortal in the earth and the heaven.

Moving on after the death of a loved one

Moving on after the death of a loved one, is one of the most dense and challenging experiences life can make us endure.

It involves a profound journey of bereavement, adjustment, healing and acceptance.

Especially if the passing happened suddenly, the pain of loss can be so devastating that it makes us ponder on life's fragility, which can change in the blink of an eye.

Grief is a natural and necessary response to loss. Embracing your feelings is a crucial step towards healing.

Allow yourself to feel the full range of emotions that accompany it, as denying or suppressing your sorrow can prolong the healing process.

Accept the support from others, allow their help to provide comfort and love during this painful time.

Sharing your thoughts and feelings can be incredibly cathartic.

Often, connecting with those who have experienced similar losses can offer unique and helpful perspectives.

If your sorrow feels unmanageable, a grief therapist can be invaluable, offering coping strategies to help soothe your pain.

As grief can take a toll on your mind and body, ensure you take care of your physical health.

Push yourself to get out of bed, to eat a balanced meal and to maintain regular exercise, all which will help bolster your resilience during these daunting times - as without, one can easily drift into depression.

Creating new routines can help you adjust to life without your loved one.

The absence of familiar patterns can be jarring, but establishing



Hyesha Barrett
@coach_hyesha

Hyesha is a certified Master Life Coach and NLP Practitioner based in Muscat. She is affiliated with the Whispers of Serenity Clinic

TO EXPERIENCE THE REAL FEELING AND MEANING OF GRATITUDE, YOU NEED TO REALISE THE IMPACT THAT “THANK YOU” MAKES WHEN ADDRESSED TO YOU.

new habits can provide a sense of stability and normalcy.

Engaging in activities you enjoy is not only a distraction but also a way to reconnect with life.

Finding moments of happiness and satisfaction is important.

Make sure to honour your own life and take it moment by moment, day by day.

There is no set timeline for moving on. Patience is crucial as healing from loss is a gradual process - each person's grief journey is unique. Be kind to yourself and acknowledge that there will be good days and bad days.

Finding new ways and means to live without this person in your daily life is extremely difficult yet with time, possible.

Moving on after the death of a loved one is a deeply personal voyage marked by moments of profound sorrow and gradual healing.

Never forgotten and always with us, there will be moments where an event, a smell or a location will elicit the grief. In these moments, offer yourself even more compassion.

Through being patient with yourself, caring for your health, creating new routines and memorialising your loved one, you can navigate this turbulent journey and eventually find a new equilibrium in life.

Death, is sadly a part of life which we will all face at some point.

Embracing each day, letting go of things and being present will follow the philosophy to “live as if you will die tomorrow”.

We never know when we will succumb to our inevitable fate, which makes it even more crucial to live, laugh and learn each and every day.

ZOUAVE CASTES VOTE



A participant of the Saint-Medard traditional parade and wearing a uniform of the French Zouaves, votes for the federal, regional and European Parliament elections at a polling station in Saint-Gerard. – AFP

Al Aqsa Flood war in its eighth month

The Israeli leadership underestimated the resistance it would face from Gaza, mistakenly believing it would be a quick military action like past conflicts.

However, the war has now stretched into its eighth month, and there are no signs it will end soon. Israel finds itself more exhausted, dealing with a multitude of internal and external challenges.

As the war drags on, there have been increasing calls within Israel for a prisoner release deal. Many are warning the Israeli leadership that it is on the brink of a strategic defeat. This sentiment was echoed by former Justice Minister Haim Ramon in the Israeli newspaper Maariv. Despite Israel's initial aim to weaken Hamas, the resistance remains strong and has inflicted significant losses on Israeli forces.

Recently, over 15 Israeli soldiers were killed or wounded east of Rafah, and a new Israeli soldier was captured in a complex operation in the Jabalia camp.

Israeli intelligence, which has historically relied on its network of spies, has been unable to locate Hamas leaders. These leaders continue to direct the war from unknown locations, much to the frustration of Netanyahu and his war council, who are eager to capture or kill figures like Yahya Al Sinwar, Muhammad Al Deif and Abu Ubaida to claim victory.

The internal pressure on the Israeli government to release prisoners held by the resistance is intense. At the same time, Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Galant face mounting criticism for failing to achieve their declared war objectives, particularly the dismantling of Hamas and the release of detainees in Gaza.

Even now, eight months into the



Zahir Al Mahrooqi

The writer is an Omani writer and the author of ‘The Road to Jerusalem’

THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE CANNOT BE BURIED, AND RESISTANCE REMAINS STRONG AS LONG AS THERE IS A SINGLE PALESTINIAN ALIVE

conflict, some Israelis are still discussing the intelligence failure to anticipate and prepare for the October 7 attack.

Haaretz concluded that Israel's dismissal and cessation of intelligence gathering on Hamas for over two years led to the Al Aqsa Flood and that this intelligence failure continued even after the war began.

Israel has not achieved its goals of eliminating the resistance, its leaders or liberating its prisoners. The war has also resulted in significant economic losses. Bloomberg has warned of the severe economic consequences of the ‘Al Aqsa Flood’ battle on the Israeli economy, suggesting it could lead to another lost decade similar to the one after the 1973 war. The Central Bank of Israel has estimated the total cost of the war could reach 250 billion shekels (\$67.4 billion) by 2025.

US President Joe Biden described the Al Aqsa flood as an event that would change the world and reverberate throughout the 21st century. His comment, made while the flood was still fresh, has proven accurate.

The world has indeed changed, with the Palestinian issue gaining unprecedented international attention. Many countries are now racing to recognise the Palestinian state and students from international universities, as well as protesters in various global capitals, are standing in solidarity with the Palestinians.

This global movement sends a clear message that the Palestinian cause cannot be buried, and resistance remains strong as long as

there is a single Palestinian alive.

This international support indicates that Israel's existence is increasingly precarious, no matter how many weapons it has or how many Arab regimes support it. These regimes may disappear before Israel does, as predicted by the Islamic scholar Shaikh Mohammed al Ghazali.

The Al Aqsa Flood, now in its eighth month, has achieved militarily and medially what Arab armies and information ministries have failed to achieve for over seventy years. If some believe otherwise, that is their problem.

The proposal by former Israeli Justice Minister Haim Ramon for Israel to declare an end to the war, contingent on the return of all

prisoners, highlights the suffering within Israel. Internal disputes among war council members have surfaced, with public accusations of strategic failure.

Tzachi Hanegbi, head of the Israeli National Security Council, admitted on Israeli Channel 13 that Israel did not achieve its war goals: eliminating Hamas, securing the return of prisoners and ensuring the safe return of residents to the Gaza envelope. He even noted that achieving these goals would take years, not just one year. If eight months have caused so much harm to Israel, it raises the question of whether it can continue the war despite the ongoing losses.

The Palestinian resistance has succeeded in causing significant

pain to Israel over the past months, shattering the myth of Israel's ‘invincible’ army and exposing the unpreparedness for the October 7 attack. Hamas has brought the Palestinian issue back to the forefront, making it a top priority worldwide again. This has embarrassed the normalising countries and the Palestinian Authority, halting the normalisation process for other countries, at least temporarily. Many more positives are likely to emerge over time as the situation develops.

Translated by Badr al Dhafari
(The original version of the article was published Oman Arabic newspaper on June 10)



A woman and child walk among debris, aftermath of Israeli strikes at the area, where Israeli hostages were rescued on Saturday in Nuseirat refugee camp in the central Gaza Strip. – Reuters

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OMAN LOOK TO TOP GROUP WITH WIN OVER KYRGYZSTAN

ADIL AL BALUSHI
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Oman will hope for a winning end against Kyrgyzstan as both teams will meet in the concluding clash of Group D in the Preliminary Joint Qualification for the FIFA World Cup 2026 and AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027 on Tuesday. The match will kick off at 8:00 pm at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex.

Red Warriors have already sealed their ticket to the next stage of the joint qualifiers thanks to the 3-0 win over Chinese Taipei in the previous round while Kyrgyzstan and Malaysia's match finished in a 1-1 draw. The importance of Tuesday's assignment for the national team is that the triumph will secure the group topper and reaching to 15



Oman head coach Jaroslav Silhavy

points.

Oman's head coach, Jaroslav Silhavy, voiced confidence that

the team is very keen to register the victory. "It is a tough match in the group as the winning result will confirm Oman as group winners. Moreover, we would like to win in this crucial match to dedicate the triumph to our lovely fans in a home game ahead of Eid Al Adha," he said.

Oman, who are 77th in FIFA rankings, are in the best shape to face the 100th-ranked Kyrgyzstan who will do their utmost level to qualify for the next stage.

"Our focus is to claim three points despite the previous result in Bishkek city. All the players are in good shape except Waleed al Musallami, who trained separately. As a coaching staff, we observed Kyrgyzstan game against Malaysia and noted down all the weakness areas which to be focused by our players," the Czech coach said.

Responding to an inquiry that as the team guaranteed their qualification and any changes may occur in the starting line-up, coach Silhavy answered: "This is an essential match and we want to continue in the same format of winning results. Playing with major changes in the starting line-up may will impact on the team. Anyhow, the doors are open for any new players and we may see changes in the squad after getting the required confidence," he added.

The Czech coach said the next round of the qualifiers will be tough and different than this round. "The readiness of the team should be at very high level. We are very confident on our squad and our goal is to develop Oman's football," he concluded.

The first leg match between the

teams ended for Kyrgyzstan by 1-0 in Bishkek in November last year.

Oman captain Mohammed al Musallami stated that this match will mean a lot for the team. "This is the concluding match to determine the topper of the group. As players we will fight on the field to claim the winning points and lead the group to spread the joy among the spectators," he said.

"Oman fans do not require an invitation. They attended in difficult times and we are assured that they will come and support the team for this crucial game," he added.

Kyrgyzstan were held to a 1-1 draw by Malaysia in the last round.

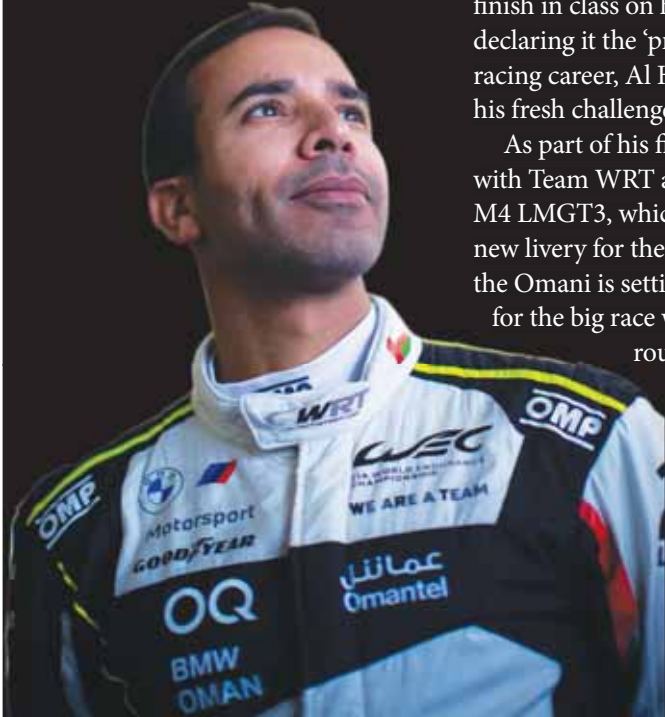
On the other side, Kyrgyzstan's coach Stefan Tarkovic said that the team will fight for promotion.

"The main target for the team is to qualify for the next round. We will do all efforts to qualify and we do not have anything to lose" he said.

"The health condition for all players who came to Oman are in best shape and ready to deliver a top game. Our goal will remain the same which is to win the game despite the result in the other game between Chinese Taipei and Malaysia which will be played ahead of our game," he concluded.

Kyrgyzstan player Valeriy Kichin pointed out that the weather condition is ranked as one of the main challenges here. "Both teams will suffer from this difficulty but Oman team players are more used to this climate. However, we will try to overcome this challenge as a team," he said.

Al Harthy primed for 24hrs of Le Mans



LE MANS, France: Oman's Ahmad al Harthy is gearing up for the undoubted biggest race on the global motorsport calendar on June 15 and 16, when the Team WRT driver contests the renowned 24 Hours of Le Mans for the second time in his glittering career.

After starring at the Circuit de la Sarthe in France during last year's staging of the endurance classic, where he achieved a sensational second place finish in class on his debut before declaring it the 'proudest day' of his racing career, Al Harthy is now relishing his fresh challenge for the 2024 race.

As part of his first season competing with Team WRT and driving the BMW M4 LMGT3, which has an eye-catching new livery for the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Omani is setting his sights high for the big race which also acts as round four of the FIA World Endurance Championship.

Fourth in the LMGT3 points table ahead of this week's twice-round-the-clock spectacular with star team-mates

AHMAD AL HARTHY AIMING HIGH WITH TEAM WRT IN 24HRS OF LE MANS

92ND STAGING OF GLOBE'S BIGGEST MOTOR RACE THIS WEEKEND IN FRANCE

AL HARTHY PROUDLY REPRESENTING OMAN ON SECOND APPEARANCE IN 24HRS

BMW RACER HOPING TO REPLICATE MAIDEN PODIUM FROM LAST YEAR'S RACE

Maxime Martin and Valentino Rossi, Al Harthy has delivered some outstanding drives thus far in 2024 and has also shone in qualifying.

Notably progressing to Hyperpole at all three FIA WEC race meetings so far contested, with a season-best qualifying of second place at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium last time out, the Omani has been in impressive form all year and has adapted to the BMW very well indeed.

In the races, the trio took fourth place at Losail in Qatar during round one of the campaign and then claimed a maiden podium with second in LMGT3

at Imola in Italy in round two. At Spa last month, an unfortunate retirement resulted from contact where Al Harthy was the innocent party.

Le Mans, of course, is the grandest race in world motorsport and after such an impressive debut in the event last year — where Al Harthy made history with his performance, proudly flying the flag of Oman on the podium — he is carrying high hopes into the coming week's preparations.

Featuring a combined entry of more than 60 cars, with 23 cars in LMGT3, the coming weekend's encounter will be one of the absolute highlights of the racing year and Al Harthy is determined to deliver pride and success for his home nation and prestigious partners OQ, Oman Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, Omantel and BMW Oman.

AHMAD AL HARTHY:

"I'm so pleased to be back at Le Mans and really looking forward to this year's race and all of the build-up throughout the week, especially with Team WRT and BMW for the first time. It's always an honour and pleasure to race at one of the biggest events in the world and, for sure, I have very good memories of the Le Mans 24 Hours from last year where

we finished second.

"We started the week with the Prologue on Sunday, then we head into official testing later in the week, qualifying and hopefully we can progress to Hyperpole once again. I'm proud to represent Oman for the second time in the world's premier endurance race, seeing the flag is always such strong motivation and it is the biggest honour to represent Oman in such a huge and important race.

"I am very much looking forward to welcoming our incredible partners and supporters to this amazing race weekend, we are obviously aiming for the best result we can achieve and I know all of the guys in the team are ready and determined to do the best job we possibly can."

Opening free practice at the Circuit de la Sarthe will get under way at 14.00 local time on June 12. On June 13, third practice is scheduled to start at 15.00 local time with Hyperpole at 20.00 and the fourth and final 'night' practice at 22.00. Following a day's rest, the 24 Hours of Le Mans competitors will undertake a warm-up session at 12.00 local time on June 15, ahead of the start of the big race at 16.00.



Jasprit Bumrah (L) celebrates after dismissing Pakistan's Rizwan. – AFP

Bumrah credits India's calmness for victory

NEW YORK: India's match-winner Jasprit Bumrah said his team's calmness and refusal to panic led them to their exciting six-run victory over Pakistan at the T20 World Cup on Sunday.

Having only made 119 on the tricky New York surface, India saw Pakistan respond with a measured reply but Bumrah provided the crucial breakthrough for the favourites.

Bumrah took 3-14 with big wickets at crucial moments, including Pakistan's top scorer Mohamad Rizwan, who after making a patient 31 from 44 balls, was looking like a match-winner himself until he was clean bowled by Bumrah.

"The biggest positive for us was the calmness because when we were batting in the morning, there was a lot more help," said Bumrah, noting the damper conditions after pre-match rain which turned to sunshine later in the day.

"And then when we started bowling, the skies opened up and the ball stopped seaming and there wasn't a lot of lateral movement. So we had to be more consistent and more accurate. And we as a unit were very calm and very clear on what we wanted to do. So very happy that as a unit we were able to contribute and created that

pressure and then we were able to get the win," he said.

Bumrah said that he had learnt over time that in situations where the pitch can offer some help, it remains crucial not to go too far with attacking intent.

"In that aspect, experience does help you a little bit because whenever there is help, you can get excited, you can try and go pole hunting, you can bowl bouncers, you can bowl out-swingers, in-swingers but you don't have to do that," he said.

"I have learned that over the experience. But this time, the ball was not doing a lot. Yes, we did create pressure. Little bit of lateral movement was there but not too much. Not as pronounced as the last game," he said.

Bumrah is in a rich spell of form, following a strong IPL campaign with a 2-6 spell against Ireland in the Group A opener before Sunday's show.

"I was trying to focus on what is the best option over here on a wicket like this. How do I make shot making difficult? What are the best options for me? So that way I try to stay in the present and focus on what I have to do. Because if I look at the outside noise, if I look at people and pressure and emotion takes over, then things don't really work for me," he said. — AFP

THIRD DEFEAT ENDS KNOCKOUT ROUND HOPES

Clinical Scotland outplay Oman

NORTH SOUND, Antigua: Ahead of the match against Scotland, Oman skipper Aqib Ilyas had talked about coming up with an all-round performance and playing as a unit. The Men in Red certainly fell short in all departments of the game against a fired-up Scotland in the Group B match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup match at the Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in Antigua on Sunday.

Oman batters put up their highest score of 150 in the ongoing edition but the bowlers failed to trouble the Scotland batters and the fielding woes continued as they lost by seven wickets with Scotland chasing down the target in just 13.1 overs.

The defeat, marked the third successive loss for Duleep Mendis-coached side, also dashed their hopes of progressing further in the tournament, with their final pool match against defending champions England looming on Thursday (June 13).

It was a clinical all-round display from the Scots to record their second consecutive win and top Group B and eye a spot in the knockout round.

Scotland batters – Brandon McMullen (61*) and George Munsey (41) – tore apart the Oman bowling attack across the picturesque ground in a remarkable display of power hitting.

Sixes rained from their blades, with a total of 11 blows hammered by the Scots as they enhanced their net run-rate.

Oman captain Aqib Ilyas opted to bat first on a fresh pitch as this was the first match of the ongoing World Cup to be played in Antigua, hoping to make the maximum use of the conditions.

Oman brought in Naseem Khushi in place of Kashyap Prajapati and along with Pratik



Athavale opened the batting. Khushi departed early and Ilyas' cameo of 16 from six balls, which included two boundaries and a six, ended before the powerplay as Oman hit their highest score in the three matches with 53/2.

Khushi, who hit the first six of the day over the long boundary at extra cover off Chris Sole, was dismissed two balls later, snapped by Mark Watt at short backward square off a miscued ramp.

Experienced Zeeshan Maqsood short visit to the crease and Khalid Kail's run out derailed the progress of Oman.

There was an incident during Watt's bowling as he had the ball hit the stumps with Kail signalling he was not ready and the umpire declaring it a dead ball. The Scottish players did protest with the umpire but Kail failed to exploit the escape as he pushed his next ball into the covers, was sent back for a second run by Athavale, and Watt whipped off the bails with an additional sense of vindication.

It was left for Ayaan Khan and Athavale to rebuild the innings as



they shared a 43-run partnership before Athavale trying to accelerate departed in the 16th over for a 40-ball 54, an innings studded with five hits to the ropes and two sixes.

Athavale made a first-ball duck in his last outing against Australia but this time he proved to be the mainstay as he reached his fifty from 38 balls.

Ayaan remained unbeaten on 39-ball 41 but with the tail failing to wag for long, Oman were restricted to 150/7.

Oman could reach the total, thanks to Ayaan's two successive boundaries, and along with Shakeel Ahmed, garnering 15 runs off the last over from Safyaan Sharif, who picked up two wickets in his 200th appearance across formats for his country.

Scotland were off to a flier and made their intentions clear with Michael Jones and George Munsey racing to 21 in three overs before the former was brilliantly caught by Mehran Khan as he backpedalled to take the catch off Bilal Khan.

Oman's cause was not helped by yet another sloppy catching display, including a sitter by Rafiullah at deep midwicket off McMullen and with the star of the day in roaring form, it was a stroll in the park for Scotland after the chance.

BRIEF SCORES: Oman 150/7 (Pratik Athavale 54, Ayaan Khan 41*, Aqib Ilyas 16, Mehran Khan 13, Naseem Khushi 10; Safyaan Sharif 2/40, Brad Wheal 1/19, Chris Greaves 1/2, Chris Sole 1/41, Mark Watt 1/25) lost to Scotland 153/3 in 13.1 overs (George Munsey 41, Brandon McMullen 61*; Bilal Khan 1/12, Aqib Ilyas 1/41, Mehran Khan 1/16).

Second Oman Broadband Governorates Marathon begins

AHMED AL KAABI
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The second edition of the Oman Broadband Governorates Marathon was opened on Monday in a ceremony held at the Muscat W Hotel. The marathon will cover 10 governorates in the Sultanate of Oman, starting with Dhofar Governorate as the first stop of the marathon within Kharif Salalah Season 2024.

The event was organised by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in partnership with the Oman Athletics Association and Sabco Sports, and under the official sponsorship of the Oman Broadband Company.

The ceremony was attended by Sayyid Khalid bin Hamad al Busaidy, Chairman of Sabco Sports, Eng Saeed al Mandhari, Chairman of the Oman Broadband Company, and Eng Sultan al Wahhabi, CEO of the Oman Broadband Company.

The marathon, launched by the ministry under the directives of HH Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, in mid-2021, aims to achieve social, economic and tourism goals. The first season witnessed record-breaking participation of



over 20,000 participants from various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman, where it was held in 10 governorates for age groups from 7-65 years, with the participation of more than 500 volunteers and providing more than 400 job opportunities. The organisers in the second edition aspire to increase participation, especially among females, with the addition of new categories including families and people with disabilities.

During the opening ceremony, a partnership agreement was signed for the second year in a row between the Oman Broadband Company and Sabco Sports, renewing their commitment to community support for sporting events in the Sultanate of Oman. The agreement was signed by Khalid

bin Hamad al Busaidy and Eng Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahhabi.

Commenting on the signing of the agreement, Sayyid Khalid al Busaidy said, "We are proud to renew our partnership with the Oman Broadband Company as the main sponsor of the Governorates Marathon for the second year in a row. This cooperation reflects our continuous commitment to promoting sports and physical activity throughout the Sultanate of Oman. The marathon is not just a sporting event, but a platform for community engagement and raising awareness of the importance of health and fitness. We hope that this marathon will continue to inspire everyone, from young to old, to engage in activities that promote a healthy and active lifestyle."



Mohammed al Ameri, Director-General of Sports Activities at MoCSY, said, "The Governorates Marathon is one of the initiatives launched by the ministry, which includes implementing 10 marathons in 10 governorates. The first edition witnessed a wide participation from the local community and residents as well as contestants from outside the Sultanate of Oman, as well as accompanying events that targeted different age groups, with the participation of institutions and small and medium-sized enterprises and a large number of volunteers."

The second edition aims to spread the culture of physical activity, improve health indicators, reduce chronic diseases and create a stimulating environment for athletes of all

ages. It also seeks to enhance the economic activity of small and medium enterprises, develop partnerships between government and private institutions, and highlight the tourist sites in the governorates.

He added the second edition will include many in-kind and financial prizes, with races dedicated to people with disabilities and an increase in the number of volunteers. The marathon will start in August from Dhofar Governorate and will continue until March 2025, taking into account the weather conditions when choosing the race routes.

He added that great efforts are being made to achieve a better edition in cooperation with Sabco Sports and the Oman Broadband Company. "The

marathon also seeks to achieve Oman Vision 2040 by building a healthy and active society and spreading the culture of physical activity, in continuation of the economic, social, sports and tourism successes and gains achieved in the first edition."

On his part, Eng Sultan al Wahhabi said, "The Oman Broadband Company, through its keenness to continue organising the Oman Broadband Governorates Marathon in its second edition this year, is a belief from us as a team in corporate social responsibility, and the need to pay attention to supporting youth programmes and activities and community partnership in reaching the Sultanate of Oman as one of the most prominent sports destinations."

Verstappen wins in Canada for third year in a row

MONTREAL: Red Bull's triple world champion Max Verstappen completed a Canadian Grand Prix hat-trick of victories on a wet, wild and tricky on Sunday at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Verstappen, who started on the front row alongside Mercedes pole sitter George Russell, stayed clear of trouble on a day of constantly changing conditions, snatching the lead from McLaren's Lando Norris on the final pit stops.

The Dutchman then grimly hung on to claim his sixth victory from nine races this season and the 60th of his Formula One career.

It was another brilliant drive from the 26-year-old who dealt with a track switching back-and-forth from wet to dry, pit stop battles and challenges from McLaren and Mercedes while wrestling with his Red Bull's suspension.

After Ferrari's Carlos Sainz and Williams's Alex Albon came together, bringing out the safety car for a second time, Verstappen pulled away on the restart and finished 3.879 seconds ahead of Norris, while Russell won a nail-biting last-laps duel with team mate Lewis Hamilton to complete the podium.

“Not easy but we did it,” said Verstappen over the team radio. “We had to be on top of our calls and I think, as a team, it went really well today.”

"I think we pitted at the right time and of course the safety car worked out nicely for us but

even after that I think we were managing the gaps quite well.

"I love it, that was a lot of fun. Those kind of races you need them once in a while."

The win will certainly provide a confidence boost at Red Bull which has recently seen challenges to the team's once unquestioned dominance.

In the three races before Canada, Red Bull had managed one win as the battle for the drivers' and constructors' titles tightened.

But the team returns to Europe back in control of both, with Verstappen opening up a 56-point advantage over Ferrari's Charles Leclerc at the top of the drivers' standings while Red Bull moved 49 clear of Ferrari for the constructors' crown.

FIRST PODIUM OF SEASON FOR MERCEDES

Both Ferraris failed to finish on Sunday, with Sainz losing control of his car on the wet track and hitting the barrier while Leclerc retired after struggling with an engine issue.

"I knew I had to score big so the other teams don't catch up a lot," said Verstappen, who accounted for all the Red Bull points after Mexican team mate Sergio Perez retired.

"I do think at the end of the day as long as you keep winning, you score 25 points, even if the others finish P2, P3, you don't really lose too much and can kind of afford these one-offs."

Mercedes head to Barcelona



Verstappen (NED) races ahead of Norris (GBR). – **USA Today Sports**

for the next grand prix on June 23 with growing confidence following a stellar qualifying effort that translated into third and fourth-place results.

The podium was the first of the season for both Mercedes and Russell, who was spurred to the finish line by team mate Hamilton, a seven-time winner in Canada.

McLaren, who have now had a driver on the podium in each of the last five races, also leave Canada with a good points haul with Norris second and young Australian Oscar Piastri fifth.

Aston Martin, owned by Canadian billionaire Laurence Stroll, gave the flag-waving home crowd something to cheer with

both cars scoring points.

Spanish double world champion Fernando Alonso took sixth place ahead of Lance Stroll, who grew up in Montreal and had his best result at this home race, finishing seventh.

Australian Daniel Ricciardo, who came under attack from former champion Jacques Villeneuve in Montreal over a lack of good results, answered his critics by scoring points for RB in eighth place.

Alpine grabbed the remaining points with Pierre Gasly taking ninth and Esteban Ocon, who was informed by the Renault-owned outfit last week that they would not be renewing his contract next season, 10th. — **Reuters**



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates on the podium with a trophy after winning the Canadian Grand Prix at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve, Montreal. – **Reuters**



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*Chery Automobile took the first spot among all Chinese automotive brands in J.D. Power 2023 China Initial Quality StudySM(IQS). For more details please visit <https://china.jdpower.com/press-release/2023-IQS>

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OPAZ achieves record signing agreements in 2023



Khazaen Economic City received investments amounting to RO 126.875 million with 30 agreements, showcasing the Authority's wide-reaching impact and successful collaboration with investors.

JOMAR MENDOZA
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) achieved record signing agreements in 2023, reflecting a robust commitment to economic growth and development. With cumulative investments reaching over RO 19.049 billion by December 2023, OPAZ solidified its position as a key player in attracting capital and fostering business opportunities in Oman.

According to its Annual Report Summary, the year saw an additional RO 3.5 billion in investments, with a notable 1,472 investment applications and the signing of 334 agreements, underscoring the authority's success in building strategic partnerships and driving sustainable economic progress.

Investments in 2023 were distributed across various zones, each accompanied by a specific number of agreements.

In Duqm Special Economic Zone, investments amounted to RO 2.319 billion with 46 agreements sealed. Sohar Port and Freezone witnessed investments totalling RO 128.889 million through 10 agreements, while Salalah Free Zone attracted RO 727.620 million with 8 agreements signed.

Al Mazunah Free Zone saw investments of RO 1.485 million across 3 agreements, highlighting diverse investment opportunities within OPAZ's jurisdiction. Furthermore, Madayn recorded investments of RO

203.358 million and 237 agreements, while Khazaen Economic City received investments amounting to RO 126.875 million with 30 agreements, showcasing the authority's wide-reaching impact and successful collaboration with investors.

In addition to investment initiatives, OPAZ focused on enhancing its manpower capabilities, with a total of 75,454 employees within the supervised zones and an Omanisation rate of 34.8%, emphasising the authority's dedication to local talent development and employment opportunities.

NEW ECONOMIC ZONES:
INTEGRATED ECONOMIC
ZONE AT AL DHAHIRAH
GOVERNORATE AND THE AL
RAWDAH ECONOMIC ZONE

The establishment of new economic zones, such as the Integrated Economic Zone at Al Dhahirah Governorate and the Al Rawdah Economic Zone, added to OPAZ's portfolio of investment destinations.

Moreover, ongoing developments like the Muscat International Airport Free Zone and industrial zones including Mahas Industrial City, Seeh Serya Industrial City, Al Wadi al Kabir Industrial City and the Al Mudhaibi Industrial City demonstrated the authority's commitment to infrastructure expansion and diversification of economic activities.



CUMULATIVE
INVESTMENTS
RO 19.049
BILLION



INVESTMENTS
IN 2023
RO 3.5
BILLION



1472
INVESTMENT
APPLICATIONS WITH
334 AGREEMENTS



75, 454
EMPLOYEES
WITH



OMANISATION
RATE

The successful hosting of the Duqm First Economic Forum, which drew over 500 participants in October 2023, exemplified OPAZ's role in promoting investment opportunities and fostering a conducive business environment in Oman.

Through initiatives like the Digital Transformation Programme Plan, OPAZ leveraged modern technologies to streamline operations and introduce new digital services, such as the ChatGPT in AI-based services and the Goods & Shipment Tracking System, enhancing efficiency and customer experience.

Key agreements in 2023 included partnerships with entities like Hydrogen Oman SPC (Hydrom) and Vulcan Green Steel, focusing on innovative projects in sustainable energy and industrial development.

Memorandums of understanding with esteemed partners like POSCO Energy and bp Oman further showcased OPAZ's global collaborations and commitment to driving sustainable growth and development.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENTS:
MUSCAT INTERNATIONAL
AIRPORT FREE ZONE AND
INDUSTRIAL ZONES INCLUDING
MAHAS INDUSTRIAL CITY, SEEH
SERYA INDUSTRIAL CITY, AL WADI
AL KABIR INDUSTRIAL CITY

As OPAZ continues to advance its investment strategies and foster economic prosperity, the authority's achievements in 2023 illuminate Oman's position as a vibrant hub for innovation, investment, and business excellence.



Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Board, presided over the meeting.

OPAZ BOARD OF DIRECTORS HOLDS 3RD MEETING

MUSCAT: The Board of Directors of the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) held its third meeting of 2024 in Muscat, chaired by Shaikh Dr Ali bin Masoud al Sunaidy, Chairman of the Board.

During the meeting, the board reviewed the implementation measures of the Ministry of Economy's study results for establishing integrated industrial clusters in the Shaleem area for industrial minerals, the cold chain and food industries in the Duqm Special Economic Zone, and aluminium-based

industries in the Sohar Free Zone, linking these industrial clusters with the industrial strategy.

The board also reviewed the developments of the Khazaen Economic City project, the progress rates, and the phases of implementing the basic infrastructure, roads, and water drainage channels for flood protection in Mahas Industrial City in the Wilayat of Khasab in the Musandam Governorate.

The meeting also discussed the implementation status of the visual identity of the Duqm Special Economic Zone, the provision of facilities, and the approval of incentives for projects that use modern construction techniques, in addition to several other topics related to the economic zones, free zones, and industrial cities under the authority's supervision. – **ONA**

Aluminium industry complex proposed at Sohar Industrial City



Project team meets in Sohar to explore establishment of aluminium cluster.

BUSINESS REPORTER
MUSCAT, JUNE 10

A project team tasked with implementing an integrated economic cluster for aluminium in Sohar, conducted a field visit to Sohar Industrial City to discuss the development and establishment of an aluminium industry cluster.

The team, overseen by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ), includes representatives from OPAZ, the Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (Madayn), National Programme for Economic

Diversification (Tanwee), National Programme for Investment and Exports Development (Nazdaher), and the Industrial Innovation Academy.

During the visit, the team met with the executive management of Sohar Aluminium, a key player in the Sultanate of Oman's aluminium industry. They also toured several downstream factories involved in aluminium manufacturing to understand the challenges facing these factories and to identify investment opportunities within the integrated economic cluster for aluminium industry.

The aluminium industry is

a vital component of Oman's industrial sector, which plays a key role in supporting national economic diversification and generating new employment opportunities. The integrated economic cluster for aluminium industry aims to strengthen the country's position as a global hub for aluminium production by attracting new investments and developing advanced manufacturing industries. This visit is expected to aid in formulating a comprehensive action plan for the development of the Aluminium Industry Complex in Sohar.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT: A CORNERSTONE OF BANK MUSCAT’S SUCCESS

MUSCAT: Human resource development plays a pivotal role in the success of organisations and various business industries.

As part of its commitment to developing human resources, Bank Muscat, the leading financial service provider in Sultanate of Oman and recipient of the “Best Places to Work Award” for 2024, continues to harvest the benefit in the field of human resource development.

The Bank’s success in this field stems from the implementation of plans and strategies that contribute to strengthening its role as a trusted and supportive partner for its employees throughout their career.

The Bank makes strenuous efforts to provide a nurturing work environment to enhance employee performance and enable them to advance professionally in various sections, thus, motivating them to serve individual and corporate customers in translation



of the Bank’s vision “To serve you better everyday.”

The Bank has over 4,000 staff members employed at the various branches and departments, with a total omanisation rate of 93%.

It is worth noting that the omanisation percentage at the Bank’s 183 branches

distributed across the Sultanate of Oman hits 100%. Today, Muscat Bank is proud to be a preferred workplace in Oman. Bank Muscat has recently organised a media visit for a group of journalists and media personnel representing various media institutions to highlight the

Bank’s role its HR development.

The media visit aimed to shed light on the importance of human resources in the Bank’s path to success over the past 40 years.

During the event, a presentation was given to introduce the audience to Bank Muscat’s contributions to human

resource development and creation of a motivating work environment that enhances employee performance and efficiency.

Human resource development represents a core element of the Bank’s leadership considering that employees are central pillars

on which the Bank’s growth and progress stand.

The visit represented a platform for journalists to ask questions and inquiries, meet and exchange conversations with the Bank’s officials. Therefore, the event was organised out of the Bank’s keenness to introduce the community to its role in HR development and to strengthen its partnership with various media outlets, as they are a fundamental partner in the Bank’s journey of success and progress. During the media visit, the Bank’s officials emphasised the significant role that the human resources play in supporting Bank Muscat’s journey as an employer of choice for Omani talents. The Bank is dedicated to developing employee capabilities and experience as well as equipping them with the necessary expertise and skills to create broad opportunities for career advancement and prosperity.

KR Eshraqa Foundation completes social projects in Bahla

MUSCAT: Achieving yet another milestone in its mission to support communities across the Sultanate of Oman, the Khimji Ramdas (KR) Eshraqa Foundation recently completed its annual social development projects in Bahla.

Since its inception in 2016, the KR Eshraqa Foundation has provided support to seven Wilayats, reflecting its unwavering commitment to social development.

The Eshraqa team visited Wilayat of Bahla and met with Shaikh Said bin Ali al Nuaimi, Wali of Bahla. During the visit, the team, accompanied by the Wali, toured the government institutions that have



benefited from Eshraqa’s support, including schools, hospitals, health centres, Al Wafa centres, the Omani Women’s Association, and the Bahla Charity Team.

The Foundation supported 36 schools by providing Smart TVs,

tablets, virtual reality glasses, and educational kits, significantly enhancing the learning environment for students.

Eshraqa installed sensory room equipment at Al Wafa Centre, donated a bus to the

Omani Women’s Association, and provided ACs, fridges, and cookers to underprivileged families through the Bahla Charity Team. Additionally, the Foundation installed a solar station in Nadan Village and donated appliances to the residents, promoting sustainable living and energy efficiency.

The Foundation supported Bahla Hospital and government health centres by providing essential medical equipment, including defibrillators, patient beds, and ECG machines, thereby improving healthcare services for the local community.

Expressing his pride in the

Foundation’s ongoing efforts, Nailesh Khimji, Director of Khimji Ramdas: “we are committed to fostering sustainable improvements and enabling individuals to achieve better lives, aligning with the goals of Oman’s Vision 2040.”

Shaikh Said bin Ali al Naimi, Wali of Bahla, said, “The support provided by the KR Eshraqa Foundation has made a substantial difference to our community. Their contributions to education, healthcare, and community well-being are invaluable; we appreciate their contribution and dedication towards enhancing the lives of the people of Bahla.”

Oman Post offers 25% discount on international express mail service



MUSCAT: Coinciding with the Eid celebrations, Oman Post, the national postal operator, is offering a 25% discount on Express Mail Service (EMS) International.

The offer which is valid until June 27, allows customers to send Eid gifts to their loved ones abroad with ease and convenience through Oman Post branches across Oman.

As a reliable partner with a wide delivery network locally, regionally, and internationally, Oman Post complies with the best international standards while delivering to over 190 countries and territories. Oman Post ensures reliable, secure, and efficient delivery within three to ten days.

The EMS international service prioritises mail delivery for documents and merchandise, providing a seamless and efficient mailing experience and offering features such as tracking, delivery to the recipient’s door, and proof of delivery for added peace of mind.

Oman Post, Part of Asyad Group, has consistently demonstrated excellence in the postal industry, by connecting people and businesses across Oman and beyond with innovative and practical postal solutions. In 2022 and 2023, Oman Post secured first place at the EMS Performance Awards, further solidifying its position as a top-performing postal operator.

BankDhofar customers express high satisfaction with digital solutions

MUSCAT: BankDhofar customers have expressed their satisfaction with the services and products provided by the bank, particularly its electronic services. Customers can easily conduct their banking transactions through the mobile application without the hassle of visiting a branch.

Additionally products like “Payment sticker, Dhofar Pay, Samsung Pay” allow customers to make purchases at various can pass through various sales outlets without the need to present a physical debit card.



Abdullah al Mashaykhi

Customer Testimonials

Mona Nasser: A Lebanese resident in Oman. Mona Nasser

shared her positive experience “I opened my bank account at BankDhofar three years ago, and I am very satisfied with their services and products. The banks efficiency and staffs responsiveness are quite impressive. I can handle the day-to-day banking requirements effortlessly” She highlighted the convenience of the BankDhofar mobile application, which saves her time and effort, especially for paying bills, transferring money, and checking her account statement with just a push of a tab, anytime and anywhere.

She added” BankDhofar offers many benefits through their women’s account, which I plan to take advantage of. I keep up with their continuous advertisements in newspaper and social media channels”

Tap & Pay Sticker

Abdullah al Mashaykhi : An Omani citizen based at Muscat. He uses the BankDhofar “Tap & Pay Sticker” on the back of his mobile phone while shopping.

He said “I am eagerly waiting for the launch of Apple Pay service.

This sticker provides a convenient and exceptional shopping experience, as I only need to swipe my mobile phone at the payment machine without presenting my debit card.”

Al Mashaykhi also mentioned the BankDhofar mobile application, which saves him the trouble of visiting ATMs or branches.

He can pay bills and make financial transfers to any bank, both within and outside Oman, from the comfort of a café or his home.

The new Preface from Geely redefines automotive excellence

MUSCAT: Towell Auto Centre LLC (TAC), the exclusive distributor of Geely vehicles in Oman, recently announced the launch of its leading segment C sedan model in Oman - the new Preface.

Built on the advanced Compact Architecture (CMA) platform, this exceptional model is poised to redefine driving pleasure for Omani consumers while setting new benchmarks in automotive excellence. It reaffirms the brand’s unwavering commitment to providing Omani customers with unmatched technology, comfort, safety, power and performance.

‘Perfected Presence’

The new Preface, a frontrunner segment C sedan, represents a harmonious fusion of technology,



design, intelligence, driving precision, and safety - heralding a new era of ‘perfected presence’ on Oman’s roads.

The Exterior Elegance

Crafted to command attention

on the road with class leading dimensions & flawless lines, the new Preface redefines driving with its sleek design and forward-thinking technology. From its sophisticated front face to its aerodynamic

exterior details, every aspect of the new Preface exudes elegance and style.

With the longest, widest, and largest wheelbase in its class, this sedan promises a high-value driving experience for the people of Oman.

Built on the CMA platform

The new Preface is ingeniously crafted on Geely’s Compact Modular Architecture (CMA) platform, which forms the foundation of its design philosophy. This platform harnesses advanced engineering to seamlessly integrate aesthetics, functionality, and performance.

By leveraging the advanced capabilities of the CMA platform, the new Preface achieves a perfect balance between elegance and

performance. From its sleek exterior contours to its meticulously crafted interior, every aspect of the new Preface showcases the engineering brilliance empowered by the Geely CMA platform.

Comforting Interiors: Modern, Spacious, Tech-savvy, Luxurious Step inside the new Preface and discover a world of luxury and comfort.

Spacious and elegant camel brown-coloured interiors, meticulously crafted with exquisite details, invite you to indulge in every journey. The functions are within reach and effortless to operate. The power windows and an easy-to-use interface ensure a comfortable and convenient driving experience.



Oman holds promising aviation e-fuels production potential: Airbus

CONRAD PRABHU

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Aircraft manufacturer Airbus has welcomed the opportunity to be part of an alliance of leading international players that have joined forces to explore the potential for commercial-scale production of Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF) in the Sultanate of Oman.

SAF, among other types of zero-carbon synthetic fuels, is a key to the decarbonisation of the global aviation industry – a commitment that the Omani government, and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), have endorsed as well.

Last month, OQ Alternative Energy (the renewables arm of Omani integrated energy group OQ) unveiled the OSCAR (Oman Sustainable Cars and Aviation Refuelling) Consortium of prominent players with a mission to ignite the growth of an e-gasoline and e-SAF manufacturing hub in Oman.

Other key partners, besides OQ AE and Airbus, are UAE-based business houses Dutco, Sumitomo Corporation Middle East, and Automobili Lamborghini SpA.

At the heart of the initiative is a vision for establishing an integrated Power-to-X



Oman has excellent potential for hybrid wind and solar power generation, green hydrogen and eFuels production: Airbus

(P2X) project starting with an exploratory study, according to a high level executive of Airbus.

“We are joining forces at Airbus, together with OQ Alternative Energy, Automobili Lamborghini SpA, Dutco Group Cleantech, and Sumitomo Corporation Middle East to advance the global eFuels market, together via an integrated P2X project for eSAF and eGasoline production in the Sultanate of Oman, starting with a project JSA (Joint Study Agreement,” said Julien Lehalle, Director - Investments, New Energies Funds, Project Equity & Tech VC, at Airbus.

In a post, Lehalle underlined

Oman’s potential promise as a destination for eSAF production, given especially the country’s well-developed aviation sector, coupled with its modern infrastructure.

“Oman has excellent potential for hybrid wind and solar power generation, green hydrogen and eFuels production.

Meanwhile, it boasts world-class airlines Oman Air, SalamAir, as well as airports Oman, Airports Management Company, energy infra and industrial ports to reach exports markets in Europe & Asia-Pacific (APAC),” he remarked.

The OSCAR consortium represents yet another global initiative, backed by Airbus, in

line with its broader strategy to support the decarbonisation of the aviation industry.

Over the past year, the aircraft manufacturer has tied up with a number of airlines, as well as eFuel startups, to boost the production and uptake of SAF fuels for air travel.

“Origination of SAF greenfield projects adds a new layer to Airbus’ strategy in new energies, besides being already a pre-FID project equity investor in Australia and the US,” Lehalle explained in his post.

According to plane manufacturer, all Airbus aircraft are capable of flying on a maximum 50% blend of SAF and conventional fuel.

However, by 2030, Airbus has pledged to ensure that its aircraft and helicopters will be capable of flying with up to 100% SAF.

SAF is presently produced as a blend of conventional fossil fuel and synthetic components made from a range of renewable feedstock, such as used cooking oils, fats, plant oils, municipal, agricultural and forestry waste.

Going forward, however, production of SAF will involve the use of green hydrogen and captured carbon dioxide to create synthetic fuels, referred to as eFuel or Power-to-Liquid (PtL).

Hormuz Marine poised to expand biofuel-blend bunker supply to Omani ports

NASRULAH AL AJMI

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

Hormuz Marine, a key provider of bunkering services in the Sultanate of Oman, says it is ready to provide an environment-friendly blend of bunker fuel for vessels either operating within Oman’s ports or making refuelling stops.

The announcement comes on the heels of last week’s landmark delivery of the first shipment of B20 fuel, a blend of 80% diesel and 20% biofuel, to Sohar Port in line with the latter’s efforts to drive the decarbonisation of its marine operations.

This initiative was the result of a strategic collaboration between Sohar Port, Svitser, Wakud, and Hormuz Marine.

It was launched as a pilot starting with the refuelling of the tugboat ‘Sohar’ with the B20 blend, and will be expanded to include all tugs in Sohar Port’s fleet by the following month.

In remarks to the Observer, Hamza al Hadhrami, Sales & Development Manager at Hormuz Marine, said the company is fully geared to support the biodiesel requirements of other Omani ports in line with their sustainability objectives.

“Hormuz Marine is already prepared logistically to deliver any bio-blend to the other ports of Oman, but in terms of the popularity of the product, it’s still early days. Nevertheless, the market is expected to pick-up soon,” he said.

“In fact, we have been advertising biodiesel to our regular frequent customers as well as advertising the product in various international conferences and exhibitions we have attended and participated in.”

Al Hadhrami praised all the parties concerned for their respective roles in enabling the successful delivery of the maiden shipment of B20 fuel to Sohar Port last week.

He explained that the introduction of B20 fuel, known for its 15-20% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and 20% lower sulphur content, required overcoming several operational challenges.

These included obtaining approvals from tug engine manufacturers, blending the



B20 blend shipment delivered to Sohar Port last week.

product and coordinating with customs and authorities to manage the non-traditional procedures involved.

The collaboration also reflects Sohar Port’s commitment to leading international marine standards, Al Hadhrami stressed. He noted in this regard the Port of Rotterdam’s increased use of biofuel to 30% of the blend – a target that Sohar Port aspires to match or exceed.

This ambition is consistent with the port’s history of pioneering efforts, such as the recent implementation of Mass Flow Meters (MFM), a first in the region.

Economically, running equipment on biodiesel is costlier than traditional marine gas oil (MGO) due to a longer supply chain and the higher manufacturing costs of biodiesel.

However, the authorities are considering fixing prices and funding the product to enhance its appeal and market penetration.

This financial strategy aims to offset the higher costs and make biodiesel a viable alternative for ship-owners and charterers, Al Hadhrami stated.

“We at Hormuz Marine are very proud to have played a crucial role in this achievement,” said Al-Hadhrami.

“This significant milestone was made possible through our dedicated collaboration with Sohar Port and Wakud in the pursuit of developing sustainable energy solutions. Our efforts highlight the importance of green energy in promoting sustainable development in the region.

We look forward to continuing our initiatives in advancing the logistics and availability of green fuels and contributing to the broader marine market.”

Sohar Free Zone lays foundation stone for \$68m silicon metal plant

BUSINESS REPORTER

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

SOHAR Port and Freezone celebrated the groundbreaking ceremony of the silicon metal plant in SOHAR Freezone owned by Green Ferro Alloy (SFZ) LLC. With an estimated total investment of \$68 million, this project reinforces SOHAR’s position as a global trade hub and represents a significant milestone in the economic growth and diversification of the region, meeting the growing demand for silicon metal in Asia, Europe, and North America.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Shaikh Mohammed bin Sulaiman al Kindi, Governor of Al Batinah North and attended by representatives from Green Ferro Alloy Company (FZS) and a number of partners along with the executive management team from SOHAR Port and Freezone.

The silicon metal plant occupies a land area of 160,000 sqm and will be designed and built to produce high-quality silicon metal, initially at a capacity of 25,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) in the first phase and expanding to 50,000 TPA in the



Representatives from SOHAR Port and Freezone and Green Ferro Alloy are pictured after the ceremony.

second phase.

The molten silicon metal is poured from the furnace into ladles and moulds, expertly cooled through moulds or continuous casting. After cooling, the silicon metal is crushed and packaged in large bags, ready for global export. This innovative process ensures premium quality silicon metal for valued customers worldwide.

Shaikh Mohammed highlighted the pivotal role of the industrial sector in driving comprehensive development in Oman.

He elaborated on how the establishment of the metal silicon plant signifies a major strategic achievement for the nation’s economic advancement, fostering trade, investment, and opening new channels for international collaboration in modern industries.

Commenting on this achievement, the CEO of Green Ferro Alloy Company said, “This landmark project with SOHAR Freezone represents a significant milestone for Green Ferro Alloy as we expand our global presence.

The silicon metal plant enhances our production capabilities and aligns with our strategic vision to lead in technological innovation in the industry.

We are committed to employing cutting-edge technologies that ensure production efficiency and environmental sustainability, positively contributing to Oman’s burgeoning industrial sector.”

Omar bin Mahmood al Mahrizi, CEO of SOHAR Freezone and Deputy CEO of SOHAR Port, further added, “The groundbreaking of the silicon metal plant in SOHAR Freezone is a significant step towards achieving our vision for sustainable growth and development. It highlights our commitment to efficiently support all project phases, from signing through obtaining necessary permits.

The establishment of the first silicon metal plant in Oman at SOHAR Freezone is a strategic step that strengthens the country’s economic and industrial standing on both regional and international levels.”

NHI launches hospitality vocational programme

HIBBA AL KINDI

MUSCAT, JUNE 10

The National Hospitality Institute announced the launch yesterday, June 10, 2024, of a hospitality vocational programme to empower young professionals. The Employment Enabling Programme was launched in collaboration with Oman Arab Bank and will target 100 students in its first edition.

Speaking to the Observer, NHI Principal Robert Maclean emphasised the significance of the programme. “We’re delighted to join up with Oman Arab Bank to provide a facility where young

people can receive vocational training that leads to employment.

This has been a challenge lately, as there aren’t many systems available to support vocational training for young people.”

He added: “Our industry is known worldwide for providing job opportunities, often to those who are lower-skilled, less educated, or from lower economic backgrounds. It has helped many people secure good-paying jobs. NHI is proud of our nearly 30-year history with great success stories.

For example, we now have almost seven hotel managers in Oman who came through our



Representatives of NHI and OAB announcing the launch of the new hospitality vocational programme.

training programmes. This success highlights the value of vocational training, which is often seen as

inferior to higher education. Vocational training suits some people and must be available to

ensure fairness and equality.”

According to Maclean, the programme will start after Eid with a duration spanning four to nine months. Chief Retail Banking Officer at Oman Arab Bank, Khalid al Amri, said, “The tourism and hospitality sector is a critical pillar for diversification in Oman, offering significant employment potential due to its rapid growth.

We’re delighted to partner with the National Hospitality Institute, a key player in training Omani youth for the sector’s job market.”

He went on to add, “This partnership reaffirms OAB’s commitment to supporting the

development and growth of our national talents.

We recognise the importance of collaboration to empower young Omanis and enhance their skills across all sectors. Through this programme, OAB will provide financial support to participants, enabling them to gain the necessary skills to thrive in this dynamic market.”

According to NHI, the programme will be delivered through a hybrid learning model, and will highlight essential areas including customer service, management and culinary skills. Interested candidates can apply through the institute’s website.

Social media can be a bad influence to your family



TARIQ AL BARWANI

The author is founder of Knowledge Oman knowledgeoman.com

Fifteen-year-old Ahmed was smart, mingled quite well with other kids in the neighbourhood, liked to ask questions about how things worked, and seemed to have a promising future ahead of him. Nevertheless, he began to de-attach himself from the family at home (by staying alone and sometimes even spending late nights with his smartphone). His interests and behaviour have

changed, and his attitude towards his other siblings at home, be they brothers or sisters, has become aggressive. Ahmed may be under bad influence. Sooner or later, his sister Khadija may follow the same path. What's the problem? Laila, a working and loving woman with two children, used to be vibrant, socially kind, and always pleasant with friends, colleagues, and family. Nevertheless, Laila lately has become stressed, has lots of pressure, feels inadequate, and is unhappy, so she avoids people, yet is mostly attached to her smart phone. Laila may also be under a bad influence. Do you see a pattern? You feel helpless and unhappy, and you also share somewhat similar feelings of inadequacy as your family at home. You also know of other families that are going through similar situations and are breaking up (from marriage to even

relationships). This is worrying, this is real, and yes, this is the unfortunate bad influence of social media on you and your loving family. The names shared above are fictional, yet the stories are factual and real. Look around you and witness the same before your own eyes. Children lock themselves in their rooms (with their smartphones or smart devices), wives or husbands complain and compare with other families (because of what they see and observe on social media via their smart phones), and society as a whole may be living a fake lifestyle (using their smartphones) only to impress the other end of the users of the smartphone (or devices per se). I am sure many readers will relate to these real-world stories. Social media can be a bad influence on you and your family at home. It may also be the reason why many families break up and/or live

a very unpleasant, stressful, and inadequate lifestyle. One cannot deny the benefits that social media and networks can offer to their users, from staying connected with loved ones and updated and informed about everything around them to sharing life and lovely moments with others. Yet, the negative impact and bad influence they can have on families, friends, and the like can be serious and ultimately disastrous. The proof is in the pudding with the rise in divorces, family detachments, and relationship strains one could see. Quality time with family and friends is reduced, and expectations from one another are increased dramatically, without real justification (but simply by comparing one another to what they see and observe on social media networks). Many parents have reported that their children spend a lot of time on social media. A study from

the University of Michigan noted constant conflict within family relations as a result of the same. The amount of information from various sources that one can obtain from social media can sometimes be overwhelming. A study by a research centre too found that parents feel stressed and anxious due to the information overload (something I wish to share in detail in my future articles). The National Sleep Foundation reported that over 45 per cent of teenagers do not get enough sleep due to late-night social media use. Please take a home tour at night and see this before your own eyes. More real-world statistics and research undertaken are a few examples of the bad influence social media can have on families as a whole. Social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) make billions of Omani rials profits while offering you a free service to use, of course

in exchange for you being their product. The platforms are designed to be very engaging, addictive, and, to some extent, disruptive. Once you sign up for an account, you get hooked, and there is very little you can do to protect yourself or your family from the bad influence social media networks can have on you. My article this week tries to shed light on the growing concern about social media's bad influence on society as a whole. Yes, there are benefits from utilising the same (e.g., starting, running, and promoting a business or initiative via the medium), but unless one really manages how social media networks are used, doom is just around the corner on what and where it can take you. I will try to list some techniques families can use in my future article to help reduce the negative influence social media can have on their loved ones. Until then, stay positive.

Uphill road for Europe's climate plan after EU election

KATE ABNETT

More rightward-leaning European Parliament will make it harder to pass ambitious EU climate policies, but the majority of Europe's current world-leading green policies are likely to stay put, lawmakers, officials and analysts said. Provisional results in the European Parliament election on Sunday night showed centrist parties holding a majority, but gains for right-wing and far-right parties sceptical of the EU's "Green Deal" package of environmental policies, and heavy losses for Green parties. "I don't think that we'll be rolling back on (climate) policies. But I do think that it will be more complicated to get new policies off the ground," Bas Eickhout, head of the European Parliament's Greens lawmaker group, said. EU climate measures over the next five years will depend on the incoming European Commission, which is responsible for proposing EU laws. But the newly-elected European Parliament will get a say on every new green policy. Sunday's election result signals tougher maths to approve new EU climate measures. "All new policies will be harder to pass. But backsliding is very unlikely," Krzysztof Bolesla, Poland's secretary of state for climate, said. "It is possible that new ambition will be delayed, mostly for populist reasons," agreed Julian Popov, who until April was EU member Bulgaria's environment minister. That could have consequences for an upcoming 2040 EU climate target, needed to steer the EU towards its 2050 net-zero emissions target. The EU Commission has suggested the 2040 goal should be an ambitious 90 per cent emissions cut, but it needs approval from both EU countries and the Parliament. The upcoming European Commission and Parliament will also face tough decisions on whether to introduce new policies to push industries towards that 2040 target. That includes farming, a sector whose emissions have barely fallen since 2005. But after months of protests across Europe by angry farmers, there is little political appetite to target the sector with new rules, especially if the cost of complying with them would drive up food prices for citizens already dealing with the biggest jump in living costs in a generation. While new climate measures might face a tougher ride, a full-scale reversal of the dozens of EU climate policies passed in the last five years would be legally difficult. Those policies — which include renewable energy targets and a strengthened carbon pricing regime on power and industry — are fixed into EU law and already being rolled-out across the bloc's 27 member states. Many are already working. EU emissions are down by nearly a third from 1990 levels, and Europe is installing wind and solar energy capacity at record speed. Still, the election campaign saw mounting calls from the right to scrap some Green Deal policies - with a prime target the EU's 2035 ban on new petrol and diesel cars. That policy has a 2026 review clause, on which the Parliament will get a say. "It was an ideological folly, which absolutely must be corrected," Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni told online magazine *Open* last week. — **Reuters**

Oman 2040: A bold vision for a transformed healthcare landscape



QASIM AL MAASHANI

The author is the head of Oman Observer's Business section

The Sultanate of Oman is at a crossroads. Its ambitious national strategy, Oman Vision 2040, anticipates a future marked by innovation, sustainability, and societal well-being. Within this broad tapestry, the vision for the healthcare sector appears as a crucial thread, offering a paradigm change towards excellence. This commentary contends that Oman Vision 2040's healthcare goals, while ambitious, provide a convincing blueprint for moving the country into a world-class medical ecosystem. The vision's unwavering dedication to preventive health serves as its foundation. Recognising the value of proactive interventions, Oman 2040 prioritises developing a wellness culture. Consider a future in which awareness campaigns become ubiquitous, encouraging citizens to lead better lifestyles. Regular medical tests would become more accessible and routine, allowing for early identification and action, which is an essential component of preventative care. This shift in emphasis, from reactive treatment to proactive prevention, represents a fundamental shift in healthcare philosophy. Furthermore, Oman 2040 recognises the revolutionary power of digital technology. Imagine a healthcare system in which patient records are effortlessly transferred between doctors, speeding diagnosis and treatment. Imagine telemedicine consultations crossing geographical barriers, enabling access to professionals for even the most isolated populations.



The vision's unwavering dedication to preventive health serves as its foundation. — (Picture credit: Reuters)

The vision emphasises the development of intelligent data and information management systems, as well as the promotion of a data-driven approach to healthcare decisions. This digital revolution holds the key to unlocking system efficiency, which will ultimately lead to better patient outcomes. Human capital, however, remains the foundation of any strong healthcare system. Oman 2040 recognises this and prioritises the recruitment and development of specialised medical workers. The goal is to recruit both domestic and international talent, resulting in a dynamic and diversified healthcare workforce. Consider a future in which ongoing training and development opportunities enable medical professionals to remain at the forefront of their professions. This emphasis on developing a highly skilled team guarantees that care continues at the highest level. However, true healthcare excellence cannot be attained

alone. Oman 2040 recognises the importance of developing a robust medical technology and industrial basis. Consider a future in which Oman not only manufactures its own medications and medical supplies, but also serves as a regional hub for cutting-edge medical innovation. The concept focuses on localising medical businesses, which promotes both import substitution and export prospects. This strategic initiative not only improves healthcare security but also adds to economic diversification, establishing Oman as a leader in the medical technology sector. The pledge to complete health coverage is perhaps Oman 2040's most revolutionary element. Imagine a world in which every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status, has access to high-quality healthcare services. The vision commits to providing health insurance to all citizens, ensuring their financial security and peace of mind. This commitment to universal health

care represents a significant shift in social responsibility, putting people's well-being at the centre of Oman's development plan. Of course, attaining this ambitious aim necessitates a strong framework. Oman 2040 provides a comprehensive implementation strategy, which includes developing a national health policy, establishing a dedicated monitoring committee, and allocating appropriate resources. Furthermore, the vision emphasises the value of collaboration, encouraging all parties — government, healthcare providers, and the corporate sector — to participate in this joint effort. This collaborative approach guarantees that all opinions are heard and all efforts are directed towards achieving the common goal of healthcare excellence. Ultimately, Oman 2040's success depends on measurable development. The vision identifies key performance indicators (KPIs) such as chronic illness mortality rates, life expectancy, and patient satisfaction. These indicators will act as a standard for assessing progress and maintaining responsibility. This commitment to data-driven decision-making exemplifies the vision's emphasis on delivering real results and cultivating a culture of continuous improvement within the healthcare system. Finally, Oman Vision 2040 provides a persuasive vision for overhauling the country's healthcare system. The vision's emphasis on preventative health, digital transformation, workforce empowerment, medical technology localisation, universal health coverage, and a data-driven implementation strategy outlines a clear route to healthcare excellence. While the path will definitely be tough, the potential benefits are enormous. A successful implementation of Oman Vision 2040 can move the country towards a future in which high-quality healthcare is freely available and accessible to all, resulting in a healthier, more productive populace for years to come.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CAPITAL REDUCTION

In accordance with the provisions of Article 150 of the Commercial Companies Law. The company Right Directions for Overall Projects(SPC), which is registered with the Commercial Registration No. 1365718, hereby announces that it is going to reduce its capital from Omani Rials 20,000.000 to 20,000.000. Whoever has any objection to the foregoing shall present the reasons for such objection to the Secretariat of the Commercial Registry at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion within 30 days from the date hereof.

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ENTERTAINMENT

Children play in the water as they find relief from the over 100 degrees Fahrenheit temperature at the lake in Hart Memorial Park in Bakersfield, California. — AFP



FASHION

British composer and singer PJ Harvey performs during the Noches del Botanico festival in Madrid. — AFP



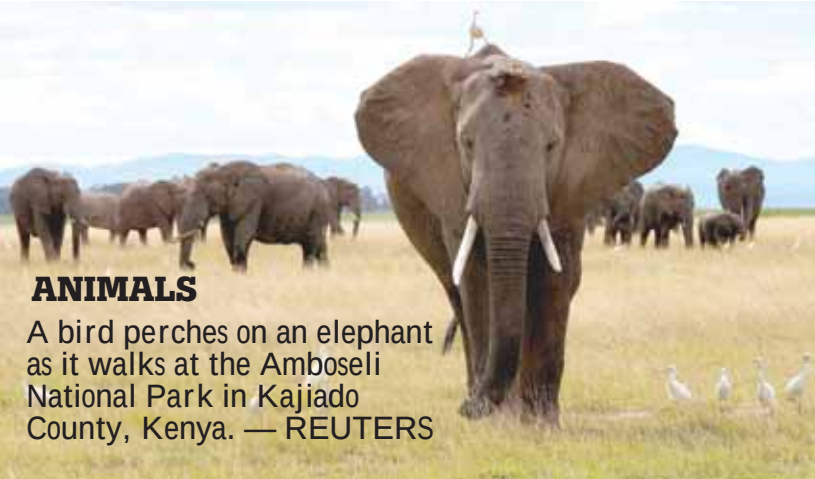
LIFESTYLE

Women quench their thirst with the tap water on a hot summer afternoon during heatwave in Prayagraj. — AFP



MUSIC

Scottish-Australian musician Colin Hay performs with Ringo Starr and His All Starr Band at Austin City Limits Live in Austin, Texas. — AFP



ANIMALS

A bird perches on an elephant as it walks at the Amboseli National Park in Kajiado County, Kenya. — REUTERS

art & life

TUESDAY | JUNE 11, 2024 | DHUL HIJJAH 4, 1445 AH

OMAN OBSERVER www.omanobserver.om features@omanobserver.om

Protect your health by properly washing fruits and vegetables

Pesticides, while effective against pests, pose significant health risks ... P20



CELEBRATING CULTURAL UNITY: 'SHUSHA - THE CRADLE OF CULTURE OF THE EAST' SHINES IN MUSCAT

In Muscat, a cultural extravaganza titled 'Shusha - the Cradle of Culture of the East' held in grandeur and harmony saw talented young musicians taking part. Spearheaded by Dr Saida Khalilova, the coordinator of the Coordinating Council of Azerbaijanis in Arab Countries for Oman, and supported by the esteemed State Committee for Work with Diaspora of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the event radiated cultural richness and cross-border camaraderie. The evening commenced with a profound moment of unity as the national anthems of the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Azerbaijan echoed through the venue. Attendees were then greeted by a heartfelt video message from Fuad Muradov, the chairman of the State Committee for Work with Diaspora, extending warm congratulations on the occasion of May 28th - Independence Day and the con-

cert itself. Enthralling performances ensued, featuring talented students of Dr Saida Khalilova from the 'Royal Conservatory of Music and Art,' alongside teachers and representatives from diverse backgrounds. Works by eminent composers from Azerbaijan and beyond adorned the stage, captivating the audience's hearts. Notably, the Azerbaijani folk melodies and the enchanting rendition of 'Yellow Bride' by Indian performer Babita Syam, as well as Arif Malikov's ballet 'Legend of Love,' left an indelible mark on the guests. In her closing remarks, Dr Saida expressed heartfelt gratitude to the government of the Sultanate of Oman for their gracious hospitality in hosting such cultural exchanges. She also extended her appreciation to the President of Azerbaijan and the State Committee for Diaspora Affairs for their unwavering support. Emphasising the significance



of dedicating the event to Shusha, the pearl of Karabakh, Dr Saida highlighted its recent recognition as the 'Cultural Capital of the Islamic World' for 2024, a testament to the solidarity within the Islamic world as declared at the 12th Conference of Ministers of Culture of the Islamic World held in Doha in 2023. The event witnessed a diverse audience comprising members of the Azerbaijani community, local dignitaries, and esteemed foreign guests, totalling 300 attendees. Throughout the evening, captivating videos showcasing Azerbaijan's rich cultural heritage, tourism allure, artistic



prowess, and historical marvels mesmerized the audience, sparking profound interest and admiration. As the event drew to a close,

certificates of appreciation were bestowed upon the dedicated teachers and talented students of the Conservatory, followed by

a poignant commemorative photo session, encapsulating the spirit of harmony and cultural exchange that defined the evening.



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TUESDAY | JUNE 11 | 2024

19

INSTAGRAM TOP PICKS



pepetteenvadrouille
Sur Oman



zeeshan_ahmed_mughal
Muscat, Oman



natures_portrait_gallery
The Chainsmokers - You Owe Me



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CATCH THEM YOUNG MOI'S SUMMER WORKSHOP FOR KIDS KICKS OFF

BALQEES AL ORAIMI
PHOTOS BY SHAMSA AL HARTHY

A three-day talent workshop for the children of Ministry of Information (MOI) employees organised by the Cultural Library of the MOI and the Oman Daily Observer began at the ministry premises on Monday.

Twelve children are taking part in the workshop presented by Amira al Yahyaee from the MOI's Engineering Systems. Zainab al Hashimi from online media and Nasser al Harrasi from the Observer newspaper are also among the trainers. Warda al Lawati was also part of the organising team.

During the workshop, children will get acquainted with the offerings of Ain smart phone app. It also highlights the importance of recycling and fostering environmental awareness.

The participants, who are aged six to nine years, will get training to develop passion for science and technology through problem-solving, brainstorming and competitions. It will also instil skills of team building and self-development.



Sam bin Fahd al Habsi, Saif bin Saud al Sariri and Al Qasim bin Saud al Sariri expressed their joy participating in the workshop, games and competitions. They will also learn about the ministry's audio, print, visual, and electronic media.





FOOD

Protect your health by properly washing fruits and vegetables

RUQAYA AL KINDI

INCORPORATING VEGETABLES and fruits into a balanced diet provides essential fibre, minerals and vitamins, promoting growth and vital functions. However, consuming unwashed produce can turn these benefits into risks due to pesticide residues.

Faisal al Malahi, a Nutrition and Holistic Health Researcher, warns about the dangers of these toxins and offers practical solutions.

"To maintain your health, ensure to avoid all sources of toxins, including pesticides found on non-organic vegetables and fruits," says Al Malahi.

Unfortunately, some farmers cheat by selling produce before the end of the pesticide ban period, increasing our exposure to these harmful chemicals. This global system mandates a waiting period after spraying pesticides, but some merchants ignore it. Therefore, washing and soaking vegetables and fruits becomes crucial for food safety and health preservation.

Al Malahi outlines several effective methods to wash produce.

He suggests a salt water solution by adding one tablespoon of sea salt to one litre of water. "Soak for 10-15 minutes, then rinse thoroughly at least twice. Salt acts as a natural steriliser, removing surface pollutants."

And is vinegar solution. "Use a quarter cup of white vinegar diluted in 1 litre of water (organic apple cider vinegar is preferred). Soak for 10-15 minutes, rinse well at least twice. Vinegar has antibacterial and antifungal properties."

Sodium bicarbonate can also be used to clean fruits and vegetables, he says. "Add one teaspoon of baking soda to one litre of water. Soak for 10-15 minutes (adding vinegar is optional), then rinse well at least twice. Baking soda is a natural disinfectant."

Herbal soak, is another method. "Neem and turmeric can reduce chemical residues. Add a tablespoon of turmeric to one litre of water, soak for 10-15 minutes, then rinse well at least twice."

Hydrogen peroxide cleaning is done by using edible hydrogen peroxide



during cultivation, packaging, and distribution. Simple water washing is sufficient for organic items.

Pesticides, while effective against pests, pose significant health risks, including increased inflammation, hormonal imbalances, liver and kidney issues, and various other health problems. They are particularly harmful to children and may lead to serious conditions like cancer. Therefore, investing in organic produce is an investment in long-term health.

"Health is more expensive," Al Malahi concludes, emphasising the value of prioritising organic produce and thorough washing practices to protect our health.

"Dilute with water, and soak vegetables. This natural substance is effective in sterilising chemicals and pesticides."

He also recommends scrubbing and says, "Use a fruit and vegetable brush for items with hard peels, like potatoes and carrots, to remove contaminated residue."

Additionally, Al Malahi advises not to return washed produce to the original container to avoid recontamination. Instead, transfer them to a clean

container, preferably glass, before storing in the refrigerator. He emphasises that only vegetables and fruits eaten with their peels, such as strawberries, apples and leafy greens, need soaking. If peeling is an option, do so before consumption.

Organic produce, free from pesticides and harmful substances, is recommended despite higher costs. Washing even organic produce is necessary due to potential contamination