

UK PM braces for no-trust vote

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced down a no-confidence vote among Conservative MPs on Monday, after dozens rebelled over a string of scandals that have left the party's public standing in tatters. The beleaguered leader has spent months battling to maintain his grip on power after the "Partygate" controversy saw him become the first serving UK prime minister to have broken the law. If he loses, he must step down as Conservative leader, but can stay on as prime minister pending a party leadership election in the coming weeks. **DETAILS ON P7**



P12

WALES DENY UKRAINE WORLD CUP DREAM



P15

TECH MAHINDRA LAUNCHES INNOVATION AND TECH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN OMAN



P20

A DEEP LOOK INTO HOW OMAN AND ZANZIBAR HONOUR OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE



MUSCAT

PUBLIC REVENUE INCREASES BY 52.3%

The public revenue by the end of April 2022 amounted to RO 4.217 billion, comprising a surge by 52.3 per cent. The increase is attributed mainly to a rise in oil revenue, driven by improved oil prices and higher oil production. At the end of April, oil revenue amounted to RO 3.310 billion, up by 74.3 per cent compared to RO 1.796 billion reported over the same period in 2021. At the end of April 2022, public spending amounted to RO 3.749 billion, constituting an increase by RO 152 million (4.2 per cent) compared to the same period in 2021. **DETAILS ON P13**

CRUDE PRICE AT \$115.60 A BARREL

Oman oil price for August delivery on Monday reached \$115.60, comprising a rise of \$3.50 from the price of last Friday, which was \$112.10. The average price of Oman oil for June delivery has stabilised at \$102.40, thus \$8.56 per barrel lower than May delivery. World oil prices extended recent gains as a pledge by Opec and other major producers to boost output fell short of what markets hoped for. Brent crude was up 0.5 per cent at \$120.35 per barrel.



INSIDE



Decree amends provisions of Tender Board Secretariat General

**MUSCAT:** His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on Monday issued two Royal Decrees. Royal Decree No 32/2022 amending some provisions of Royal Decree No 84/2020 on the Secretariat General of the

Tender Board. Article (1) replaces annexes (1) and (2) attached to the aforesaid Royal Decree No 84/2020 with the two annexes attached to this Royal Decree. Article (2) cancels all that contradicts this Decree or

contravenes its provisions. Article (3) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. Royal Decree No 33/2022 on the ratification of an agreement

between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on mutual visa waiver for holders of diplomatic, special, service and official passports, signed in Hanoi

on April 28, 2022. Article (1) ratifies the aforesaid agreement as per the version attached to this Decree. Article (2) says that this Decree shall be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from its date of issue. — ONA

HIGH-PERFORMING YOUTH HONOURED



The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, on Monday marked the GCC Youth Day, which falls on June 6 every year. Workers in the youth sector were honoured during the event, alongside 12 successful youth and 30 high performing athletes. The honouring ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information. **DETAILS ON P3**

Oman condemns insulting remarks

**MUSCAT:** Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Foreign Ministry's Under-Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs met with Amit Narang, Ambassador of India to the Sultanate of Oman. Al Harthy expressed Oman's condemnation of the insulting remarks made about Prophet Muhammad Peace be Upon Him

(PBUH), Islam and Muslims by an official in the Bharatiya Janata Party. Al Harthy also reiterated Oman's rejection of insulting all religious symbols. He pointed out that such comments and incidents do not serve peaceful coexistence among people of different religions and only causes public outrage.

He also expressed that Oman welcomes the statement issued by the ruling party in India which announced the suspension of the official who made the insulting remarks. Al Harthy reaffirmed Oman's commitment to the culture of tolerance, coexistence, resisting hatred and respecting all faiths and religions. — ONA

Human rights guaranteed by state bodies

ZAINAB AL NASSRI  
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The symposium on “The Role of National Mechanisms in the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights” kicked off on Monday, in presence of Shaikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of the Oman Human Rights Commission, and a number of concerned parties from Oman and abroad. The two-day event is organised by the OHRC in cooperation with the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions. It aims to introduce national mechanisms concerned with the protection and promotion of human rights, enhance cooperation and partnership between the Omani commission and various relevant authorities, highlight the role of the commission with government and non-government organisations, clarify contractual and non-contractual human rights mechanisms and clarify the role of government agencies and civil society institutions in this regard. The symposium also aims to contribute to the implementation of the objectives of (Oman

The symposium comes as confirmation and support for the legislative and administrative laws adopted by the Sultanate of Oman

SHAIKH ABDULLAH AL HOSNI  
Chairman, OHRC

Vision 2040), specifically the strategic objective of a society whose members are responsible, committed to their duties and aware of their rights. Al Hosni said that holding this symposium comes as confirmation and support for the legislative and administrative foundations and laws adopted and implemented by the Sultanate of Oman within the framework of protecting human rights and dignity (everyone who lives on the land of the Sultanate of Oman) through mechanisms created to work together with all state institutions and civil society institutions. **TURN TO P2**

Climate action must not be delayed by global crises

**PARIS:** Negotiators from almost 200 countries met in Germany on Monday for climate talks tasked with reigniting momentum on tackling global warming, as Russian war on Ukraine overshadows the threat from rising emissions. The conference will set the stage for a fresh round of major United Nations talks later this year in Egypt. It will also be a chance to test

the resolve of nations facing a catalogue of crises, including escalating climate impacts, geopolitical tensions, bloodshed in Ukraine and the threat of a devastating global food crisis. **INTERNATIONAL UNITY** Issuing a call for international unity to hold firm, outgoing UN climate change chief Patricia Espinosa told delegates it was “not acceptable to say that we are in



Patricia Espinosa

challenging times”. “We must understand that climate change is moving exponentially. We can no longer afford to make just incremental progress”, she said at the opening of the June 6 to 16 meeting. “We must move these negotiations along more quickly. The world expects it” Governments have already accepted that climate change is a grave threat to humanity and

the planet and have advocated immediate action to cut fossil fuel emissions and prepare for the accelerating impacts of warming. The summary to this year's landmark climate report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change concluded that any further delay in action “will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a liveable and sustainable future for all”. — AFP



## Oman, Qatar explore ties in human rights

A meeting was held between HE Dr Laila bint Ahmed al Najar, Minister of Social Development, and Maryam Al Attiyah, Chairperson of Qatar’s National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) in Muscat on Tuesday. The meeting explored a spectrum of social topics, particularly the protection of human rights, as well as serving the Omani society. It also touched on the mechanisms implemented for the protection of women, children, people with disabilities and the aged, among other segments of the society. — ONA

## Oman and EU hold political consultations



A third round of political consultations was held here today between the Foreign Ministry and the European External Action Service (EEAS) of the European Union (EU) in Muscat on Monday. The Omani side was headed by Shaikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Diplomatic Affairs Under-Secretary, and Enrique Mora, Deputy Secretary General and Political Director of the EEAS. The discussions covered the bilateral relations between the Sultanate of Oman and the EU and means of developing them to serve the joint interests of the two sides. They also discussed the procedures to waiver Schengen visa for Omani citizens. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues of common concern. — ONA

SOHAR Port and Freezone invites Tenderers to the following tenders:

| No | Tender Ref    | Tender Title                                                                       | Tender Fee OMR |
|----|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 1  | SFZ 2022/001  | Pipe culverts and Plot Road Access Installation at Storm Channel in SOHAR Freezone | 105.000        |
| 2  | SIPC 2022/062 | Seaside Fence Renovation at SOHAR Port                                             | 26.250         |
| 3  | SIPC 2022/063 | Mobile Shelving System for the Physical Archiving at SOHAR Port                    | 26.250         |

• The above-mentioned tender fees including the VAT 5%.  
• Tenderers can request to receive the electronic tender documents from 9:00 am on Tuesday , 07/06/2022 until 4:00 pm on Thursday 23/06/2022.  
• Tenderers to follow the below procedures and steps to obtain the electronic tender documents:

**Step 1:** Interested Tenderers should remit the stated tender fees as per the below bank details:

| Account Name   | Sohar Industrial Port Co      |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Account Number | 3101-007970-500               |
| Bank Name      | Oman Arab bank SADC – Main Br |
| SWIT           | OMABOMRUXXX                   |

Note: Bank transfers is the only mode of payment accepted

**Step 2:** Tenderers to send the following documents:

- A request for the electronic tender documents
- Scanned bank transfer
- The firm's commercial registration documents
- All shall be communicated to the following e-mail address: [sipc.procurement@soharpportandfreezone.com](mailto:sipc.procurement@soharpportandfreezone.com)

**Step 3:** Tenderers will receive the electronic tender documents by email.

- SOHAR reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reasons.
- All SMES are requested to provide their Green Card along with the required documents.
- For any clarification regarding the tenders please send an e-mail to: [sipc.procurement@soharpportandfreezone.com](mailto:sipc.procurement@soharpportandfreezone.com)

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# GREEN HOUSES FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

**IBRA:** Al Wafa Centre for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in the Wilayat of Ibra in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate inaugurated the Green Houses Project. The project comes within the framework of joint cooperation with the Dar Al Attaa Charitable Society to support people with disabilities and is funded by National Finance Company through its social responsibility programme

The project was inaugurated by Maryam bint Issa al Zadjali, Member of the State Council, and President of Dar Al Attaa Charitable Society, in the presence of a number of officials.

Hamad bin Muhammad al Mushaiqri, Director of the Department of Social Development in Ibra, said: “The greenhouse project comes within the framework of the partnership between the Ministry of Social Development represented by the Al Wafa Centers for the Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities in the various governorates, civil society institutions and the private sector.”

He added that the project will contribute directly to opening avenues for people with special needs and that this initiative is a role model and in providing vocational rehabilitation services to enable them to lead lives without relying on others.

Siham al Kharousi, Director of Empowerment Department at Dar Al Attaa Charitable



Society, said: “The project will contribute to strengthening the role of functional integration programmes for people with special needs at the Al Wafa Social Center by enrolling them in the production and marketing of farm produce.” She pointed out that the association seeks, through the empowerment programme, to contribute to creating sustainable projects aimed at serving the community and achieving social solidarity.

She said the idea of green houses is based on the establishment of agricultural reserves to cultivate seasonal vegetables of value and commercial demand in various outlets, pointing out that the project targets persons with disabilities, families with limited income and families benefiting from Dar Al Attaa programmes.

She pointed out that the number of houses adopted by the Dar Al Attaa Charitable

Society in various Al Wafa centers for the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman amounted to 13 green greenhouses at a total cost of RO 48,750.

She explained that the project is among the 9 initiatives for green greenhouses that are being implemented by the association in cooperation with National Finance Company. It funded various projects in various Al Wafa centers located in the Wilayat of Ibra in the North Al Sharqiyah Governorate, the Wilayat of Nizwa in the Governorate of Al Dakhiliyah, the Wilayat of Ibra in the Al Dhahirah Governorate and the Wilayat of Al Buraimi. Al Buraimi Governorate, in addition to the wilayats of Shinas in the North Al Batinah Governorate, Khasab in the Musandam Governorate, and Al Rustaq in the South Al Batinah Governorate. — ONA

## Human rights guaranteed by state institutions

**FROM P1**

“The response that the committee found from all parties concerned to participate in this symposium is nothing but an affirmation of the extent of cooperation, interaction and constant keenness of all state institutions and competent civil society institutions concerned to work together to implement and follow-up everything related to human rights legislation and laws and protecting them, taking into account the commitment to international laws and charters that work to protect them and preserve their rights.”

He expressed his thanks to the Arab Network of National Human Rights Institutions for contributing to the organisation of this symposium, which comes within the framework of the network’s efforts and programmes for all its members, stressing the support of the permanent committee of the network and its goals.

He expressed his thanks to the participants from different agencies, describing it as “an affirmation of the extent of cooperation, interaction and constant keenness of all state institutions and competent civil society institutions concerned to work together to implement and follow-up everything related to legislation and laws related to human rights and their protection, taking into account the commitment



to international laws and covenants that work to protect and preserve their rights.”

Speaking on the occasion, Mariam bint Abdullah al Attiyah, President of the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions, President of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions and Chairperson of the National Human Rights Committee in Qatar, said: “The Arab network works to promote and protect human rights by empowering and supporting national institutions in all areas of human rights and at all national, regional and international levels. This participation in organising this important symposium comes within the framework of strengthening the programmes

of member institutions at the national level to enhance the capabilities of human rights workers in all segments and sectors, thus contributing to greater interaction with the system of national, regional and international human rights”.

### PALESTINIAN ISSUE

Al Attiyah said, “in this event, I want to address the issue of our Palestinian people and their pain and suffering as a result of the Israeli occupation. In this context, I would like to emphasise the continuation of the Arab Network in accordance with the decision of its General Assembly, with the support of the Independent Commission for Human Rights in Palestine, to empower it and enhance its

capabilities to promote and protect human rights in facing Israeli violations.

The President of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions also mentioned that “international human rights system recognises the inspiring and unique role of NHRIs, and this is exemplified in resolutions issued in this regard by the United Nations General Assembly and the Human Rights Council and in the review of Universal League and Treaty Bodies. Therefore, the Global Alliance encourages national human rights institutions to develop their cooperation with international mechanisms”, confirming that the participation of national human rights institutions at the international level; helps the United Nations and its mechanisms to understand the human rights situation on the ground, and helps to implement United Nations standards also in their countries.

In his speech, Sultan bin Hassan al Jamali, Executive Director of the Arab Network for National Human Rights Institutions, spoke about the role of the network in enhancing human rights principles based on international and regional regulations.

The symposium is attended by about 100 participants representing government, private institutions, as well as civil society agencies.



# OMAN CELEBRATES GULF YOUTH DAY

WALEED AL JAHWARI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

The Sultanate of Oman celebrated the Gulf Youth Day, represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth, which falls on June 6 of each year. The day was dedicated for Gulf youths at the 35th GCC summit in March this year, which shows the great interest of the leaders on the future generations.

The ceremony was held under the auspices of Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information.

Basil bin Ahmed al Rowas, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth for Sports and Youth said that marking the GCC Youth Day is an opportunity to promote the role of youth and to celebrate their achievements in various fields. It is also a platform to honour senior



leaders who contributed to the support accorded to youth.

The event celebrates the potential of youths of the GCC in advancing social progress and appreciation of

the pioneering role played by the Omani youth in various spheres. It also motivates youths to strive for excellence, achieve more creativity and innovation.

The minister honoured 12 youths well as 30 high performing athletes.

To mark the Gulf Youth Day, the finals of a two-day debate



tournament will kick off on Monday at the Nizwa Cultural Centre. A dialogue session will be held via video conferencing on youths and jobs. In Manah Cultural Centre, a financial awareness initiative will be held, which targets 40 participants. A lecture demonstration on the

basics of photography will also be held.

The GCC Youth Day is a testimony to the role of pioneering youths in building nations. It also comes within the framework of activating joint cooperation among the GCC youth to advance societies.

## In brief

### MUSCAT

#### CITIZEN MISSING IN KHASAB

The Royal Oman Police, (ROP), said that a citizen residing in the Wilayat of Khasab left the house last Saturday and has not returned yet. ROP said in a statement: "The Royal Oman Police's Department of Relations and Security Media announces that Abdullah bin Ahmed al Shehhi left his home in the Wilayat of Khasab since Saturday and has not returned until the date of publication of this announcement." "If anyone knows anything about him, please contact the Police Operations Centre at 9999 or the nearest police station," ROP added.

#### OVER 500 SAPPLINGS PLANTED

Over 500 wild saplings of Sidr and Ghaf were planted in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate. The Environment Department of Nizwa implemented the second phase of planting wild trees in the public site designated for cultivation operations, with wide community participation from the people of the Wilayat. Issa bin Abdullah al Yahmadi, Director of the Environment Department in Al Dakhiliyah Governorate, said that the planting comes as a continuation of the success of the national initiative to plant 10 million trees and in conjunction with the activities of the World Environment Day, which falls on June 5 of each year.

#### 3 NEW OUTLETS FOR WORK PERMIT SERVICES

To provide work permit services, three new outlets have been opened in various shopping malls in North Al Batinah Governorate, the Ministry of Labour said. The Ministry said in a statement: "The Ministry of Labour, represented by the Directorate General of Labour in North Al Batinah Governorate, announces to all beneficiaries of its services that outlets have been inaugurated to provide work permit services in the Makkah Hypermarket in the Wilayat of Saham, Shinas Mall in Shinas and Liwa Mall in Liwa."

# Falaj Al Mahyul boosts tourism, agriculture

TEXT & PHOTOS BY YAHYA AL SALMANI

Falaj Al Mahyul is located in the heart of Al Mahyul village, which lies between the heights of the dry mountains. The village was named after the mountain town of Al Mahyul in Ibri (277 km from Muscat).

The story of Falaj Al Mahyul, as told by locals, goes back to the fact that this ancient falaj was known as Al Ghudayfiyah. It feeds this mountainous town several kilometres. However, after being flattened in that area, the falaj did not reach the places designated for agriculture, and the local farmers did not benefit from it anymore. So they decided to change the previous route of its channel and constructed the current location, which flows directly from Wadi Al Mahyul.

It is obvious that the trace of the old channel still exists today. The falaj draws its water from the streams of the valleys that pass through the zigzag mountain range.

Locals in this attractive village cultivate crops such as wheat, garlic, onions, dates, tomatoes, beans, mangoes, lemons, grapes, figs, wheat and fodder. Thus, the continuous and uninterrupted flow of Falaj Al Mahyul encouraged the people and farmers to pay attention to agricultural and livestock wealth.

One of the farmers explains that the water distribution of Falaj Al Mahyul is carried out through the so-called pad (literally means section). Each pad equals 12 hours, and there are approximately 14 pads in the town that are distributed among the farm owners to ensure a fair share.

This falaj contributes to the revitalisation of domestic tourism, as it attracts many Omanis and residents of the Al Dhahirah Governorate. The tourism traffic peaks during the winter season when visitors



can swim, camp and go hiking in the extended mountains surrounding this region.

Specialists pointed out that the Omanis' success in constructing Afalaj channels in the mountainous areas was not an easy matter. The engineering of structure Afalaj requires physical efforts and great skills and knowledge.

"Omanis used professional methods of digging and building Afalaj. They had to dig deep that might reach several metres. This deep digging aided them in obtaining the collection of groundwater. This was an engineering miracle that preceded the development of mechanical machines," a specialist in water management explained.

Several sources show that "Omanis have succeeded in constructing more than 4,000 Afalaj. The number of active Afalaj is about 3,000. In addition, Afalaj produce about 680 million cubic metres of water annually. The agricultural areas depend on the water of the Afalaj at a rate ranging between 50 and 60 per cent).

The Afalaj in the Sultanate of Oman fascinate both global and local attention. The achievement in building such construction using humble gears obtained very high respect from the International organisations. For example, five Afalaj in Oman have already been included in the World Heritage List by the United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (Unesco) in 2006. These are Falaj Daris, Falaj Al Maysir, Falaj Al Khattameen, Falaj Al Jilah and Falaj Al Malki.

All of these Afalaj attract tourists who are eager to learn about Oman's ancient water channels, which represents several centuries of the Omani civilisation.



# SMALL YET MIGHTY

THE APPROACH ADOPTED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF HAND-HOLDING SMALL BUSINESS IDEAS, OWNERS AND INNOVATORS HAS BEEN ALL-ENCOMPASSING, TARGETING VARIOUS SECTORS FROM IT, TOURISM, SCIENCE, FOOD AND ENVIRONMENT TO HANDICRAFTS, TO NAME BUT A FEW

SAMUEL KUTTY  
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SINCE THE ROLL-OUT of Vision 2040, the start-up scene in the Sultanate of Oman has become a hotspot, with many small to medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) making their way at par with many countries in the world. The government is building the necessary institutional foundations to address the gaps in SME growth with an array of initiatives in line with the Vision 2040, which aims to achieve wider socio-economic goals for the country.

Accordingly, the current five-year plan features a similar initiative to boost small businesses by offering technical support to promising enterprises. SMEs account for around 15 per cent of GDP, a figure the Public Authority for the Development of SMEs (Riyada) has forecast will double in the medium-term as opportunities are created. The approach adopted by the government of hand-holding small business ideas, owners and innovators has been all-encompassing, targeting various sectors from tourism, science, food and environment to handicrafts, to name but a few.

The small ecosystem in the economy receives unlimited support from the government, having a clear goal with a focus on financing, nurturing, legitimising and building entrepreneurial skills. SMEs are a key contributor to the economic growth of the country, not to mention a source of job creation for the generation.

Oman also encourages the private sector to join it in nurturing the SME ecosystem. The partnership is proving to be a good investment with many funding training, support etc., for Omani entrepreneurs.

The number of new listings at Riyada amounted to 73,741 at a growth rate of 42.7 per cent at the end of March 2022 compared to 51,663 establishments during the same period in 2021.

According to the latest statistics issued by the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI), Muscat had the largest number of SMEs at the end of March 2022 at 24,977 followed by North Al Batinah with 11,464 establishments and Al Dakhiliyah with 8,534 establishments at third place.

**INCREASE IN THE NUMBER**

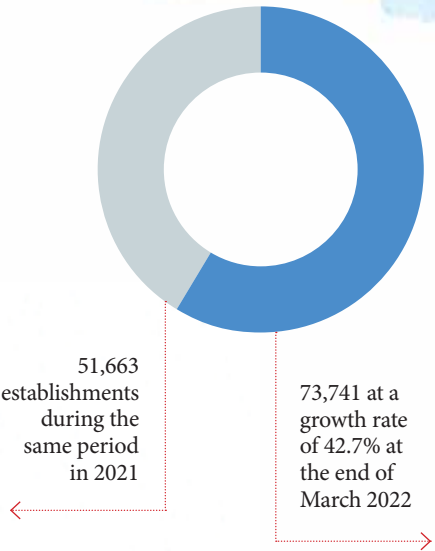
The statistics showed that Musandam topped the increase in the number of SMEs by 102.1 per cent, followed by Al Wusta, 64 per cent and Dhofar registering an increase of 60.7 per cent. The lowest growth was registered in Al Dhahirah by 31.4 per cent at the end of March 2022 compared to the end of March 2021. Although the SME sector in Oman is hyper-growing with unlimited support from the government, SMEs face the challenge of gaining the desired exposure and connecting in real-time with buyers and sellers locally and across the Mena region.

With the market continuously expanding and the competition exceeding normal limits, businesses see a tremendous drop in growth, especially during the pandemic. Moreover, youth below the age of 29 years constitute over 60 per cent of Oman's population. At the current level of population growth, the Sultanate of Oman needs to create at least 50,000 jobs annually to reduce unemployment, which is estimated at 15 per cent.

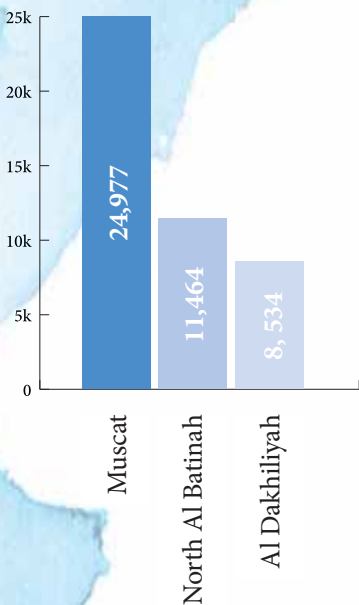
And questions like whether SME initiatives in the country are in sync with the needs of entrepreneurs and are they promoting job creation, growth and development still remain unanswered. Considering the government's keenness to bring down unemployment rates, it has become imperative to encourage job-seekers to either join the private sector or start their own enterprises.

Thus, it has become imperative that employment opportunities are created to enable young Omanis to establish their own businesses.

The number of new listings at Riyada



Governorates Latest statistics (NCSI)





# Sultanate of Oman to mark World Oceans Day

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, JUNE 6

The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Environment Agency, will mark World Oceans Day on June 8. It will highlight the 2022 theme of “Revitalisation: collective action for the ocean”.

The ocean covers over 70 per cent of the planet. It is our life source, supporting humanity’s sustenance and that of every other organism on earth.

The ocean produces at least 50 per cent of the planet’s oxygen, it is home to most of earth’s biodiversity, and is the main source of protein for more than a billion people around the world. Not to mention, the ocean is key to our economy with an estimated 40 million people being employed by ocean-based industries by 2030.

Even with all its benefits, the ocean is now in need of support.

With 90 per cent of big fish populations depleted, and 50 per cent of coral reefs destroyed, we are taking more from the ocean than can be replenished. We need to work together to create a new balance with the ocean that no longer depletes its bounty but instead restores its vibrancy and brings it new life.

“Revitalisation: collective action for the ocean” is the theme for World Oceans Day 2022, a year framed by the UN Decade of Ocean Science and the celebration of the United Nations Ocean Conference, two years after being cancelled because of the pandemic.

World Oceans Day reminds every one of the major role the oceans have in everyday life. They are the lungs of our Planet and a major source of food and medicine and a critical part of the biosphere.

The purpose of the Day is to inform the public of the impact of human actions on the ocean, develop a worldwide movement



The Environment Authority said that it is continuing its efforts to study coral reef environments in the Musandam Governorate and rehabilitation and cultivation of coral reefs in the Daymaniyat Islands Reserve

of citizens for the ocean, and mobilise and unite the world’s population on a project for the sustainable management of the world’s oceans.

The Environment Agency explained that the celebration of this occasion comes within the framework of concern for coral reefs, which are one of the most important marine resources and ecosystems and are present in five main areas in the various governorates of the Sultanate of Oman.

The authority indicated that the coral reef ecosystem constitutes an integrated system, as the composition of its biodiversity does not consist not only of coral reefs, but also of a large number of marine organisms associated with it.

The authority stated that the abundance of mangroves on the

coasts of the Sultanate of Oman is an important food source for many fish, crustaceans and different types of birds, whether they are endemic or migratory, in addition to the presence of coral reefs.

The authority confirmed that the Sultanate of Oman has made great efforts to preserve coral reef environments by implementing a national plan for its management and developing a plan for periodic cleaning campaigns for coral reef environments.

The authority pointed out that the marine environment is characterised by biodiversity that made it one of the richest and most diverse marine environments in the world. The coast of the Sultanate of Oman extends over 3,165 kilometres with more than 21 species of

whales and dolphins, in addition to five species of sea turtles.

The authority added that it is continuing its efforts to study coral reef environments in the Musandam Governorate and rehabilitation and cultivation of coral reefs in the Daymaniyat Islands Reserve.

The authority indicated that it is continuing to work on organising campaigns to remove waste especially fishing nets and gear from coastal areas with the support of the public and private sectors and the local population.

The authority indicated that the cleaning campaigns aim to protect coral reefs, in addition to raising awareness among people and fishermen about the importance of these marine life and their positive role in maintaining the marine ecological balance.



## Training to develop strategic and operational skills

STAFF REPORTER

MUSCAT, JUNE 6

The Ministry of Education, represented by the Directorate-General of Strategic Planning and Development, Educational Needs Planning Department, in cooperation with the Directorate-General of Administrative Affairs, Training and Rehabilitation Department, implemented training programme to develop skills of preparing strategic and operational plans.

The training programme kicked off on Sunday and continues for five days with the participation of 25 planning specialists from the Directorate-General of Strategic Planning and Development, and the various Educational Directorates in the governorates. The training programme takes place at the Carnelian Muscat Hotel Athaiba, Bausher.

The programme is presented by Dr Muhanna Mohammad Ibrahim, Professor of Educational Planning and Economics of Education at the College of Education in Egypt.

The training touches upon several topics including basic concepts in the educational and strategic planning and its development, and determining the responsibility for preparing the strategic

plan, its establishment and the factors affecting its formulation, preparation of strategic plans and defining steps, characteristics of strategic planning, its benefits, levels and obstacles, databases, and information. The training programme also presents models for strategic and operational planning and evaluation mechanisms.

The programme aims to develop work priorities by training new employees in the planning departments on how to prepare plans, identify their stages, how to build the operational plan, and follow them up so that they have a clear picture of everything related to planning. It also aims to introduce the trainees to the concept of planning skill and its importance, strategic planning, its elements, various dimensions and stages, the course of preparing strategic plans.

It also seeks to help trainees build a plan with a strategic vision, defining its mission and values according to the work environment.

It also aims to enable trainees to conduct an analysis of the current situation experienced by their educational organisations to identify weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats, and to be able to apply these skills and knowledge in operational plans in their work environment.

## Go First connects Muscat with Kochi

KABEER YOUSUF

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Catering to the increasing demand for more seats to the South Indian city, Kochi and in line with its vision to strengthen international connectivity between India and the Middle East, Go First, the erstwhile GoAir, has launched direct services from Muscat to Kochi.

A warm welcome was

accorded to the inaugural flight from Cochin International Airport at 11.05pm which left Nedumbassery Airport at 9pm.

The new flights to Muscat from Kochi will offer connectivity and convenient travel options to predominantly lesser income groups and blue collar workers flying abroad for employment.

Kaushik Khona, Chief Executive Officer, Go First,

said, “As we eventually come out of the pandemic, we are pleased to strengthen our international presence and commence operations between Kochi to Muscat besides other destinations. We believe that the situation is improving, and we are hopeful that this will further ease travel between India and Middle East,” Kaushik said.

“India is a very important partner country for Oman.

We feel that the relationship between India and Oman is so strong that the air connectivity has to expand more. We are excited to further grow and give passengers more options to travel. This direct route will enable tourism between the two cities and strengthen direct airlinks between Oman and Kerala,” Shyamaprasad Kallat, General Manager, Meزون Travel LLC said.

## Motorists urged to take precautions at pumps

MUSCAT: As fuel stations are prone to high risks due to the presence of flammable materials, it requires caution on the part of employees as well as the customers.

The inspection teams of the Civil Defence and Ambulance Authority recorded two cases of violations in 2020 and none last year.

The CDAA has called on motorists to turn off the



vehicle’s engine during the refuelling process, and not to move the vehicle before making sure that the worker has pulled the fuel hose out of it.

Motorists shall not smoke at filling stations at all times or use mobile phones while driving.

The authority called on fuel marketing companies to train workers on how to deal with any emergency or fire and to abide by the safety instructions.

**Sultanate of Oman**  
**Ministry of Defence**  
**ENGINEERING SERVICES**

**TENDER ANNOUNCEMENT**

Ministry of Defence invites Contractors/consultant specialized in the under mentioned works and registered with the Govt. Tender Board and Ministry of Defence to participate in the following tender.

| Tender No. | Tender Name                                   | Contractors Grade | Last Date to Obtain Tender | Tender Submission Date | Tender Price (RO) |
|------------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 18/2021    | Electromechanical (RO Plant) Work – Al Furjah | First and Above   | 16 June 2022               | 25 July 2022           | 135/- R.O         |
| 14/2022    | Electromechanical (RO Plant) Work – MNB       | First and Above   | 16 June 2022               | 25 July 2022           | 250/- R.O         |

\*For more information about the above Tenders please visit gate number (14)

- Tender Documents (Electronic Tender Document) can be obtained from the Tender office, Gate No: 14, Muaskar Al Murtafa'a after payment of the tender fee indicated above.
- The Payment should be made electronically by using SMART CARD, VISA CARD and VISA ELECTRON. Sunday to Thursday (0900 – 1300 Hours).
- The Bid to be accompanied by Tender Bond in the value of (1%) of the bid value in the form of a Bank Guarantee or Certified Cheque issued by a local bank and addressed to HE the Chairman of the Tender Committee.
- Bids are to be submitted in sealed envelopes addressed to HE the Chairman of Tender Committee and marked with Tender Number and Name. Name of Bidder or any other marks should not be printed on the envelopes.
- Bids to be deposited in the Tender office at Gate No: 14 Muaskar Al Murtafa'a before 1300 hours on the assigned day for submission of the Tender.
- We would like to draw your attention to the importance of adherence to the submission date, request and any queries related should not be submitted to MODES fourteen days prior to submission of offer & that queries must be on electronic (Microsoft word).
- You are requested to submit the following items within your tender submission, failure to submit the required information may result a disqualification of your offer without any further notification.
  - Percentage of Omanisation within the company supported by an authenticated certificate from the Ministry of Manpower (Updated Copy).
  - Detailed priced breakdown to be specified as per scope and drawings.
  - Full set of stamped drawings and documents, Tender Form and Tender Bonds to be submitted as hard copy and others documentation shall be as soft copy (USB) in two separate files:
    - Financial (bill 1&2 separated from bill3)
    - Technical files.
  - Confirmation of site visit.
  - All addendums and circulars.
  - List of sub-contractors/suppliers and their acceptance letter to this project.
  - List of current and executed projects for the last Five years.
  - Valid Registration Certificates from Tender Board.
  - Financial Statement for the last Three years.



# Talks on to revive Iran nuclear deal

VIENNA: Major European countries and the US are expected to seek for reviving talks as the UN atomic watchdog started meeting on Monday with talks to revive the 2015 nuclear deal stalled.

The resolution drafted by the United States, Britain, France and Germany is a sign of their growing impatience as diplomats warn the window to save the landmark agreement is closing.

The International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors meets on Monday through Friday in Vienna.

If the resolution urging Iran to "cooperate fully" with the IAEA is adopted, it will be the first motion censuring Iran since June 2020.

Talks to revive the accord started in April 2021 with the aim of bringing the United States back into the deal, lifting sanctions and getting Iran to scale back its stepped-up nuclear programme.

The 2015 landmark deal — promising Tehran sanctions relief in exchange for curbs in its nuclear programme — started to fall apart in 2018 when the then US president Donald Trump withdrew from it.

Talks to revive the agreement have stalled in recent months.

The coordinator of the talks, the EU's top diplomat Josep Borrell, warned in a tweet this weekend that the possibility of returning to the accord was "shrinking".

In a report late last month, the IAEA said it still had questions that were "not clarified" regarding traces of enriched uranium previously found at three sites, which Iran had not declared as having hosted nuclear activities.

"The agency remains ready to



Head of Iran's permanent mission to international organisations in Vienna Mohammad Reza Ghaebi attends the quarterly IAEA Board of Governors meeting at the agency headquarters in Vienna. — AFP



Rafael Grossi, Director General, IAEA Board of Governors meeting in Vienna. — AFP

re-engage without delay with Iran to resolve these matters," IAEA head Rafael Grossi said in his opening statement to the board.

"I hope that as a result of the deliberations of the board this week, we will come out of this with a sense of commitment to solve these things once and for

Josep Borrell, coordinator of the talks, has warned that the possibility of returning to the accord was 'shrinking'

all — because as I said, this it not going to disappear," he told reporters later on Monday.

Iran will reject the resolution, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Saeed Khatibzadeh told state TV.

"Not only do we not view the resolution as constructive, but

we believe it will have a negative impact both on the general direction of our cooperation with the IAEA and on our negotiations," he said.

Kelsey Davenport, an expert with the Arms Control Association, said a resolution was "necessary to send a message that there are consequences for stonewalling the agency and failing to meet safeguards obligations".

"There is no excuse for Iran's continued failure to provide meaningful cooperation with the agency's investigation," she said.

China and Russia — who with Britain, France and Germany are parties to the Iran nuclear deal — have warned that any resolution could disrupt the negotiation process. — AFP

# Australia, Indonesia hold talks to boost ties

JAKARTA: Australia's new prime minister and Indonesia's president rode bamboo bicycles together on Monday as they held talks to boost ties, as Canberra embarks on a diplomatic charm offensive aimed at countering China's growing assertiveness in the region.

Anthony Albanese hailed relations with Indonesia and vowed to strengthen them on his first bilateral trip since being elected last month, heading to Southeast Asia's biggest economy in what has become a traditional tour for new Australian premiers.

After a guard of honour, Indonesian President Joko Widodo presented Albanese with a bicycle at the presidential palace in Bogor — a city south of capital Jakarta — where the pair removed their jackets, donned helmets and rode around the grounds.

"Australia's relationship with Indonesia is one of our most important. We are linked not just by geography, we are linked by choice," Albanese said in a joint press conference held after talks.

"Our relationship is ever-deepened by the strategic and economic interests we share," he added, saying Indonesia was on course to become one of the five biggest economies in the world.

Widodo said good relations between the two would contribute to "the peace and prosperity of the region".

About the bike ride, Albanese later tweeted, "it was a privilege to have such a personal and enjoyable tour of the magnificent



Australia Prime Minister Anthony Albanese observes a moment of silence at the Kalibata National Heroes Cemetery in Jakarta. — AFP

grounds". Widodo tweeted the bikes were "designed for use on the highway" and made from bamboo by Singgih Susilo Kartono, an East Javan designer known for his woodcraft.

Albanese confirmed he would attend the G20 summit, which Indonesia will host in November, despite reservations from predecessor Scott Morrison about sitting around the table with Russian President Vladimir Putin after his attack on Ukraine.

"I said before I travelled to Indonesia... that Vladimir Putin attended previous meetings in Australia hosted by (former PM) Tony Abbott," he told reporters.

"That didn't mean we agree with his stance, indeed we find President Putin's behaviour to be abhorrent, to be illegal," he added.

The Labor Party leader discussed advancing opportunities on trade, climate change and regional security with Widodo, who last visited Australia in early 2020. — AFP

## ■ PROTESTING SETTLEMENT EXPANSION



An Israeli soldier is confronted by a Palestinian demonstrator in the city of Tubas during a gathering to denounce the Israeli settlement expansion in the Jordan Valley. — AFP

# Iraq jails British tourist in antiquities smuggling case

BAGHDAD: An Iraqi court on Monday sentenced a British retiree to 15 years' prison for trying to smuggle antiquities out of the country, but acquitted his German co-accused.

The maximum penalty for the offence is death by hanging but the court decided on a lesser sentence for James Fitton, 66, "because of the advanced age of the accused", the judge said. Fitton's lawyer said that he would appeal.

The court found "insufficient evidence" to convict co-accused Volker Waldmann, 60, who was visiting Iraq with Fitton on an organised tour when they were arrested in March at Baghdad

airport. War-ravaged Iraq's tourism infrastructure is almost non-existent but the country is timidly opening to visitors.

Iraq has also been trying to recover antiquities that were looted over a period of decades from the country whose civilisation dates back thousands of years. When the judge asked the men whether they were guilty or not guilty "of trafficking antiquities", each replied: "Not guilty."

They appeared in court dressed in yellow prisoners' clothing, but not handcuffed, said a journalist at the hearing. They were charged under a 2002 law against "intentionally taking or trying

to take out of Iraq an antiquity". According to statements from customs officers and witnesses, Fitton's baggage contained about a dozen stone fragments, pieces of pottery or ceramics.

Waldmann, a Berlin psychologist, allegedly had two pieces but at the trial's opening on May 15 denied they were his.

When the judge asked Fitton why he tried to take the artefacts out of Iraq, he cited his "hobby" and said he did not mean to do anything illegal. "I didn't realise that taking them was against the law", Fitton said, adding that some of the ancient sites were open and unguarded. — AFP

## SEOUL

### S Korea, US fire missiles in response to North tests

South Korea and the United States fired eight ballistic missiles in response to North Korean weapons tests the previous day, Seoul's military said.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff said the allies launched the ground-to-ground Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) at targets in the East Sea.

The 10-minute volley comes a day after North Korea launched ballistic missiles following a South Korea-US joint military exercise. "Our military strongly



condemns the North's series of ballistic missile provocations and urges it to immediately stop acts that raise military tensions on the peninsula", the Joint Chiefs of Staff added. — AFP

## COLOMBO

### Sri Lanka minister convicted of extortion

A cabinet minister in crisis-hit Sri Lanka was convicted of extorting money from a businessman over a land deal, a rare guilty verdict in a graft case. Prasanna Ranatunga — whose elder brother Arjuna captained the country's cricket World Cup winning team — was given a two-year suspended prison sentence and fined 25 million Sri Lankan rupees. He is currently the urban development minister and was previously responsible for tourism, before a brief spell as



public security minister. Sri Lanka ranks 102nd out of 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2021. — AFP

## SHANGHAI

### Shanghai residents chafe under fresh lockdowns

Residents stuck inside a compound after Shanghai's much vaunted reopening following a virus outbreak shouted at hazmat-clad officials, as fears grew that some city neighbourhoods were being locked down again. Authorities in the financial hub eased many harsh restrictions, after confining most of the city's 25 million inhabitants to their homes since late March, as China battled its worst Covid outbreak. But hundreds of thousands have not yet been allowed out of



their homes, while others have immediately been placed back under local lockdowns after a brief liberation that triggered shopping sprees and lavish-fuelled street parties. — AFP



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## In brief

■ LONDON



### UK FACES POST-JUBILEE TRAVEL CHAOS OVER PLATINUM JUBILEE

London was hit by a subway strike on top of train and flight delays and cancellations that caused travel chaos in Britain following four-day Platinum Jubilee weekend. Several underground stations were closed after the RMT union called a 24-hour strike in the British capital, prompting authorities to urge commuters to avoid the Tube until Tuesday morning. Thousands of travellers struggled to return home after the celebration of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee as hundreds of flights were cancelled, according to UK media.

— AFP

■ BUNIA



### AT LEAST 20 DEAD IN NEW DR CONGO MASSACRE

At least 20 people have been killed in a new massacre in DR Congo's eastern province of Ituri, a respected monitor said, adding that the notorious ADF militia were suspected. The attack took place overnight in the village of Bwanasura in Irumu territory, the Kivu Security Tracker (KST) said on Twitter. David Beiza, head of the Red Cross in Irumu, said volunteers from his organisation 'have counted 36 bodies' at the site of the massacre. Ituri and neighbouring North Kivu province are struggling with attacks by armed groups, many of them a legacy of wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo's east. — AFP

■ LAGOS



### DEATH TOLL RISES TO 100 AFTER ATTACK IN NIGERIA

The death toll in Nigeria has risen to 100 following a brutal attack on a Catholic church, with many children and pregnant women among the dead, Oluwole Ogunmolasuyi, a local politician in the southern state of Ondo, said on Monday. Heavily armed perpetrators had stormed St Francis' Church in the city of Owo on Pentecost, or Whit, Sunday during a church service, shooting indiscriminately at worshippers and setting off explosive devices. Authorities had initially said on Sunday that up to 50 people were killed. The government launched an investigation into the incident. — dpa

# Ukraine suffers setbacks in strategic city

**KYIV:** Ukrainian troops suffered setbacks after retaking parts of flashpoint eastern city Severodonetsk from Russian forces, local officials said on Monday, as the see-saw battle raged on for the strategically important city.

With Russia bringing the weight of its artillery to bear around Severodonetsk — the largest city in the Lugansk region not under Russian control — more help was promised from abroad.

The United Kingdom said it would follow the United States and send long-range missile systems to Ukraine, defying warnings from Russian President Vladimir Putin against supplying Kyiv with the advanced weapons.

Thousands of civilians have been killed and millions forced to flee their homes since Putin ordered Russian troops into Ukraine on February 24.

Fighting since April has been concentrated in the east of the country, where Russian forces have made slow but steady advances after being beaten back from other parts of Ukraine, including the capital Kyiv.

"Fighting is very fierce in Severodonetsk", regional governor Serhiy Gaiday told Ukraine's 1+1 television. "Our defenders



A firefighter stands in a destroyed production depot of the Darnytsia freight cars repair plant, which was targeted by Russian missile strikes in Kyiv. — AFP

managed to counter-attack and liberate half of the city, but the situation has worsened for us."

Russian forces "are destroying everything with their usual scorched earth tactics" so that "there's nothing left to defend", he said.

Gaiday said on Sunday that Kyiv's troops had "cleared half of Severodonetsk and are moving forward", after Ukrainian forces

earlier appeared on the verge of being driven out of the city.

Artillery strikes have intensified on Severodonetsk and neighbouring city Lysychansk, where pensioner Oleksandr Lyakhovets said he had just enough time to save his cat before the flames engulfed his flat after it was hit by a Russian missile.

"They shoot here endlessly... It's a horror show", the 67-year-old

said. Lysychansk was among areas visited on Sunday by President Volodymyr Zelensky, who "got himself acquainted with the operational situation on the front line of defence", the presidency said.

In Moscow, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov on Monday blasted European countries for blocking his plane from travelling to Serbia, saying:

Russia warns West against long-range weapons for Ukraine and Zelensky says 'outnumbered' in Severodonetsk

"The unthinkable has happened."

"This was a deprivation of a sovereign state of the right to carry out foreign policy", Lavrov told an online press conference in Moscow after several of Serbia's neighbours prevented his plane from passing through their airspace.

Lavrov had been due to hold talks with top officials in Belgrade, one of Moscow's few remaining allies in Europe since the launch of its military offensive in Ukraine.

Serbian daily 'Vecernje Novosti' reported that Bulgaria, Macedonia and Montenegro had refused access to their airspace.

While Serbia has condemned Russia's military action in Ukraine, it has not joined the European Union in imposing sanctions in Moscow, despite its bid to join the bloc.

— AFP

## UK PM braced for Tory no-confidence vote

**LONDON:** British Prime Minister Boris Johnson faced a no-confidence vote on Monday among Conservative MPs after dozens rebelled over a string of scandals that have left the party's public standing in tatters.

The beleaguered leader has spent months battling to maintain his grip on power after the "Partygate" controversy saw him become the first serving UK prime minister found to have broken the law.

If he loses the evening vote, he must step down as Conservative leader, but can stay on as prime minister pending a party leadership election in the coming weeks.

Writing to his MPs, Johnson defended his governing record, including on delivering Brexit, fighting the Covid pandemic and supporting Ukraine.

"Tonight we have the chance to end weeks of media speculation and take this country forward, immediately, as one united party", he wrote ahead of meeting his backbenchers in person before the vote.

But the scale of Tory disunity was exposed in a blistering resignation letter from Johnson's "anti-corruption champion", John Penrose, and another letter of protest from longtime ally Jesse Norman.

The prime minister's rebuttals over "Partygate" were "grotesque", Norman wrote. He warned that the Tories risked losing the next general election, due by 2024.

Ex-cabinet member Jeremy Hunt, who lost to Johnson in the last leadership contest in 2019 and is expected to run again if he is deposed, confirmed he would vote against him.

"Conservative MPs know in our hearts we are not giving the British people the leadership they



A photograph shows a board reading 'Resign' and picturing Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson in front of The House of Parliament in London. — AFP

Johnson defended his governing record, including delivering Brexit, fighting the Covid pandemic and supporting Ukraine

deserve", Hunt tweeted. After a dismal showing in May local elections, the party is predicted to lose two Westminster by-elections this month, including one in a previously rock-solid Conservative seat.

That is focussing the minds of Tory lawmakers, who fear their own seats could be at risk under Johnson. Ahead of Monday's vote, a snap poll by Opinion showed 59 per cent of voters believe the Tories should ditch him as leader.

Among Conservative members, 42 per cent want MPs to fire Johnson, according to another poll by YouGov. Johnson was booed on Friday by sections of an ardently patriotic crowd gathered outside St Paul's Cathedral, ahead

of a religious service for Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee.

For wavering Tories, the barracking at a televised national occasion reportedly marked a turning point. Some said they had held back on public criticism of Johnson until after the jubilee.

But cabinet ally Jacob Rees-Mogg dismissed the booing as "muted noise" and insisted that Johnson could survive with the slenderest of majorities. "He has shown himself to be a good, strong leader who gets the big decisions right, and he has a mandate from the British people", Rees-Mogg told reporters.

Graham Brady, who heads the backbench committee of Conservatives which oversees party challenges, had earlier confirmed that the threshold of 54 Tory lawmakers seeking a confidence vote — or 15 per cent of its MPs — had been met.

Brady told reporters that he informed Johnson early on Sunday — as four days of jubilee celebrations ended — and that the prime minister did not object to a rapid ballot. — AFP

## Tourist arrivals tripled in first quarter: UN

**MADRID:** International tourist arrivals tripled in the first quarter compared with the same period in 2021, with Europe leading the rebound as Covid restrictions were eased, the UN's tourism agency said on Monday.

In the first three months of 2022, there were 117 million global tourist arrivals, up from 41 million in the same period a year earlier, with the figures showing an increase of 182 per cent, the Madrid-based UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) said.

Although the figure remained 61 per cent lower than the first quarter of 2019, a year before the pandemic, it showed tourism was continuing to recover "at a strong pace" as "restrictions ease and confidence returns", it said.

"Of the extra 76 million international arrivals for the first three months, about 47 million were recorded in March, showing that the recovery is gathering pace."

The increase was particularly notable in Europe, which welcomed almost four times

as many arrivals as in 2021, an increase of 280 per cent.

Strong growth was also seen in the Americas, where arrivals more than doubled (up 117 per cent) and in the Middle East, up 132 per cent.

"The gradual recovery is expected to continue throughout 2022, as more destinations ease or lift travel restrictions and pent-up demand is unleashed", the agency said, pointing to "a significant increase in flight reservations".

By June 2, 45 destinations (two thirds of which were in Europe) no longer had Covid-related restrictions in place, while in Asia, an increasing number of destinations had begun easing restrictions.

However, the UNWTO retained a prudent outlook for the coming months, given the risks linked to the "challenging economic environment" and Russia's war on Ukraine.

"The Russian offensive on Ukraine seems to have had a limited direct impact on overall results so far", it said. — AFP

## Colombia mine explosion kills 11

**RIO DE JANEIRO:** At least 11 people were killed after a coal-mine explosion in Colombia last week.

The country's civil defence authority said on Twitter on Monday that searches for three missing people are still ongoing after the accident near the town of El Zulia.

An explosion of methane gas and coal dust caused landslides and a high concentration of carbon monoxide, the Colombian mining authority explained as the cause of the accident.

According to media reports,

rescuers were initially unable to reach the 14 trapped miners. The rescue was difficult due to the unstable shaft and the concentration of gas.

The mine was closed last year because of another incident and had only recently been allowed to resume operations, a spokesperson for the local mining administration told the newspaper *La Opinión*.

At that time, it was closed for improvements to the ventilation in the mine, which has been in operation for about 30 years.

— dpa

# Allow life to happen for you, not to you



Hyesha Barrett

The writer is a NLP practitioner and hypnotherapist

We live in an era where there is so much going on, at all times. We are spoilt for choice and are constantly being bombarded from so many varying means and different platforms, which makes it difficult for us to focus our attention on one area without getting swayed by another.

As much as we don't want to admit it, we are often lured down the enticing path towards the next "shiny object". We are getting used to life happening at such a high speed that boredom can set in if things transpire at a slower pace.

However, this high level intensity is not sustainable in the long run.

With all the external stimuli and mental chatter, it's no wonder we feel

overwhelmed at times. When we slow down to the present moment, the noise quiетens. Mindfulness is about choosing to pay attention to the present moment in a curious and non-judgmental fashion. Thoughts will automatically come; the key is to notice them and bring your wandering mind back to the now. When we make the conscious effort to slow down and notice when our thoughts wander, it's much easier to re-centre ourselves.

Here are five simple steps to being more mindful:

- Breathe.

We often shallow breathe, which doesn't allow our body to work at full capacity. As breathing for the most part happens on the

## PAY UNDIVIDED ATTENTION TO SOMETHING THAT IS PART OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE

unconscious level, we often take it for granted. Breathe deep, long and slow into your belly for a few minutes and repeat a word or "mantra".

- Pay undivided attention to something that is part of your daily routine: brushing your teeth, driving, kids bedtime etc

When your mind wanders, notice and bring your attention back to the activity.

- Really engage with what you are doing whether it be talking to a friend, cooking a meal, eating or reading a book. Focus on the little things that you would normally take for granted.
- Ground yourself.

Sit comfortably or go for a stroll and take the time to experience your surroundings with all of your five senses.

- Body scan awareness.

Focus your attention slowly and deliberately on each part of your body, from toe to head and release any tension. Be aware of any sensations, emotions or thoughts that arise. Acknowledge them, welcome them and let them go.

Mindfulness practices have been

linked to improvements in body pain, lowered stress, enhanced concentration, mental clarity, boosted memory and stronger relationships. When we are more mindful, more present and more focused, this supports our overall mental health, emotional and physical well-being.

With practice and over time, being patient and holding compassion for yourself, you will be able to maintain a moment to moment awareness of your thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations and surrounding environment, without judgement nor criticism.

You will be able to let go much easier, and allow life to happen for you, not to you.

## Job-seekers collide with German language barrier

YASMINE GUÉNARD-MONIN

Ganna Nikolska comes back dejected from the stand of an insurer ready to hire Ukrainian refugees in Berlin: "I don't speak German," she explains in halting English.

The 42-year-old trained doctor fled Kharkiv in eastern Ukraine in March "with her backpack and her daughter", her sister Olena Nikitoshkina, 36, who speaks fluent German, said.

Nikolska would like to stay in Germany, but is having trouble finding work in her field "because her degree would need to be recognised and she'd need to speak German but that takes a long time", Nikitoshkina said.

Around 1,000 Ukrainian new arrivals showed up this week at the stands of companies gathered at the Berlin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IHK) for a job fair.

Three months after the start of the Russian attack of Ukraine which touched off a mass exodus of more than six million people, Germany has taken in more Ukrainians than any other nation apart from the bordering countries, according to the United Nations.

German authorities estimate that more than 700,000 people have arrived from Ukraine since February 24, without knowing how many have continued on to third countries.

In Berlin, some 44,000 Ukrainians have applied for a permanent residence permit. Following the hectic first few weeks getting settled, the refugees, the vast majority of them women, now aim to integrate and earn a living.

A wide range of around 60 employers including hotels, private clinics and construction companies took part in the job fair, said Yvonne Meyer of the IHK.

As Europe's biggest economy with its ageing population and low unemployment faces a manpower shortage across many sectors, Ukrainian newcomers are seen as an attractive option in industry, retail jobs and healthcare.

The Institute for Employment Research at Germany's Federal Employment Agency reports that there are currently 1.69 million jobs unfilled in the country — a new record.

"We are still searching for personnel so it's a very good opportunity for us," a recruiter from the Berlin street cleaning service (BSR) said at the fair. Some companies including the Grill Royal group of upscale restaurants and Policum health clinics have started offering new staff German courses.

But none of the jobs that interest Yuliia Bokk provide this possibility. "It's not enough that I speak English.

— AFP

# Fire is here to stay. Can we live with it?



Molly Mowery

The writer is Executive Director, Community Wildfire Planning Centre

In 2018, downed powerlines ignited northern California's Camp Fire, which raced through Butte County into the town of Paradise, spreading at a rate of up to 80 football fields per minute.

The fire took 85 lives and destroyed nearly 19,000 structures, becoming the deadliest and most destructive wildfire in California's history. Just two years later, in 2020, the state experienced its largest wildfire, the August Complex, which burned more than 1 million acres of land across six different counties.

That same summer, the Almeda Fire took hold in Oregon, where its catastrophic toll included the loss of more than 2,600 homes and three lives.

These days, wildfire records don't last very long — and there are no signs of record-breaking trends letting up. On December 30, 2021, the Marshall Fire ignited in Boulder County, Colorado.

This winter wildfire was fanned by 100-mile-per-hour winds and parched grasses, burning more than 1,000 homes and several businesses in suburban communities and killing two people within 12 hours.

Already this year, major fires have burned in Florida, Texas, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico, where the Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak Fire has become the largest wildfire in state history, and the early spring McBride Fire destroyed 200 homes and killed two people.

But wildfires don't just destroy homes, infrastructure, and lives — their widespread secondary impacts

## CLIMATE CHANGE CONDITIONS WILL CONTINUE TO EXACERBATE DROUGHTS, EXTREME HEAT, AND DECLINING ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

also disrupt daily norms and pose additional health and safety risks.

In several Western states, wildfires have forced utility companies to develop strategies for "public safety power shutoffs," which pre-emptively turn off electricity during dangerous weather conditions in high wildfire hazard areas.

Evacuation notices are now so common in some communities that residents are advised to pack emergency go bags and be ready to leave at a moment's notice.

During long stretches of the summer and fall, an almost continuous haze of wildfire-generated smoke in the atmosphere is regularly creating hazardous air quality levels that extend far beyond fire locations — during last summer's fires, wildfire smoke from Canada and the Western US created unhealthy air quality as far away as New York and Pennsylvania.

Wildfires and poor visibility also shut down commerce routes such as major highways and railways — during the 2020 Grizzly Creek Fire

in Colorado, Interstate 70 was forced to close for two full weeks, disrupting supply chains across multiple states.

Forest closures, smoke, or mass displacements from wildfires frequently cancel summer vacations, camping trips, weddings, and other events, with drastic impacts for tourism and hospitality industries.

Seasoned incident managers say they have never witnessed fires this intense and severe. Several factors are to blame, and all of them have to do with us.

Starting in the early 1900s, fire agencies formalised a policy to suppress all wildfires in an attempt to protect towns and large timber stands. But a full suppression policy, we now recognise, is unachievable and inappropriate, primarily because it results in unhealthy forests and ecosystems, which ultimately contribute to increased fire risk.

At the same time, we built homes and businesses in a variety of fire-prone landscapes — forests, prairies, grasslands, and other areas now known as the wildland-urban interface (commonly referred to as the "WUI").

The US Forest Service and SILVIS Lab estimate that between 1990 and 2010 the number of houses located in the WUI grew to 43.4 million from 30.8 million.

Many Western counties experienced the highest growth, with some areas seeing more than a 75 per cent growth rate of homes being added to the WUI. Much of this development did not incorporate adequate fire measures, such as emergency access routes for evacuation, adequate water supply for response, or building materials that could withstand an onslaught of intense heat and embers.

Layered on top of our past development and land management decisions is the dramatically changing climate. The Western US is experiencing its worst megadrought in at least 1,200 years, evidenced by declining snowpack, record low reservoirs, and parched agriculture fields. There is no reason to believe things will get better:

The United Nations Environment Programme predicts that climate change conditions will continue to exacerbate droughts, extreme heat, variability in precipitation, and declining ecosystem health.

— New York Times



A helicopter drops water on a smoldering hillside in Laguna Beach, California.

Digital world knows no boundaries



Lakshmi Kothaneth @lakshmioman

The writer is a senior journalist and a radio anchor with one person's comment can be experienced by anyone in the social media.

Hurting sentiments of communities unearth the past and even the calmest of people churn out hurtful words.

Being responsible is not just the duty of organisations, but each individual.

When we create so much of chaos within families because of lack of communication or not respecting each other, why are we not taking time to fathom the impact of words of hatred can cause to others especially when individuals are from different backgrounds and orientations.

Being politically correct might sound like being artificial but it can maintain a decorum.

If opinions matter then it would be nice to reflect on the impact of the words before they are expressed simply because a peaceful society is the ideal one to live in.

Having a social media tool or a microphone does not mean anything can be said, because the intention to use the platforms ought to be for the benefit of the society and people living in it, at least in the ideal world.

HAVING A SOCIAL MEDIA TOOL OR A MICROPHONE DOES NOT MEAN ANYTHING CAN BE SAID, BECAUSE THE INTENTION TO USE THE PLATFORMS OUGHT TO BE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE SOCIETY AND PEOPLE LIVING IN IT, AT LEAST IN THE IDEAL WORLD

This must be an interesting period for anthropologists, Psychologists and psychiatrists with the outpouring of such large level of emotions.

Conflicts are inevitable but how we respond makes a difference and in the near future one would hope we could use the social media for better understanding and not to provoke negative thoughts and emotions.

May the world heal and look for causes that bring the world together.

There is so much suffering that goes on at humanitarian level at the same time there are individuals who make a difference towards humanity, but for some reason negative news tend to feed our attention.

What we also have to remember that just few decades ago there were not many options to express one's opinion.

There were too many factors that determined — how we walked, talked and behaved.

In the past, elders in the family would remind an individual from a very young age that he/she is representing the family in everything they do in speech and in action.

And then came the millennium with new attitude and principles and so here we are — in the midst of opinions and conflicts.

But then again there are advantages to every situation and a wise friend said, "Problems come to be resolved."

What it requires meanwhile is a whole lot of patience, tolerance and forgiveness.



A CRYSTAL COMPOSITION

Visitors view 'Composition in Crystal', an interactive light and sound installation by Czech decorative lighting specialist Preciosa Lighting, as part of the Fuorisalone 2022 design event on Monday in Milan. — AFP

Syria's climate-scorched wheat fields feed animals, not people

DELIL SOULEIMAN

Moussa Fatimi's wheat field was once part of a thriving Syrian breadbasket. Now, he can't even grow enough to feed his family, and the land has been turned over to animals.

Fatimi's crop has withered from a climate crisis, adding to fears of supply shortages sparked by the war in Ukraine as Syria grapples with record-high rates of food insecurity.

"For the second year in a row, we face drought," Fatimi, 85, said at his parched plot. "We haven't even harvested enough this year to secure our own supply of bread. Our losses are in the millions," he said.

Syria is among the countries most vulnerable and poorly prepared for climate change, which is forecast to worsen, posing a further threat to the wheat harvests that are an essential income source for a war-battered population.

The trend is most evident in Syria's once-fertile northeast where wheat fields are drying to a crisp because of severe drought and low rainfall, challenges also faced by Iraq and other neighbouring countries.

In Umm Hajrah, a village northeast of Hasakeh city, Fatimi meandered through a wheat field dotted with sheep munching on the crops.

"It's just straw. There's no seeds," he said after pulling up a stunted stalk.

Trucks used to queue to ferry bags of Fatimi's wheat to granaries, but now he largely relies on income from other farmers who use his field to graze their animals.

"I feel sorry when I see the sheep eating from the field," he said.

Syria's wheat production averaged 4.1 million tonnes in years prior to its war, which erupted in 2011 after the protests. Years of subsequent fighting have left around half a million people dead and

displaced millions.

Before the war, Syria's wheat production was enough to meet local demand. Harvests then plunged to record lows, leading to increased dependence on imports especially from Russia.

Those shipments have continued since Russia's February attack on Ukraine but the war in Kyiv has sparked fears of a supply crisis as wheat fields shrivel.

Northeast Syria is about 0.8 degrees Celsius hotter today than it was 100 years ago with a decreased mean rainfall of about 18 millimetres per month over the same period, according to a report released in April by iMMAP, a data-focused non-profit organisation based in

Washington. By 2050, temperatures are expected to be at least two degrees Celsius higher while precipitation falls by 11 per cent, iMMAP said.

The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization said that the 210,000 tonnes of wheat grain produced in Hasakeh province during the 2020-2021 winter cropping season were only 26 per cent of the previous year.

The low harvest came with an estimated 60 per cent of Syria's population food-insecure, according to the UN, and prompted Salman Mohammed Barko to turn his wheat plot into a grazing ground as Fatimi did.

But the money he makes doesn't even

cover what he paid to plant the area.

"Climate change has affected us as farmers, with water scarcity, poor production, less rainfall and weather changes" posing a great challenge, said Barko, 55.

Local authorities are trying to support farmers, despite a lack of resources to confront an agricultural crisis compounded by inflation and shortages of fuel and water.

The semi-autonomous Kurdish administration helped irrigate 300,000 hectares of land and offered farmers subsidised seeds and fuel in response to this year's drought, agriculture official Laila Mohammed said.

"Climate conditions have affected the production and quality" of wheat crops, she said, explaining that a decline in output is also due to an exodus of farmers during Syria's war.

Adding to water shortages, groups on the border with Turkey have been building dams on the Khabour river that serves as a lifeline for communities downstream in Kurdish-dominated areas, according to Dutch peace-building organisation PAX.

For Syrian farmer Musa Mohammed, the Kurdish administration isn't doing enough to help.

It buys a kilogramme of wheat from farmers for 2,200 Syrian pounds (about 56 cents), which according to him is insufficient. "This price doesn't compensate us for our expenses. It should have been set at 3,000 at least," said Mohammed, who because of low rainfall — and soaring fuel costs — has had to pay more than usual for irrigation.

The 55-year-old planted 10 hectares of wheat this season.

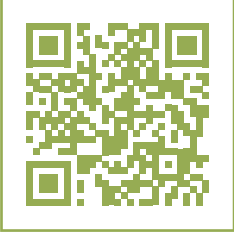
"Farmers are completely dependent on seasonal harvests, but the season is weak this year due to weather conditions, lack of rain, high prices and climate change," Mohammed said. — AFP



A shepherd guides his sheep along a dry wheat field in the countryside of Syria's northeastern Hasakeh province. — AFP

# sport

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OMAN SAIL WINS BID TO HOST 2022 WORLD RS VENTURE CONNECT

## OMAN TO HOST PARASAILING

**MUSCAT:** Oman Sail will host the 2022 RS Venture Connect World Championships in November 2022, the first time an exclusively parasailing championship has been held in Oman. Taking place from Sunday, November 20-27 at the Barcelo Mussanah Resort, up to 36 teams from an estimated 15 nations will compete in the RS Venture boat, designed specifically for people with disabilities, including members of Oman Sail's SailFree team.

Dr Khamis al Jabri, Oman Sail CEO, said, "We are honoured to be chosen as hosts of the RS Venture Connect World Championships and have the opportunity to welcome parasailors from around the world to Oman in November. This is a huge step forward for the discipline in this region and the PDP will provide valuable training for coaches, race officials and Classifiers which will help to grow the sport in Oman. The championships and PDP will be integral in supporting the athletes as we build towards our long-term goal of developing a national parasailing team and continue to support World Sailing's campaign to reinstate sailing at the Paralympics in Los Angeles 2028."

Khamis al Anbouri, Oman Sail Commercial Director, said, "The RS Venture Connect World Championships will allow the sailors from SailFree, the first parasailing programme in the region, to gain valuable experience and compete against sailors from around the world on home waters as we continue to make progress in the sport. We are also looking forward to hosting such a prestigious championship and furthering Oman's reputation as a world-class sailing venue, creating new pathways for staff and coaches to be part of this and future events, and share Oman's famous warm hospitality with our visitors."

Dan Jaspers, Head of International Sales and Business Development for RS Sailing and the Manufacturer's Representative for the RS Venture Connect Class stated, "I am very excited that the World Championship will be headed to Oman this year and I am happy that we have been able to partner with our friends at Oman Sail and their sponsors to make this event a reality, especially with the many challenges which sporting events are facing currently. Having been to Oman on a number of occasions,

NOVEMBER  
20-27  
TEAMS  
36

NATIONS  
15

## WORLD EVENT



I can say for certain that it will not only be the on-water competition that will be enjoyed by those taking part, but also the hospitality of the hosts and the culture of this amazing country."

He added, "I strongly urge all those RS Venture Connect sailors as well as Disabled Sailing programmes that are currently using the RS Venture Connect as part of their day-to-day activities but that have not yet had sailors attend an international event, to do so. The experience of a Worlds in Oman is one that should not be missed. I look forward to seeing you all in Mussanah."

As with the previous RS Venture Connect Class World Championship, the 2022 World Championship will once again feature a 'Para' as well as an 'Open' category for teams entered, increasing the opportunities for participation by sailors do not meet the World Sailing Minimal Disability Classification criteria required to participate in the Para category. The inclusion of the 'Open' category means that the event will present awards for both 'Para' and 'Open' Venture Connect Class Champions.



## Oman eye second win against Bahrain today

ADIL AL BALUSHI  
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Oman futsal team will take on Bahrain on Tuesday in their second Group B match of West Asian Futsal Championship which is under way in Kuwait. The match will kick off at the Al Nasr club hall in Kuwait at 19:30 (Oman time).

Oman team, coached by national coach Younis al Fahdi, will chase for the second straight win to seal spot in the next round of the championship after they beat UAE 4-2 in the opener on Sunday night.

In the UAE match, Motasim al Shamsi broke the deadlock in the 12th minute as he opened the account for Oman while Zamil al Balushi netted second goal in the second half in 17th minute. Captain Samer al Balushi raised the margin to three goals and Mohammed Taqi ended the scoring campaign by registering Oman's fourth goal.

In the other Group B match, Bahrain and Lebanon ended at 1-1. Oman's victory took them to lead the group with three points. Bahrain and Lebanon are positioned in the second and third places and UAE are placed in the bottom of the group. Oman will conclude their group matches on Thursday as they will meet Lebanon.

In the previous month, Oman futsal team had concluded their participation at the GCC Games which was held also in Kuwait. Oman began their campaign at



the GCC Games in style with a 2-1 win over UAE team at Shaikh Saad Al Abdullah Multi Sports Complex B Stadium.

In the following game, Oman's men suffered a 2-0 loss to Bahrain team and then another defeat from Saudi Arabia by 3-0 in the third fixture. Oman team ended their campaign against the hosts Kuwait with a 3-1 defeat.

The West Asian Futsal Championship will act as vital preparatory stage when Oman futsal team will make their debut at the AFC Futsal Asian Cup which will take place in Kuwait in September.

The Sultanate of Oman team will face a tough challenge of battling with the hosts Kuwait, 16-time Asian champions Thailand and Iraq in Group A. Uzbekistan led Group B besides Bahrain, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan while 12-time champions Iran were drawn in Group C besides Lebanon, Chinese Taipei and Indonesia. Japan, the only other team to lift the continental trophy, were drawn in Group D with Vietnam, Korea Republic and Saudi Arabia.

# CURRY STARS AS WARRIORS LEVEL NBA FINALS SERIES

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Stephen Curry scored 29 points as the Golden State Warriors roared back into NBA Finals contention on Sunday with a series-levelling 107-88 game two victory over the Boston Celtics.

Curry spearheaded a deadly display of Golden State shooting in San Francisco while a superb Warriors defensive effort shut down Boston's key offensive weapons.

The Warriors, who squandered a 12-point fourth-quarter lead in game one, were in no mood to allow lightning to strike twice as they cut loose to build a double-digit advantage in the third quarter to tie the best-of-seven series at 1-1.

Curry led the scoring for Golden State, with Jordan Poole (17 points), Andrew Wiggins (11), Kevon Looney (12) and Klay Thompson (11) also making double figures.

Jayson Tatum topped the Boston scorers with 28 points, but crucially 21 of those came in a hardfought first half.

Only two other Boston players — Jaylen Brown with 17 points and Derrick White with 12 — cracked double digits.

The Warriors defence, marshalled brilliantly by Draymond Green, suffocated Boston in the second half, with two high-scoring Celtics heroes from game one — Al Horford and Marcus Smart — held to just four points combined.

The series now moves to Boston with game three scheduled for Wednesday and game four on Friday.

"We said we needed to play with desperation and that's what we did," said Curry. "It's a good feeling to get back on track and now we've got to take it on the road."

"We got off to a better start defensively where we made an imprint on the game and they felt us more than they did in game one. Our third quarter was great and we got a bit more separation that made the fourth quarter



easier tonight."

The Warriors put themselves in a winning position after outscoring Boston 35-14 in the third quarter to take an 87-64 lead into the fourth quarter.

### POOLE PARTY

Poole electrified San Francisco's packed Chase Center after launching a buzzer-beating three-pointer from near halfway at the end of the third to cap a devastating passage of play from the home team.

The Warriors kept up the pressure in the early part of the fourth quarter, extending their lead to 29 points as the Celtics scrambled to regroup before closing out a blowout win.

"I thought everybody was more engaged," Golden State coach Steve Kerr said. "It was pretty obvious, just our level of force and physicality was ramped up quite a bit, and it had to be."

"What Boston did in the fourth quarter the other night, we knew we had to come with a much better

focus and sense of aggression, and I thought that started right from the beginning."

Boston, who erupted for 40 points in the final quarter to win game one, picked up where they left off on Sunday, jumping out to an early 13-5 lead with Brown leading the way.

A Brown three-pointer took Boston into a 22-13 lead early in the first quarter before a sustained Warriors rally led by Curry saw the hosts get back to within one point. — AFP

# Murray awed by Nadal's 'incredible' French Open record

**STUTTGART, Germany:** Before continuing his grass court preparations, Andy Murray on Monday did the maths on Rafael Nadal's latest feat on clay.

The 36-year-old Spaniard on Sunday routed Norway's Casper Ruud 6-3, 6-3, 6-0 in the final at Roland Garros to extend two records. It was not only his 22nd Grand Slam title but also his 14th French Open.

"Winning 14 Grand Slams at the same place is incredible," said Murray in Stuttgart.

"There's hardly any players on the Tour who will get the opportunity to play Roland Garros 14 times, much less win it."

Nadal won his first French Open title in 2005. In the 17 seasons since then, he has lost just three matches at Roland Garros and been forced out once by a wrist injury.

Murray used the sport's latest prodigy, Nadal's compatriot Carlos Alcaraz, for comparison.

"Alcaraz is 19 now, so he would have to win it every single time (until age 33) to achieve that. I just

don't see that happening."

Murray, who reached the Roland Garros final in 2016, was also impressed by Iga Swiatek, who extended her singles winning streak to 35 matches as she won the women's final.

"It was just an incredible achievement for Rafa — and Iga Swiatek," said Murray.

The Scot is making his debut at the ATP event in Stuttgart after moving onto the lawns last week at the Challenger level event in Surbiton, London, where he reached the semifinals before losing to American Denis Kudla.

The former world number one, who is ranked 68th, will take to the lawns of the Weissenhof Club on Tuesday when he faces Australian qualifier Christopher O'Connell.

"I beat him in a very close match in Dubai, it's going to be difficult," Murray said.

The 35-year-old, who survived a mass shooting at his primary school in Dunblane, Scotland, when he was nine, again spoke about gun violence.



This combination of pictures shows Spanish Rafael Nadal holding the Mousquetaires Cup (The Musketeers) after his 14 victories at the tennis French Open at Roland Garros on June 5, 2005; on June 11, 2006; on June 10, 2007; on June 8, 2008; on June 6, 2010; on June 5, 2011; on June 11, 2012; on June 9, 2013; on June 8, 2014; on June 11, 2017; on June 10, 2018; on June 9, 2019; on October 11, 2020 and on June 5, 2022. Nadal won a 14th French Open and record-extending 22nd Grand Slam title with a straight-sets rout of Casper Ruud to become the oldest male champion at Roland Garros.— AFP



Spain's Rafael Nadal poses with the trophy on Alexandre III bridge, a day after his 14th victory at the Roland Garros Open in Paris.

"(When) that happened, we changed the gun laws and there have been no more mass shootings in the UK."

"There have been more than

200 mass shootings in the US this year. They should probably do something to change that culture."

Murray said that while he would love to play doubles with Britain's US Open champion Emma Raducanu at Wimbledon, the odds were against it unless he suffered an early singles loss.

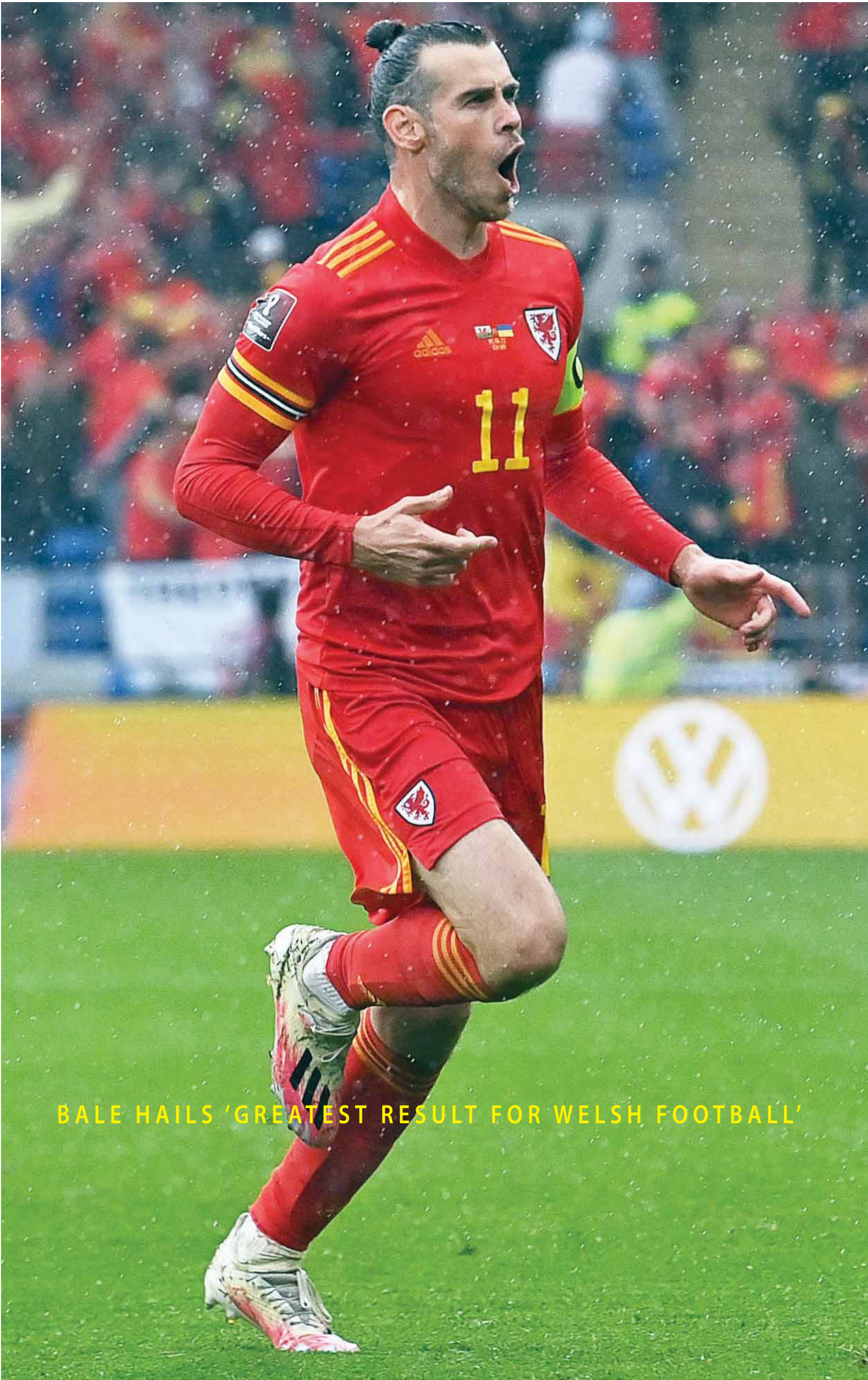
"British tennis fans would enjoy that but I don't know if it's going to happen."

"Only if the singles don't work out. It's tough enough for me to play the singles right now," said Murray, who has been beset by injury problems in recent years, especially to his hip.

Murray will be playing his 45th event on grass but only the second on the surface outside of Britain.

He said the Stuttgart lawns — originally curated by Wimbledon experts prior to the first edition in 2015 — play differently than last week in Surbiton.

"Those were old-school courts, lower bounce, very fast. But it was a good start, hopefully I can continue it here." — AFP



BALE HAILS 'GREATEST RESULT FOR WELSH FOOTBALL'

Wales' Gareth Bale celebrates after scoring the opening goal during the Fifa World Cup 2022 play-off final qualifier against Ukraine at the Cardiff City Stadium. – AFP

# Wales deny Ukraine World Cup dream

CARDIFF, UK: Gareth Bale hailed Wales' qualification for a first World Cup since 1958 as the greatest result in their history after a 1-0 win over Ukraine in Cardiff cruelly denied the war-torn nation a place in Qatar.

Bale's free-kick, which was turned into his own net by Ukrainian captain Andriy Yarmolenko, separated the sides despite the visitors dominating the game at the Cardiff City Stadium.

"The result is the greatest result in history of Welsh football," said Bale, who previously led his country to the semifinals of Euro 2016. "It's what dreams are made of."

"I'm speechless because we're so happy. We did it for all our amazing fans in the country. Words can't describe our feelings at the moment."

Ukraine made a nation proud in beating Scotland 3-1 on Wednesday in their first competitive clash since Russia's attack.

Oleksandr Petrakov's men deserved much more from another exceptionally composed performance under the strain of carrying the hopes of a people devastated by Russian aggression. "I think we did everything we could, but I really want the people in Ukraine to remember our team, our efforts," said Petrakov. "I want to say sorry we didn't score but this is sport."

The Ukrainian national anthem was applauded by all sides of the stadium before the game and, just as on their trip to Scotland in midweek, the visitors were inspired rather than inhibited by the pressure put upon them.

However, they were made to pay for some wayward finishing, one moment of misfortune and a heroic goalkeeping performance from Wayne Hennessey, who made nine saves. "We gave everything today, we left everything on the pitch," said Ukraine midfielder Oleksandr Zinchenko.

"The keeper from Wales did an unbelievable job. He's definitely man of the match with his incredible saves."

**BIG GAME BALE**

Wales had barely threatened the Ukrainian goal in the first half, but in Bale have a star capable of

| Calendar for Group B |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| GROUP STAGE          |         |
| Monday November 21   |         |
| Doha, 1300*          |         |
| England              | Iran    |
| Al Rayyan, 1900      |         |
| US                   | Wales   |
| Friday November 25   |         |
| Al Rayyan, 1000      |         |
| Wales                | Iran    |
| Al Khor, 1900        |         |
| England              | US      |
| Tuesday November 29  |         |
| Al Rayyan, 1900      |         |
| Wales                | England |
| Doha, 1900           |         |
| Iran                 | US      |
| *GMT Source: FIFA    |         |

changing the course of matches in an instant. The 32-year-old is without a club having brought down the curtain on nine years at Real Madrid by picking up a fifth Champions League winner's medal last weekend.

Bale has reserved his best for international duty in recent years and will now get the chance to add a World Cup to a glorious career.

His free-kick on 34 minutes was headed off target until Yarmolenko tried to head it to safety and only succeeded in deflecting the ball past the helpless Georgiy Bushchan. — AFP

"In big matches he delivered for us," said Wales manager Rob Page.

"He did it against Austria (in the play-off semifinal) with two goals and he's done it tonight with a free-kick. Somebody with that quality, he always poses a threat."

Ukraine refused to be crushed by that misfortune and were unlucky not to be given a penalty before half-time when Yarmolenko was clipped by Joe Allen inside the box.

The pattern continued into the second half as Rob Page's men were pinned back inside their own half.

But the home side did have big chances of their own to double their advantage on the counter-attack when Aaron Ramsey steered wide, Brennan Johnson hit the post and Bale shot meekly into the arms of Bushchan. — AFP

# What to say? Scaloni compares five-goal Messi to Nadal

PAMPLONA, SPAIN: Lionel Messi was likened to Rafael Nadal by Lionel Scaloni after scoring all five of Argentina's goals in a 5-0 friendly rout of Estonia on Sunday.

Barcelona legend Messi moved to 86 international goals, two more than Hungary legend Ferenc Puskas, now leaving him fourth on the all-time men's list.

Messi's exploits occurred on the same day as tennis legend Rafael Nadal defeated Casper Ruud in straight sets to win a 14th French Open title and extend his record for most men's grand slam titles to 22.

For Argentina boss Scaloni, there are simply no more superlatives left for him to describe either man's seismic impact on the world of sports.

"I don't know what else to say. It's very difficult; it's like Rafa Nadal, what are you going to say?" Scaloni told TVP.

"It is preferable that the journalists speak, that they speak. You have no words left to describe it, and above all, for everything it generates."

The result saw Argentina extend their unbeaten run to 33 matches, in fine form just five months out from the start of the World Cup in Qatar.

Messi had completed his hat-trick early in the second half before scoring twice more in the final 20 minutes.

Scaloni added of his talisman: "He is something unique, and it is a pleasure to have him in this group. It is a pleasure to train him, the entire coaching staff. And it's a pleasure his behaviour and how he toasts to his shirt."

"We only have words of thanks. I don't think he's just the heritage of Argentina; he's the heritage of the world, of world football. The day he doesn't play anymore, we are going to miss him." — dpa



Argentina's forward Lionel Messi celebrates after scoring his team's first goal during the international friendly match between Argentina and Estonia at El Sadar stadium in Pamplona. – AFP



# business

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## High oil prices boost public revenues to RO 4.2 billion in January – April 2022

MUSCAT: State public revenue soared 52.3 per cent to reach RO 4.217 billion for the first four months of this year, up from RO 2.764 billion for the corresponding period of 2021, the Ministry of Finance announced in its latest monthly newsletter.

Public expenditure for the same period amounted to RO 3.749 billion this year, which was marginally higher than the corresponding tally of RO 3.597 billion for the first four months of 2021. That left a surplus of RO 468 million for the period under review, the Ministry noted.

It attributed to strong uptick in revenue to buoyant oil prices translating into earnings of RO 3.310 billion for the January – April period, compared with corresponding earnings of RO 1.796 billion in 2021, entailing an increase of 74.3 per cent.

Total development expenditures of ministries and civil units amounted to about



RO 252 million, accounting for 23 per cent of the total development funds allocated for 2022 aggregating RO 1.1 billion. Current expenditures of

ministries and civil units amounted to about RO 1.278 million, which are the same levels as recorded during the same period in 2021.

The Ministry of Finance confirmed that the surplus achieved by the end of April 2022 will be directed to promote economic recovery

by increasing spending on priority development projects and reducing the level of public indebtedness of the state. — ONA

## London metal exchange sued over cancelled nickel contracts

LONDON: The London Metal Exchange is being sued by activist investor Elliott Management for more than \$456 million over its move to suspend and cancel nickel trades this year after dramatic swings in the metal's price.

Elliott filed the claim in England's High Court of Justice on June 1 against the London Metal Exchange (LME) and its subsidiary LME Clear.

The US hedge fund alleges that the cancellation of nickel contract trades on March 8 was "unlawful on public law grounds and/or constituted a violation of the claimants' human rights," according to a statement from LME owner Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing (HKEX).

HKEX said the claim is "without merit and the LME will contest it vigorously." The LME was forced to halt nickel contracts and cancel trades on March 8 after Russia's attack on Ukraine in February sparked wild movements in the price of nickel. — dpa

## Oman crude rises to \$115.60 per barrel



BUSINESS REPORTER  
MUSCAT, JUNE 6

The price of Oman crude (for August 2022 delivery) rose to \$3.50 a barrel to settle at \$115.60 per barrel in trading on the Dubai Mercantile Exchange on Monday. The price of Oman crude (for June 2022 delivery) has averaged \$102.40 per barrel, which is \$8.56 a barrel lower than the May 2022 delivery average.

Meanwhile, most international benchmarks slipped on Monday after topping \$120 a barrel as Saudi Arabia raised crude prices for July, a number of agencies said. Crude moved lower amid doubts that last week's decision by Opec+ oil producers to boost their monthly output target would translate into a jump in output needed to ease tight

supply.

Brent crude was down 52 cents, or 0.4 per cent, to \$119.20 a barrel at 12:40 GMT after touching an intraday high of \$121.95. US West Texas Intermediate crude futures were down 54 cents, or 0.5 per cent, at \$118.33 a barrel after hitting a three-month high of \$120.99.

Saudi Arabia raised the July official selling price (OSP) for its flagship Arab light crude to Asia by \$2.10 from June to a \$6.50 premium, the highest since May, when prices hit all-time highs due to worries of disruption in supplies from Russia.

The price increase followed a decision last week by the Opec+, to boost output for July and August by 648,000/bpd, or 50 per cent more than previously planned.

TURN TO PAGE 15

## Sultanate of Oman's producer prices increase 50 per cent in Q1 2022

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman recorded a 50.2 per cent increase in producer prices during the first quarter of this year compared to the same period in 2021.

Oil and gas prices led the rise by 61.7 per cent, while non-oil products rose 8.8 per cent, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information's quarterly producer price index data.

The rise in the prices of oil and gas products was due to a 39 per cent rise in the price of refined oil products and a 66.3 per cent rise in crude oil and natural gas products, while the rise in the prices of non-oil products was due to an 11.5 per cent rise in the prices of the manufacturing group, while the prices of the mining, electricity and water group fell by 0.9 per cent.

In the manufacturing group, most subgroup prices rose by varying proportions, with prices of mineral products, machinery and equipment rising by 20.7 per cent, food, beverage and textile prices by 13.3 per cent and prices of other transportable goods products by 6.0 per cent.

In the food and textile group,



THE RISE IN THE PRICES OF OIL AND GAS PRODUCTS WAS DUE TO A 39 PER CENT RISE IN THE PRICE OF REFINED OIL PRODUCTS AND A 66.3 PER CENT RISE IN CRUDE OIL AND NATURAL GAS PRODUCTS, WHILE THE RISE IN THE PRICES OF NON-OIL PRODUCTS WAS DUE TO AN 11.5 PER CENT RISE IN THE PRICES OF THE MANUFACTURING GROUP, WHILE THE PRICES OF THE MINING, ELECTRICITY AND WATER GROUP FELL BY 0.9 PER CENT.

the prices of fish, fruit, vegetable and oil products rose by 28.9 per cent, dairy prices rose 12.8 per cent, bakery and other food products by 4.9 per cent, beverage prices by 4.3 per cent and shoe

iron waste products by 4.7 per cent, and paper products by 2.2 per cent, while glass, cement and marble products fell 4.1 per cent.

In the category of mineral products, machinery and equipment, the prices of "iron, steel or aluminium" products increased by 36.9 per cent, "iron ore, steel or aluminium products" by 25.4 per cent, "empty CDs" products by 19.1 per cent, and "power transformers, electricity and cable distribution devices" products by 14 per cent. — ONA

# Lulu brings in UK treats for British Food Week

MUSCAT: Lulu Hypermarket Oman has launched “The British Food Week” across all its stores in Oman, bringing in all the UK flavours and cuisines under one roof. The promotion, held from June 5 to June 11, 2022, was officially inaugurated by Bill Murray, the UK Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, at Lulu Hypermarket Avenues Mall.

Shoppers can look forward to a splendid selection of classic British food products, beverage brands and other favourites in the grocery, fresh food and bakery sections, as well as non-food and health and beauty products during the week-long promotion.

From British cereals, cookies, and sweets to a wide range of fresh cheeses, juices and desserts, Lulu has all the British treats stocked up for the festival. This year’s event will also feature products from



new brands introduced for the first time in the Omani market.

Lulu has flown in a wide range of food items, confectionery, seafood and meat products from the UK for this promotion. Other food products, such as fresh bread, goat’s milk, plain and flavoured yogurts and different types of canned foods, are also featured as part of the promotion.

A variety of diabetic-friendly, gluten free and organic products will also be available for health-conscious customers. Speaking at the inauguration, the ambassador remarked, “I am delighted to see such a vast range of products that Lulu is directly importing from the UK.

Britain manufactures some truly great food products, and it is fantastic to see them being made available to consumers in Oman”. Commenting on the promotion,

Ananth A V, Director – Oman, Sri Lanka and India of Lulu Group, stated “As always, the UK promotion is sure to receive an amazing response from our customers. This event has served as a platform for us to promote the best of British brands among the local as well as the expatriate communities in Oman.

It is also an occasion to blend together the culture and heritage of the two countries. From fish and chips to pies, cakes, chocolates and toffees from popular brands, customers get a chance to explore an array of British culinary delights during the food week.”

Special in-store counters have also been put up, enabling customers to get a real taste of some of the best British delicacies on sale. The food sampling counters will offer several dishes specially prepared for the festival.

## NBO welcomes Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning members for leadership session



MUSCAT: Continuing to foster partnerships with the public sector, National Bank of Oman (NBO) welcomed 60 members from Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning for a special learning and development session.

The event is part of the Ministry’s leadership development programme, and aims to initiate a network for sharing best practices to enhance the delivery of services and empower professionals, contributing directly to the objectives of Oman Vision 2040.

Mustahil al Maamari, Head of CEO Office, spoke about the bank’s Tamkeen programme that acts as a catalyst to drive NBO’s strategy forward by focusing on simplifying the internal customer workplace towards better services for external customers and to achieve the set target.

Said al Marhoobi, Head of Customer Experience, shared the bank’s approach to the customer experience journey and Dr Ali al Sheikali, Head of Digital Channels gave a brief about the various digital banking services and features.

The Ministry members also visited the bank’s Ibtikar Lab, which taps into the talent of its staff to come up with innovative ideas and solutions, and finally were introduced to NBO’s portfolio of products and services.

Hassan Shaaban said, “As the country’s national

bank, we enjoy a solid and long-term relationship with the government sector and we continue to support them, whether it’s through knowledge-sharing or by providing our innovative financial solutions.

It was our pleasure to welcome the esteemed members from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning. By sharing our experience and best practices, we are strengthening our national capabilities, and more broadly, Oman’s standing as an empowered and knowledge-based society.”

NBO has long been an active participant in supporting government projects that add value to the development and diversification of the economy.

The bank also partnered lately with the Ministry of Labour to provide supplementary courses to graduates of the national leadership development programme, Etimad, the bank also contributes by nominating leading figures and businessmen as speakers in the programme and other leadership forums.

Moreover, NBO provides integrated banking services with an innovative approach to a growing number of public sector entities, helping to support Oman’s economic development, while cementing its position as a preferred financial institution.

## Alizz Islamic Bank mobile app receives overwhelming success

MUSCAT: The new and improved Alizz Islamic Bank mobile banking application has been received with overwhelming success for its banking features and services offered to the users. It is rated as the very best digital banking application among other mobile banking applications.

The app is available on the Apple App Store, Google Play Store and Huawei Gallery Store and has been downloaded by users that have also rated the app based on its seamless user experience.

Sayyidah Nadira al Said (pictured), Senior Manager of Digital Banking at Alizz Islamic Bank, highlighted that the latest version of the mobile banking app features cutting edge mobile banking technologies including a new user interface and user experience which is visually attractive and convenient with an enhanced customer



experience. The colours and the interface were selected based on the best international standards demonstrating the bank’s leadership in innovative digital banking services.

Sayyidah Nadira further added that among the important features added to the application are the useful shortcuts on the dashboard that enables users to monitor and execute recurring banking transactions without the need to go into many steps or clicks. These shortcuts enable users to save time while enjoying a host of smart solutions in the bilingual application.

## Bank Muscat offers attractive rewards in Al Jawhar referral scheme



MUSCAT: Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the Sultanate of Oman, continues to receive excellent feedback for its efforts to provide customers with attractive offers and benefits in line with its customer-centric vision.

The bank’s currently ongoing Al Jawhar referral scheme, which is open to Privilege Banking customers has been receiving an excellent response over the last many weeks. The scheme, which will be open till December 31, 2022, gives all existing Al Jawhar customers a chance to earn up to RO 5,000 by referring their friends and family members to

join Privilege Banking.

Customers can now earn an incentive of RO 50 for every successful referral, up to a maximum of 100 referrals. All new referrals who successfully open and maintain their Al Jawhar account will also receive RO 50 each making the scheme a win-win proposition for both existing customers as well as their family and friends.

To participate in the exciting promotion, Al Jawhar customers have to download and fill the form given in the link below with both the customer’s and referee’s details and then email it to AlJawharCampaign@bankmuscat.com.

## Ominvest congratulates Injaz students for winning global award

MUSCAT: As part of its corporate citizenship initiative to encourage entrepreneurship and support the growth of SMEs in the Sultanate of Oman, Ominvest held a congratulatory function at its headquarters for the founders of Bioplastics — an Injaz School-Student Company.

Ominvest and Injaz Oman applauded Neeam al Harrasi and Do’aa al Hashmi, the founders of Bioplastics, whose project secured fourth place out of 1800 other students from around the world at the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) 2022.

For the past four years, Ominvest’s partnership with Injaz Oman’s Student Company Programme has not only empowered the youth of Oman to become future entrepreneurs



but has also helped develop startups and entrepreneurship projects through the establishment of outstanding training experiences that combine theoretical learning with real life application.

As an eco-friendly company, Bioplastics aligns with Ominvest’s Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) efforts. The business manufactures bioplastics that are made using natural materials,

which makes it a great alternative to industrial plastics. This newly developed material will not only make the mass production of bioplastics affordable but will also contribute to the wider goal of protecting the planet by putting a curb on plastic pollution.

Commending the founders of Bioplastics at the congratulatory function, Khalid bin Mohammed al Zubair, Chairman of Injaz Oman said “Neeam and Do’aa’s

pioneering achievement at ISEF has made us at Injaz Oman very proud.

Injaz Oman’s dedication and commitment to fostering entrepreneurial talents and the growth of SMEs in Oman has been exemplary. Our programmes have managed to support around 155,760 students so far, and we have received the “Best Student Company” award at the regional level for three years in a row now.

In our effort to develop the skills and abilities of Oman’s youth and to motivate them to achieve their dreams, Injaz Oman has been working very closely with schools, universities and training centres all of which have been a fundamental part of the formula of Injaz Oman’s success across the years.”

# Tech Mahindra launches Innovation and Tech Development Centre in Oman

**BUSINESS REPORTER**

MUSCAT, JUNE 6

Tech Mahindra, a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting and business re-engineering services and solutions, inaugurated an Innovation and Technology Development Centre, in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, that will cater to the Telecom, Oil and Gas, BFSI (Banking, Financial Services and Insurance), Energy & Utilities and Public Sector by leveraging Artificial Intelligence, Big Data & Analytics, Cloud and 5G technologies on Sunday, June 5.

This is in line with Tech Mahindra's commitment to invest in upskilling and reskilling of the local Omani talent to take on projects in Oman and around the world.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Dr Ali al Shidhani, Under-Secretary for Communications & Information Technology — MTCIT, Amit Narang, Indian Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, senior Oman government officials, along with senior executives of key enterprises in the Sultanate of



Oman and the top management team of Tech Mahindra led by its MD & CEO C P Gurnani.

Dr Al Shidhani said, "Oman Vision 2040 prioritises a future with a knowledge-based society where education and research play a vital role for the citizens. Being ahead of important developments in information technology is encapsulated in our vision statement, and this innovation and development centre by Tech Mahindra is a step in that direction. Developments like

these are milestones in achieving the success we envision of being a competitive nation and one of the top countries in Digital Economy in the region. It also supports our talent, upskilling to compete in the job market."

C P Gurnani, MD & CEO, Tech Mahindra, said, "I believe the vision of Oman based on the pillars of "People and Society", "Economy and Development", and "Governance and Institutional Performance" will transform and enhance the country's economy.

Tech Mahindra is pleased to play a part in this strategic narrative and support in building a resilient tomorrow for Oman, that thrives on growth & innovation, with a keen focus on empowering women.

As a global organisation, we are committed to honing talent across geographies, and our initiatives have been warmly embraced in Oman. This innovation and development centre will grow Omani talent in the technology industry and will enable us to

leverage it for markets globally."

Ram Ramachandran, Senior Vice-President & Head of Middle East and Africa at Tech Mahindra, said, "Across the world, the IT industry has been revolutionary — it has become an archetype of how economic liberalisation combined with entrepreneurial spirit builds an industry that today contributes significantly to the GDP of any country.

Tech Mahindra has a significant footprint in Oman and we have the confidence of the local industries which we have partnered with through the years. The newly inaugurated innovation and development centre is one more significant development in our contribution to the country as we tap the huge young talent in the country."

Tech Mahindra also inaugurated Maker's Lab (Centre for R&D) at the centre, which will have strategic focus on creating IPs, solutions & services that harness the power of technology to make continuous advancements that will enable digital transformation, smart enterprise solutions, cloud transformation, Big data & Analytics.

## Oman-Switzerland Friendship Association appoints new Patron



**MUSCAT:** The Oman Switzerland Friendship Association has recently announced their new Patron from the Switzerland side as serving Member of the Swiss Parliament, Vincent Maitre (pictured).

Speaking of his appointment, Maitre described how his love for the Sultanate of Oman began during a visit in 2014 where he experienced the true beauty and hospitality of the country. "It is my privilege to become Patron for the Oman Switzerland Friendship Association and I would like to congratulate everyone involved, especially my predecessor, former president of the Swiss Federation, Adolf Ogi, for establishing this wonderful initiative."

He further added: "It is important we nurture the positive momentum created by OSFA as it provides such a valuable platform to share and learn from our counterparts in key sectors such as economy and trade, science and technology, health, tourism, education, culture, youth and sport. I look forward to further developing my relationship with Oman and promoting the excellent work of the Friendship Association."

Current Chairman of the Board of Directors of OSFA, Hani al Zubair expressed his warm welcome to Maitre adding that his close connection to the economically and culturally important region of Geneva could help encourage more members to join the Association. Al Zubair looks forward to welcoming their new Patron, alongside Omani Patron, Sayyid Abdullah al Busaidy, to the Association's Business Forum in Muscat, planned for October 2022.

# Multi-city roadshow to help connect suppliers to oil & gas procurement opportunities

**BUSINESS REPORTER**

MUSCAT, JUNE 6

In keeping with its commitment to In-Country Value (ICV) creation, Business Gateways International (BGI) has launched a multi-city roadshow called 'Meet-JSRS' spanning Oman and the UAE as part of a vigorous drive to engage directly with suppliers eager for procurement opportunities linked to the Omani Oil & Gas industry by obtaining the JSRS certification.

Recently, Ibri played host to the inaugural stop of the 13-city roadshow that will potentially cover hundreds of Omani SME, Large and International suppliers over the course of the summer season. The next leg of the roadshow will



take place on June 9 in Muscat at the Centara Muscat Hotel in Ghala Heights. Invitations have gone out to registered members of the JSRS network encouraging them to be part of an event that will have a game-changing impact for their

businesses.

The initiative 'Meet-JSRS' exemplifies the ongoing efforts of Business Gateways International (BGI) to help the vast and diverse suppliers unlock procurement opportunities offered by Oil &

Gas operators and leading oilfield contractors. Certification under the Joint Supplier Registration System (JSRS) is a compliance prerequisite for national and international contractors or vendors to qualify to bid for oilfield tenders or procurement requests.

It's a process designed to ensure a transparent, equitable and credible procurement system governing all oilfield contracts. With resurgent international oil prices promising to usher in a fresh tide of investment inflows into Oman's hydrocarbon sector, BGI is eager to make sure that the supplier community makes the most of the business opportunities that are expected to flow from these investments.

## Oman crude rises to \$115.60/ barrel

FROM PAGE 13

The increased target was spread across all Opec+ members, however, many of which have little room to increase output and which include Russia, which faces Western sanctions.

"With only a handful of... Opec+ participants with spare capacity, we expect the increase in Opec+ output to be about 160,000 barrels per day in July and 170,000 bpd in August," JP Morgan analysts said in a note.

On Monday, Citibank and Barclays raised their price forecasts for 2022 and 2023, saying they expected Russian output and exports to fall by around 1-1.5 million bpd by end-2022.

# Power and Energy Forum IEEE Power Talks opens

**BUSINESS REPORTER**

MUSCAT, JUNE 6

The IEEE Power Talks Conference, jointly organised by Raya Services, Al Nimr Expo and IEEE Power & Energy Society (PES), opened its three-day forum and exhibition at the Oman Convention & Exhibition Centre on Monday, June 6, 2022.

The technical event, which runs until June 8, was inaugurated by Dr Ali bin Amer al Shidhani, Under-Secretary of Communications and IT at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology.

IEEE Power Talks centres on increasing technological efficiencies in the Sultanate of Oman's power and energy sector whilst tackling rising challenges related to production capacity and the unreliability of power systems.

It features a two-day technical forum, a one-day workshop and an exhibit area showcasing innovations and technologies by local and global power contractors and product manufacturers from the power and energy industry.

The conference sessions which are centred on fundamental topics such as the country's energy market outlook, renewables and energy storage solutions, the future of power grids, energy management and efficiency, asset management and optimisation alongside case studies and panel discussions, will be presented by industry experts Dr Amer al Hinai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies and Scientific Research, SQU; Eng Abdulaziz S al Shidhani, Director General, Renewable Energy and Hydrogen—Ministry of Energy & Minerals; Yaqoob bin Saif al



Kiyumi, CEO, Oman Power & Water Procurement Company; Dr Salim al Huthaili, CEO, Solar Wadi; Eng Yahya al Rawahi, CEO, Shams Ad-Dhahirah; Eng Faiza al Harthi, energy sector head, Oman Vision 2040 Implementation Follow-up Unit (OVIFU); Dr Ralf Blumenthal, SVP and Head, Grid Software Middle East — Siemens; Dr Fahd Hashiesh, Global Director, Renewable Energy Centre of Excellence —

Air Products; Dr Adil al Busaidi, Power Infrastructure Team Leader, Daleel Petroleum; and Nader Abou Dagga, MENAT Digital Services Leader, GE.

Workshops subjects are "Getting Ready for Renewable DER and Microgrids on Electric Power Systems," "Building a Hydrogen Economy", and "The Race towards Net-Zero: Decarbonisation through Energy Efficiency", hosted by Siemens.

The event's Technical Committee, represented by prominent officials from Nama Group, Ministry of Energy and Minerals, Petroleum Development Oman (PDO), OQ, Majan Electricity Company, Tanweer, Muscat Electricity Distribution Company and Al Shawamikh Oil Services, will provide direction that offers a meaningful platform and an opportunity for discourse, exchange of ideas, and building collaboration amid a swiftly evolving energy landscape.

The conference expects to receive about 350 delegates and close to 6,000 visitors represented by engineers, consultants, technology providers and power and energy professionals. Ahmed Sayed, conference director, IEEE Power Talks and representing Raya Services, remarks, "We are glad to

partner with an industry leader like IEEE PES and established trade organiser Al Nimr Expo to produce and deliver this highly technical forum, which is a progressive step towards the sultanate's initiatives and goals of digital transformation and sustainability across sectors.

This is a proper venue to get firsthand insights, plans and developments in the power and energy industry and an opportunity to collaborate to help advance this segment of the power and energy industry."

Proof of the event's significance to the industry is the support by the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Oman Society of Engineers. Reputable companies such as Nama Group, Siemens, Solar Wadi, Safe Line and Fortescue Future Industries comprise the sponsor line-up.

# Is ‘greedflation’ rewriting economics, or do old rules still apply?

LYDIA DEPILLIS

There are few good things about living through a period with the highest inflation in four decades, but here’s one: It’s a chance to reexamine what happens in an economy that’s gone haywire.

Since prices started to escalate a year ago, politicians and economists have seized on inflation to tell their preferred story about what went wrong and what policies would bring it back into line. Some say it’s very straightforward: Supply and demand, Economics 101.

“There’s simply a lot of cash out there,” said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist for the accounting firm RSM US, referring to the several trillion dollars in pandemic stimulus that has filtered into the economy since early 2020. “The competition for those goods is up, and that’s sending prices up, whether we’re talking about getting a Nissan Sentra or a seat on an American Airlines flight.”

The White House and progressive organisations, however, say wait a minute: This time is different. In a time of extraordinary disruption, they contend, increasingly dominant corporations are taking the opportunity to jack up prices more than they otherwise could, which is squeezing consumers and supercharging inflation. Or “greedflation,” as the hypothesis has come to be known.

The argument comports with the Biden administration’s focus on the ills of economic concentration. Congressional Democrats have run with the idea, introducing bills that would impose a temporary “excess profits tax” on companies that charge prices they deem unreasonably high, or simply ban those high prices altogether. Critics, including the nation’s largest business lobby, deride these efforts as based on a “conspiracy theory” and a “flimsy argument.”

So what’s really going on?

It’s hard to tease out. A pandemic, a trade war, a land war, huge government spending and a global economy that has become vastly more integrated might be too complex for traditional macroeconomic theory to explain. Josh Bivens, research director at the left-leaning Economic Policy Institute, thinks that’s a good reason to revisit what the discipline thought it had figured out.

“When I hear stories about an overheating labour market, I don’t think about falling real wages, and yet we have falling real wages,” Bivens said. Nor is the rise in profits typical when unemployment is so low. “The idea that ‘There’s nothing to see here’ — there’s everything to see here! It’s totally different.”



When thinking about greedflation, it’s helpful to break it down into three questions: Are companies charging more than necessary to cover their rising costs? If so, is that enough to meaningfully accelerate inflation? And is all this happening because large companies have market power they didn’t decades ago?

## Productive profits, or gouging?

There is not much disagreement that many companies have marked up goods in excess of their own rising costs. This is especially evident in industries such as shipping, which had record profits as soaring demand for goods filled up boats, driving up costs for all traded goods. Across the economy, profit margins surged during the pandemic and remained elevated.

When all prices are rising, consumers lose track of how much is reasonable to pay.

“In the inflationary environment, everybody knows that prices are increasing,” said Z John Zhang, a professor of marketing at the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania who has studied pricing strategy. “Obviously, that’s a great opportunity for every firm to realign their prices as much as they can. You’re not going to have an opportunity again like this for a long time.”

The real disagreement is over whether higher profits are natural and good.

Basic economic theory teaches that charging what the market can bear will prompt companies to produce more, constraining prices and ensuring that more people have access to the good that’s in short supply.

Say you make empanadas, and enough people want to buy them that you can charge \$5 each even though they cost only \$3 to produce. That might allow you to invest in another oven so you can make more empanadas — perhaps so many that you can lower the price to \$4 and sell enough that your net income still goes up.

Here’s the problem: What if there’s a waiting list for new ovens because of a strike at the oven factory, and you’re already running three shifts? You can’t make more empanadas, but their popularity has risen to the point where you would charge \$6. People might buy calzones instead, but eventually the oven shortage makes all kinds of baked goods hard to find. In that situation, you make a tidy margin without doing much work, and your consumers lose out.

## Sorting chickens and eggs

The question of whether profit margins are speeding inflation is harder to figure out.

Economists have run some numbers on how much other variables might have contributed to inflation. The Federal

Reserve Bank of San Francisco found that fiscal stimulus programmes accounted for 3 percentage points, for example, while the St Louis Fed estimated that manufacturing sector inflation would have been 20 percentage points lower without supply chain bottlenecks.

Bivens, of the Economic Policy Institute, performed a simple calculation of the share of price increases attributable to labour costs, other inputs and profits over time, and found that profit’s contribution had risen significantly since the beginning of 2020 as compared with the previous four decades.

That’s an interesting fact, but it’s not proof that profits are driving inflation. It’s possible that causality runs the other way — inflation drives higher profits, as companies hide price increases amid broader rises in costs.

## Concentration’s double edge

If you think that’s complicated, try establishing whether market power is playing a role in any of this.

It is well established that the American economy has grown more concentrated. On a fundamental level, domination by a few companies may have made supply chains more brittle. If there are two empanada factories and one of them has a Covid-19 outbreak, that in itself creates a more serious shortage than it would if there were 10 factories.

“Concentration has affected prices during the pandemic, even setting aside any potentially nefarious actions on the part of leaders,” said Heather Boushey, a member of President Joe Biden’s Council of Economic Advisers.

But most of the public argument has been about whether companies with more market share have been affecting prices once goods are finished and delivered. And that’s where many economists become sceptical, noting that if these increasingly powerful corporations had so much leverage, they would have used it before the pandemic.

“Market concentration is a long-standing problem, yet we’ve had close to no inflation for two decades,” said David Autor, an economics professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. “So it cannot be that market concentration suddenly explains inflation.”

In addition, most research on how market concentration affects companies’ “pass through” of suddenly higher costs has found that fiercely competitive industries raise prices more than those that are dominated by only a few companies, because they have thin margins and would lose money if they didn’t. That’s one consequence of oligopolists’ pricing power: They can give up some profits when they choose to.

“In the inflationary environment, everybody knows that prices are increasing. Obviously, that’s a great opportunity for every firm to realign their prices as much as they can. You’re not going to have an opportunity again like this for a long time.”

**Z JOHN ZHANG**  
MARKETING PROFESSOR  
WHARTON SCHOOL  
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

# Opec+ to increase oil supply, but prices keep rising

STANLEY REED

The group of oil-producing nations known as Opec+ agreed on Thursday to a larger increase in supply than planned for July and August.

The White House hailed the higher output as a diplomatic breakthrough after months of lobbying Middle East oil giants to raise production to ease price pressures. Administration officials said on Thursday that President Joe Biden would visit Saudi Arabia, which effectively leads Opec+, later this month.

But it is not clear how far Saudi Arabia is willing or able to go to help Biden on oil prices. The amount of added crude oil that Opec+ committed to produce is unlikely to cause gasoline prices to fall. In fact, the price of oil rose after the announcement on Thursday.

After a videoconference, the group said it would raise production by 648,000 barrels a day in July and then again in August, an increase of about 50% over the monthly rise set under a programme last year. Effectively, what Opec+ is doing is compressing three

months of planned increases into two months.

But the Opec+ member countries are not expected to generate that output when the time comes. Many of the producers have already run out of additional production capacity. Only Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and one or two other countries have more oil to add.

Whatever they add risks being offset by what happens in Russia. Russian production is in decline in the wake of Western sanctions imposed after the invasion of Ukraine. According to the International Energy Agency, Russia is producing about 15% less than its target of 10.8 million barrels a day for July. Further decreases in Russian output are expected later this year as the European Union’s effort to stop most Russian oil purchases takes effect.

While the amount of additional oil will not be large, some analysts said that the fact that Opec+ was willing to depart from its previous routine could be the beginning of a breakthrough, leading to more cooperation from Saudi Arabia and other countries like the United Arab Emirates as sanctions reduce Russian output.

Until recently, these countries have insisted that

While the amount of additional oil will not be large, some analysts said that the fact that Opec+ was willing to depart from its previous routine could be the beginning of a breakthrough, leading to more cooperation from Saudi Arabia and other countries like the United Arab Emirates as sanctions reduce Russian output

they could not depart from the schedule agreed by Opec+ in July. The break comes after diplomatic work by Amos Hochstein, the Biden administration’s energy envoy, and other diplomats.

“It is more important to see this in terms of the political signal it sends than the actual number of barrels it adds,” said Bill Farren-Price, the head of macro oil and gas research at Enverus, a research firm. It suggests, he said, that Saudi Arabia “may be more prepared to boost supply” as sanctions further reduce Russian production.

With growing constraints on Russia’s production and exports, a reordering of the world energy market is under way. The Saudis and other Opec+ members with additional oil to produce could benefit. On the other hand, some analysts said that even the Saudis and the United Arab Emirates may be approaching the limits of how much oil they can produce.

“We think that too big of a burden is probably being placed on Opec to offset the economic damage caused by a war” involving Russia, an enormous commodity exporter, Helima Croft, an analyst at RBC Capital Markets, wrote in a note to clients after the meeting.

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# Classifieds

TUESDAY

JUNE 7, 2022

DHUL QAADA 7, 1443 AH

OMAN OBSERVER

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## A deep look into how Oman and Zanzibar honour outstanding performance in history

Raya al Hajri and Jalila al Rashdi's effort in tracing Oman's rich history and culture would lead them into the creation of a 336-page book divided into four chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to orders, decorations and medals in Oman and Zanzibar; the second on Oman orders and medals; the third on foreign orders, decorations and medals awarded to sultans of Oman and Zanzibar and the fourth on orders, decorations and medals awarded to Omani notables...**P20**



## Indian Oscars return as Abu Dhabi hosts Bollywood bash

**BOLLYWOOD'S BRIGHTEST** stars will gather in Abu Dhabi on Saturday as the Indian Oscars return for the first time since the pandemic shuttered cinemas and turned audiences on to streaming. Host Salman Khan and actor Aishwarya Rai Bachchan will be among the A-listers at the International Indian Film Academy Awards celebrating the Hindi-language movie industry, the world's most prolific. The glitzy show follows a box office slump when movie-mad India was hit hard by Covid-19, with US streaming giants such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video rushing to fill the gap.

"I'm excited to perform at Abu Dhabi before a live audience. I'm sure it'll be a fun show", said actor Shahid Kapoor, who will dance at the first IIFA awards since 2019. "I'm very nervous but I hope I can do my best", Kapoor told reporters, wearing a pale blue suit with carefully coiffed hair. "Shershaah", the biopic of a war hero killed in the 1999 Kargil conflict with Pakistan, leads the way with 12 nods, with "83" — the story of India's 1983 cricket World Cup victory — nominated for nine awards. Historical drama "Sardar Udham", action pic "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior"

and "Thappad", a drama tackling India's problems with domestic violence, round out the best picture nominations. Real-life intrigue is not far away. One performer will be actor Rhea Chakraborty, who was arrested on drug charges in 2020 after her boyfriend, actor Sushant Singh Rajput, allegedly committed suicide. Chakraborty needed clearance to travel to Abu Dhabi and is under conditions set by a Mumbai court including attending the Indian Embassy everyday. The show is also taking place as police probe the death of renowned Bollywood singer Krishnakumar Kunnath, or "KK", who died after a concert in Kolkata of a suspected heart attack this week. Media reports said there were injuries to his face and head.

**INDIAN DIASPORA** Pumping music and scantily clad performers will be a change of scene for Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates' oil-rich capital which has been upgrading its staid image with imported attractions including Formula One. The awards have been held at venues around the world including London, Madrid, Johannesburg and Singapore, reflecting Bollywood's wide appeal and the sprawling Indian diaspora. The Hindi-language film industry was worth \$2.5 billion in 2019 and produces more movies than any other. India also releases hundreds of films in its 21 other official languages every year. But pandemic lockdowns sent the industry into a tailspin, with multiplex chains suffering major losses and dozens of small cinemas going bust. In a country where cinema visits are central to cultural life, India's media and entertainment earnings slumped by a quarter to \$18.7 billion in 2020, according to accounting firm EY. The theatre closures prompted a surge in subscriptions to streaming platforms with American services Netflix, Prime and Disney's Hotstar tapping into a sharp growth in online audiences. Some big-budget Indian films were released straight onto streaming platforms, such as comedy-drama "Gulabo Sitabo" starring Bollywood great Amitabh Bachchan, which went out on Amazon in May 2020. However, cinemas have made a robust recovery since restrictions were eased, with non-Hindi movies like "Pushpa", "KGF" and "RRR" from southern India making brisk business. — AFP



### READ

#### SINGING IN THE RAIN

BY GENE KELLY

Don and Lina have been cast repeatedly as a romantic couple, but when their latest film is remade into a musical, only Don has the voice for the new singing part.



### ANIMAL PLANET

The population of endangered Saiga antelopes in Kazakhstan is now over 1.3 million, the ecology ministry said Tuesday, in the latest boost to a species threatened by poaching and disease. In 2015, around 200,000 of the antelopes — well over half the total global population at the time — were wiped out by what scientists later determined was a nasal bacterium that spread in unusually warm and humid conditions. — AFP



### FASHION TRENDS

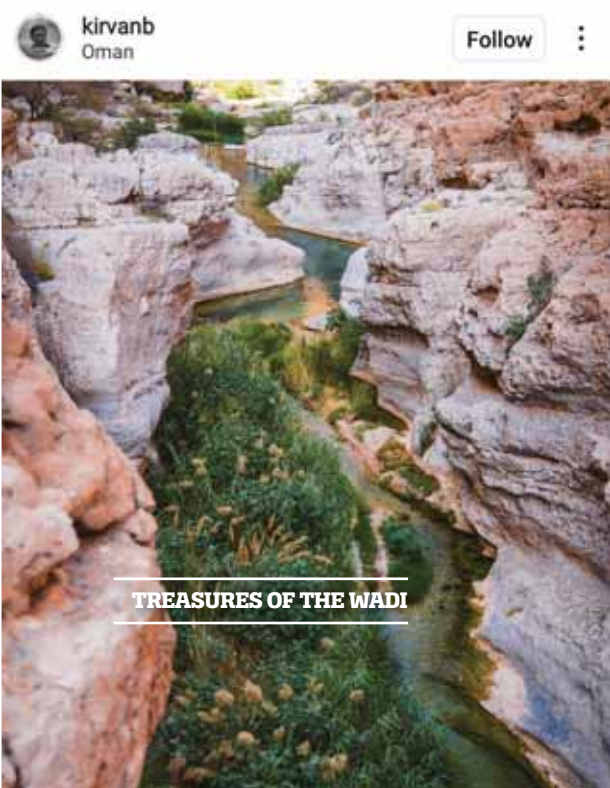
A Rolex watch worn by a British prisoner during the real-life "Great Escape" from the Nazi Stalag Luft III concentration camp is going on sale in New York. Christie's expects the timepiece to fetch between \$200,000 and \$400,000 at auction on June 9. — AFP





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## AROUND THE WORLD

### ENVIRONMENT

# Clean, green superhero dog fights garbage in Chile



**SAM, THE FOUR-LEGGED** superhero, works to keep a park in Chile's capital clean and green. The dog's superpower? Collecting garbage as a role model for visitors.

The border collie, who takes regular walks in Santiago's metropolitan park with his owner, has become famous wearing a green cape in a comic used as an educational guide.

It all started when Sam and Gonzalo Chiang had to stop again and again in the city's largest green area to pick up plastic bottles, masks, cans and food packages.

"On Sam's walks we began to find a lot of garbage," Chiang said in an interview. "From that, the need to come prepared to take away the garbage that we found on each visit arose."

In April alone, Sam and Gonzalo collected 602 masks, 585 bottles and 304 cans in addition to clothing, helmets and food wrappers, according to an official count.

"The walk is a good opportunity to clean, rather than litter," Chiang said.

Park officials were impressed by Sam, who visits the tourist attraction at least three times a week, and decided to use his image in its park care campaign.

Catalina Aravena turned the 5-1/2 year-old collie into a cartoon in "Sam: The Parquemet Superhero," telling visitors to take their waste with them or use one of the more than 40 recycling points throughout the park.

"This became much more widespread than expected," Aravena said. "It reached different schools and it has been spread very well on social media."

The park - home to a zoo, several hiking trails and a funicular railway - launched anti-litter campaigns last year urging drink vendors to switch from plastic to glass cups, and started classifying garbage into separate bins.

Sam and Gonzalo "have inspired us to accelerate this education process and structure this garbage classification," said Eduardo Villalobos, the park's acting director. -- **Reuters**

### ART OF LIVING

# A Brooklyn Home Designed With Fun in Mind



the ceiling, where glow-in-the-dark star stickers create a simulated night sky. Underneath the bed, a play area carpeted with artificial turf gives the impression of an indoor park.

"I just wanted to make something really fun", Aizaki said. "It's a tiny space, but it encourages him to use it."

Indeed, fun was the guiding principle for most of the design changes. Revisiting his childhood memories, Aizaki tried to imagine elements that would have thrilled his younger self. That is how he arrived at the idea to design and build three copper speaking tubes that snake through the apartment's two levels to enable remote conversations. One tube connects the living room to Luka's bedroom, another goes from the living room to the bathroom, and the final one runs from the kitchen to the primary bedroom.

"In this age of Siri and Alexa, it's just totally low-tech", Aizaki said. "We play games or just talk to each other. And when he has friends over it's the first thing they do."

Aizaki also punched a hole through the tiled wall of the primary bathroom to add a small ribbed-glass window on a wooden turntable that can provide privacy when needed. It also serves as a pass-through for notes, toiletries and toys.

"It's just a little funny thing", he said.

Along the way, he made a few less whimsical changes. When the family needed more soundproofing between their kitchen and the upstairs neighbor, he added a layer of plywood paneling to the ceiling. When he tired of the original kitchen, he made new kitchen cabinet doors from additional surplus water-tank wood. Recognising that the family spent most of their time in the kitchen, he also added a steel island and topped it with a butcher block counter made from still more water-tank wood.

But it is the playful projects that seem to inspire Aizaki the most. When he first purchased the house, he planted a cherry tree sapling in the backyard. Now that the trunk is about 10 inches in diameter and strong enough to hold a structure, he recently built a treehouse that includes a bucket on a pulley system for raising and lowering toys and snacks.

"When I was a kid, I would have loved to have had all these things to play with", Aizaki said. Now Luka is the beneficiary of his father's imagination, living in a home that Aizaki described as "a little bit like a dream house." — NYT

**SOMETIMES, WHEN** life changes, your home needs to change, too. Or at least that's what Jun Aizaki, founder of the architecture and design firm Crème, determined after he started a family.

In 2010, before he was a parent, Aizaki bought a two-family townhouse in the Williamsburg neighbourhood of Brooklyn that was so poorly maintained it had begun to fall apart.

"Things were literally patched together with duct tape", Aizaki, 49, said. "The canopy was supported by 2-by-4s, and the roof had holes everywhere. It wasn't in real livable condition, even though a person lived there."

Aizaki, who designs restaurants like RedFarm and L'Amico in Manhattan and hotels like Hyatt Centric in Philadelphia, paid a little more than \$500,000 and undertook a down-to-studs renovation. He put on a new roof. He bought a generous supply of redwood reclaimed from old New York water tanks and had it milled to create exterior siding as well as interior features like a custom bathtub and bookshelves. He dug into the backyard to add an extension that expanded it from about 2,500 to 3,000 square feet, and to create space for a sunken patio beneath a new deck.

After 10 months of construction, it was complete. Aizaki and



his newlywed wife, Fanny Allié, an artist who is now 40, moved into the 1,500-square-foot apartment occupying the first two floors and rented the same-size unit on the top two floors.

For years, the apartment seemed perfect. Then, in 2017, the couple had a son, Luka, and everything began to change. Aizaki decided that the home could use more family-friendly features.

To carve out a dedicated space for Luka, who is now 5, he converted a large closet into a treehouse like sleeping nook with a loft bed that can be reached through a hatch. The exterior of the room is clad in reclaimed water-tank wood, which Aizaki had left over from the original renovation, and the interior is coated with spray paint that fades from peachy pink to dark blue at

## A WINDOW INTO CONTEMPORARY OMANI LITERATURE



Dr Khalid Mohammed al Balushi  
khalidalbalushi@hotmail.com

# Tracking Honey in the 60s

The following is my English translation of an excerpt from "A Soldier from Oman: Memory's Nectar" by (ret.) Inspector-General Said bin Rashid al Kalbani

**HONEY WAS THEN** a common commodity and a source of reasonable income. We observed traces of the honeybee through water resources and through the waste it dropped. This latter was of two types. One was light, which meant the honeycomb was somewhere nearby or that the cells had descended rather recently, and as such, there was no honey. The second type was known as mawwit. It had a strange shape, something like a head with a needle. It was this shape that helped us trace the flight direction of the honeybee.

If the bee flew rather high its waste would be both small and light, and the reverse would be the case if flying low or near water resources. If it flew in a vertical manner, it meant that the honeycomb was nearby, and if in a horizontal manner it meant that the honeycomb was far away. However, if it flew in a circle over water, it meant that its honey had been taken away, while if it came to water directly it meant there was honey in its cell.

It was usually the case in those days that the honeybee would resort to the mountain shadow in the summer, facing either the north or the south. In the winter, on the other hand, the bee would face either the east or the west. We would normally find the traces around water resources more often in the summer than in the winter, as the bees would drink more because of the heat.

We would go about looking for honey. If someone found a honeycomb, he would shout saying: "Its hair as samra"; its eyes as ember\*\*\*, which meant that it brimmed with honey. No sooner had the rest heard that than they would dart towards him, saying "We're coming, we're coming".

It was customary that if a person found a honeycomb in the mountain, he would leave a mark upon it. If someone else came and saw the mark he would know that it had already been earmarked, and, as such, he would have no right to touch it at all. There was a widespread certainty that people wouldn't touch a honeycomb in an area that didn't belong to

them. This demonstrated the great respect people had for each other.

As for honey seasons, they varied according to the trees. For example, the sadr honey ended in November, the samar honey in June, and the sho\*\*\* honey in March and April. When collecting honey, the person wasn't expected to wear perfumes or smelling of onion or garlic, nor should he be wearing red or white clothes. Regarding the time of honey collection, the bee would only attack the collector at midday in the summer heat. We would therefore approach the honeycomb with satisfaction at other times, though we would normally take a few precautions.

For example, we wouldn't approach it with fire or smoke. We would use a method locally known as mo'asha, by which we meant that hunting should be in the opposite direction of the sun rays. We would equip ourselves with a gun, a knife and water in a pot and all fire making requirements. It was normal that during honey harvesting, one would be sometimes stung. We were told that these stings were treatment of some sort for arthritis. I should also mention that the honey we harvested was kept in pottery pots, known as joroor made by women.

The sarh honey was believed to be amongst the best, and would come from flowers of the sarh tree, which had horns-looking fruits. When ripe, the latter would have bee-like sweet substance. One day a person collected that sweet substance and offered it to a potential buyer as honey. When tasting it, the would-be buyer didn't like it, and deemed it to be of "poor" quality. The man responded by saying, "Of course, you'd naturally say that about the honey of a poor man like me".

The quality of honey would usually be measured by dropping a small quantity on the ground. If it took the shape of a circle and didn't mingle with the soil, it meant it was of good quality. If the soil absorbed it, it meant it was of poor quality.

\*A tree (the translator).  
\*\*The Arabic word for "ember" is "jamra". The musical effect of "samra" and "jamra" is all but lost in the English translation (the translator).  
\*\*\*Sadr, samar and sho' are types of tree (the translator).

# art & life

## Local Scene

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TUESDAY | JUNE 7 | 2022

# A deep look into how Oman and Zanzibar honour outstanding performance in history

By Mai al Abri

Throughout human history, great achievements in different aspects of life had been awarded distinctly with different forms of ornaments or mementoes. In Greece and Rome for example, a wreath made of laurel was worn in the head as an honour to someone who has been victorious in sports, music and poetry, even at the later part, to signify victory in battles.

Over time, these awards will give way to their more modern forms. Insignias, medals and trophies become souvenirs for victors.

In Oman, orders have a deep-rooted history in the country and every order usually comes with an unforgettable story of great heroism and noble acts. Orders and decorations, in all their designs, classes, colours, and materials, are marks of honour for those who are honoured to wear them during international events and gatherings, whether the honoured is a guest or a resident. Recognition insignia and high-ranked orders have noble values, as they are awarded for outstanding services in the fields of military, artistry, literature, science, etc.

The authors of the book "Orders, decorations and medals in the Sultanate of Oman and Zanzibar", Raya al Hajri and Jalila al Rashdi focused particularly on the orders of the Sultanate of Oman, yet, "while the research was conducted, it fluently took us to Zanzibar, as it was a country of prosperity and a flourishing civilisation", says Raya, assistant director of organisations and international cooperation at the National Records and Archives Authority.

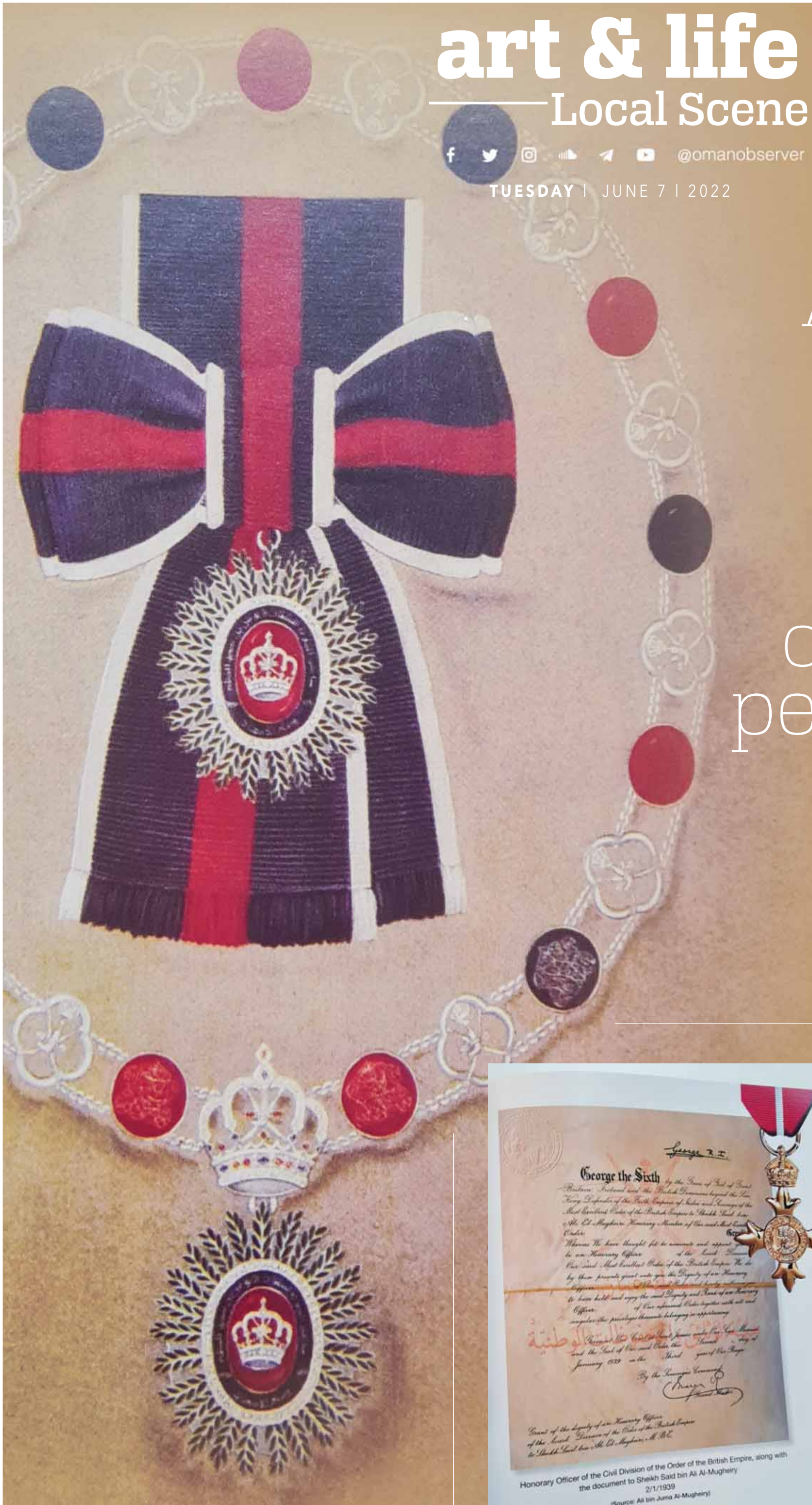
The book is part of NRAA publications in the 25th edition of research studies on national and international archives. It highlights various civilisational and historical aspects of the legacy of Oman and Omanis across the ages.

The 336-page manual consists of a preface and four chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to orders, decorations and medals in Oman and Zanzibar; the second on Oman orders and medals; the third on foreign orders, decorations and medals awarded to sultans of Oman and Zanzibar and the fourth on orders, decorations and medals awarded to Omani notables.

The establishment of orders and decorations was coupled with several rituals. It was essential to distinguish between members of a certain group or association. Those groups started wearing uniform insignia called "order ". These rituals and practices go back thousands of years. They originated in the middle ages. At first, orders were established to distinguish religious groups living in harsh conditions similar to those of priests, who devoted themselves to serving the religion and the king. The patterns then developed into orders of knighthood and Merit. History investigation shows that these military religious orders originated during the Crusades, including the Order of Malta, the order of Knights Templars, and the Teutonic Order. The Order of Malta was instituted in 1070 as a charity organisation, unlike the Order of Knights Templars, whose main purpose was to defend their religious beliefs. The organisation was created by some Italian merchants to care for sick Christian pilgrims at St John's Hospital near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem.

Raya explains that this English version of the book aims at introducing the foreign readers to the diplomatic role undertaken by the Omani sultans and their practice of international protocols in the field of decorations and medals. This book is a valuable tool to researchers and those interested in the history of decorations, and medals in the Sultanate of Oman in particular and the world in general.

This book is important due to its comprehension of the different kinds of medals and their purposes as it keeps pace with recent changes in the field of decorations. The book contained all the different names of medals in English to make it easy for the foreign reader to get the exact names.



Honorary Officer of the Civil Division of the Order of the British Empire, along with the document to Sheikh Said bin Ali Al-Mugheiry 2/1/1939 (Source: Ali bin Juma Al-Mugheiry)



The Long Service and Good Conduct Medal



Empire Gallantry Medal (Source: Massoud bin Omar bin Sulaiman Al-Maskri)