



Stars aligned for us: Renard

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GREEN TSUNAMI

Citizens rejoice Saudi's stunning World Cup win against Argentina

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Saudi Arabia shocked Argentina in one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history in Qatar on Tuesday, beating Lionel Messi's side 2-1 with brilliant individual goals from Saleh al Shehri and Salem al Dawsari.

Social media was flooded with congratulatory messages with many hailing the heroics of the Green Falcons.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Ali Shayadi, former goalkeeper of Suwaiq Club, said, "Saudi Arabia, ranked 51st globally, beat the world's third best team in a pulsating match at Doha's Lusail

Stadium."

Shayadi added that the World Cup being played in the Gulf region is a golden opportunity for a team from the region - Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Tunisia or Morocco - to reach at least the last four stage.

"The participation of Saudi Arabia in the World Cup is evidence of the team's strength. Victory over Argentina, one of the favourites to win the World Cup, is a historical achievement and has never happened before. We hope the Saudi team continues playing well and reaches the second round," Shayadi said.

Continued on Page 03



This victory will motivate the Saudi team to play better. We congratulate them and wish them more victories

EMAD AL HOSNI
Former national football player

I am very happy for Saudi Arabia's feat achieved despite the presence of the mighty Lionel Messi

HAMOUD AL HADRAMI
Resident of Seeb

The Saudi win is a golden opportunity for a team from the region to reach at least the last four stage

ALI SHAYADI
Former Suwaiq Club goalkeeper

OCCI elections conclude, winners announced

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Elections for the board of Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) concluded on Tuesday with a huge voter turnout witnessed at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat as well as the chamber's branches across governorates.

Elections were conducted to elect 21 members from 122 contestants for a period of four years (2022-2026). A number of voters and candidates said the voting process was smooth and easy while praising the arrangements made by the electoral committee.

Dr Mohammed al Badi, Director of Legal Affairs Department at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and Member of the Main Committee for the elections, said voting went off smoothly.



Siham al Harthi, one of the contestants, casts her vote

"The Main Committee for the elections of OCCI will hold its meetings continuously until the closing of vote. The committee decided in its earlier meetings that the voting process should be electronic, in line with the digital transformation policies, which effectively makes sorting and counting of votes easy," he said.

Mustafa bin Ahmed Salman,

Chairman of Board of Directors of United Securities, informed that votes were cast electronically - which eased the whole process - for the first time for the OCCI board. "I hope the new board of directors of the chamber achieve the aspirations and hopes of the Omani private sector."

He noted that the addition of joint stock companies and foreign investor companies to the Board of Directors provides an opportunity for all companies and institutions to contribute to the success of these elections by guaranteeing to find qualified representatives as members of the board.

Siham al Harthi, Founder of Siham Development and Investment Company, said that the high turnout for the elections reflects awareness of the importance of membership in the Board of Directors of OCCI.

Continued on Page 02



US, China defence chiefs meet in Cambodia

27th edition of Muscat Book Fair from Feb 22

Muscat - The Main Committee of Muscat International Book Fair announced that the 27th edition of the fair will be held from February 22 to March 4, 2023.

H E Dr Abdullah bin Nasser al Harrasi, Minister of Information and Chairman of the Main Committee of Muscat International Book Fair, told ONA that the event will include a diverse range of cultural programmes appealing to the tastes of avid readers across different categories, including academic, cultural, literary and scientific.

The minister said, "The extravaganza constitutes an opportunity for all of us, as readers, researchers, academics and students, to pursue our interests to

the maximum extent possible."

He pointed out that the event will include family and children's programmes fulfilling their educational aspirations and facilitating development of skills. Emphasis will be laid on sciences of the future, providing access to a wide repository of knowledge.

H E Harrasi stressed that Muscat International Book Fair provides a major platform for publishers, distributors and authors from Oman and abroad.

Besides a diverse selection of books, the fair will have interactive cultural events and seminars.

The 26th edition of the fair attracted more than 300,000 visitors.

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Sand Running Race to be held in Bidiyah

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) in cooperation with the Quick Challenge Company (QCC) will be organising Sand Running Race in North Sharqiyah governorate on Friday.

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, QCC founder Hazza al Jahmani said, "We have organised a series of winter sports competitions in North Sharqiyah starting from October 14. We will conclude the series with the Sand Running Race on November 25."

To be held in the wilayat of Bidiyah, the race for the professionals will be for a distance of 10km and 5km for amateurs. "We expect over 55 contestants to take part in the race."

The winter sports events are aimed at promoting tourist sites, boosting domestic tourism, and spreading awareness about the importance of various sports such as hiking and swimming,



the organisers said.

"The events help shed light on adventure tourism, discover Omani talent in various sports and help them enhance their

skills."

The QCC founder informed that as part of the series of events, a mountain race was held in the wilayat of Bani Khaled on

October 14, while a bicycle race took place in the wilayat of Ibra on October 28. The Wadi Dayqa Challenge race in the wilayat of Dima Wa al Tayeen took place

on November 4.

According to Jahmani, more than 250 contestants participated in the competitions, which witnessed a turnout of people

from the age of nine to 60 years.

Talking about the challenges, he said financial and media support was difficult. "These competitions require big cash prizes to

We have organised a series of winter sports competitions in North Sharqiyah starting from October 14. We will conclude the series with the Sand Running Race on November 25

HAZZA AL JAHMANI

encourage young people to participate."

He said the company holds many sports events and competitions with the aim of stimulating the tourism movement in the sultanate. In 2019, the company, in cooperation with MHT, held the first pentathlon in Oman. "We, in cooperation with the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, will hold the second edition of pentathlon soon."

Festival turns spotlight on Musandam

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A five-day off-road multi-sport event concluded in Musandam on November 19, with thousands participating in adventure sports and enjoying the magnificent sea and mountainous terrain in the governorate.

The Musandam Cross Festival was launched on November 15 under the auspices of Saeed bin Humaid al Harthy, Wali of Khasab, in the presence of Musandam governorate representatives, participating athletes, supporters, and members of the Khasab and Musandam communities.

During the launch, Harthy also inaugurated the official 2022 Musandam Cross Festival village at the iconic Khasab Fort. The festival village served as a family entertainment arena and central hub to highlight many adventure sports and adventure tourism



opportunities in the region.

With the support of the Authority for SME Development, the village also ran an exhibition for the local SMEs and traditional craftsmen to display and promote their products.

Along with its off-road triathlon, duathlon, trail runs, and the highly popular kids' fun run and aquathon, the Musandam

Cross Festival provided a prime opportunity for athletes and their families to immerse themselves in the breathtaking beauty of Musandam.

Musandam governorate - separated from the rest of Oman by the UAE - is located on the northern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. With spectacular sea and mountain views, as well as

dozens of fjord-like khors, magnificent marine life to explore while diving, pristine beaches, picturesque fishing villages, and premium luxury hotels, Musandam makes for a modern-day adventure sport paradise.

Several multi-sport themed activities were held for kids during the festival, so as to encourage them to start endurance and adventure sports as a healthy and highly rewarding lifestyle activity.

"The 2022 Musandam Cross Festival shined a spotlight on the governorate's spectacular sea and mountain views, and highlighted the rich heritage and culture of the area while providing a warm Omani welcome for the regional and international competitors," said Mohamed Obaidani, CEO, Triathlon Middle East.

"It was a true honour to welcome the wali of Khasab to launch this event for the Musandam

governorate and Oman - as well as for our neighbour the UAE, which has an enthusiastic triathlon and endurance sports community."

The Triathlon Middle East CEO added that the festival served as a flagship event for Musandam's winter-season calendar of activities, besides bringing in focus the governorate that is seeking to boost its economy with a special emphasis on adventure tourism and adventure sports.

With the 2023 XTERRA Musandam off-road triathlon slated for March 9 to 12 next year, Musandam is increasingly becoming a globally-renowned destination for hosting adventure sport events in a spectacular wilderness setting, and in one of the 'Capitals of Adventure Tourism' in Oman. This will be the first time an XTERRA off-road triathlon to be organised in the Middle East.



Oman Airports opens Document Management Centre at Muscat airport

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Airports launched Document Management Centre (DMC) at Muscat International Airport on Tuesday.

Launched under the auspices of H E Dr Hamad Mohammed al Dhawyani, Chairman of the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), and in the presence of Sheikh Ayman bin Ahmed al Hosani, CEO of Oman Airports, the centre covers an area of 787sqm, of which 430sqm is dedicated to document storage. Another 357sqm area has been designated for facilities such as a post office, a documents sorting area, a meeting room, and a reception area, in addition to staff offices and service facilities for personnel.

Oman Airports equipped the centre as per the technical specifications approved by the NRAA, and obtained the necessary approvals as stipulated by the Records and Archives Law.

To ensure safe protection of all documents, the centre has been equipped with a state-of-the-art FM 200 fire extinguishing system, as well as moisture removal devices.

On the sidelines of the DMC's inauguration, Oman Airports signed an agreement with Bah-

wan Information Technology Company to provide an electronic system for managing records and documents in accordance with the standards and specifications approved by the NRAA.

Signed by Abdullah bin Saleh al Yafi, VP Support Service Unit of Oman Airports, and Yasser Mohammed Khair, CEO of Suhail Bahwan Group, the agreement reflects Oman Airports' ongoing digital transformation efforts - in this case, through the automation of documents and records to facilitate their protection, and ease of management and retrieval.

The agreement also ensures that Oman Airports meets the requirements set by the NRAA's Records and Archives Law.

Oman Airports' CEO Hosani said that the establishment of the DMC aims at ensuring the effective management of the company's documents, and their protection against any unauthorised access. The documents in question include those related to Muscat International Airport, Salalah Airport, Duqm Airport and Sohar Airport - such as operation and maintenance manuals, and detailed maps.

"Oman Airports is also moving forwards with its digital transformation by signing the agreement," he added.

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OCCI elections conclude, winners announced

Continued from [Page 01](#)

"The Board will have a major role to play through the new system of the chamber and the addition of other categories to the membership of the board. The chamber will be a great supporter and catalyst for the Omani economy," Siham said.

Dr Ahmed Badr, an investor in the health field in Oman, expressed his appreciation for the new system of OCCI, which added a seat for foreign investor companies within the Board. "The presence of the foreign investors in the Chamber's board of directors represents the link between the investors and the government," he said, praising the smooth electoral process that took place with ease.

WINNERS	
Muscat	Foreign investor companies
Areej Mohsin Darwish	Abdul Latheef
Khalil al Khonji	
Siham al Harthi	Governorates
Rashid al Muslehi	Nayef bin Hamid Fadel - Dhofar
Redha al Saleh	Saeed al Abri - N Batinah
	Hamoud al Saadi - S Batinah
Public shareholding companies	Saif al Badi - Dhahirah
Faisal al Rawas	Muhammad al Maskari - N Sharqiyah
Abdullah al Harthy	Anwar al Sinani - S Sharqiyah
Mustafa Salman	Saif al Tiwani - Dakhliyah
Saud al Nahari	Raed al Shehhi - Musandam
Hussein Abdul Hussein	Zaher al Kaabi - Buraimi
	Salem al Junaibi - Al Wusta

Saeed bin Sulayem al Kindi, head of the sub-committee at OCCI in Dakhliyah, said that the number of registered voters in

the governorate reached 500, and business owners and those registered flocked to cast their votes from early morning.

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MOH No: 558/2022

Love, peace and football



Our Correspondent
Muscat

As the world's biggest sports spectacle unfolds in Qatar, three Omanis from Muscat are spreading the message of love and peace at the FIFA World Cup 2022.

The three are also educating football fans and tourists from around the world about Oman and the Arab world.

Their stall, set up at Katara - the cultural village in Doha - has visitors from Africa, Latin America, Europe and Asia.

The three, Nasser Said Amur al Batrani, Dr Hamdi Hilal Mohamed al Barwani and Abdulwahab Sulaiman Mohamed al Busaidi, have been greeting fans with Omani halwa and kahwa everyday and will continue to do so till the end of the tournament.

Busaidi, an astronomer, said, "In the last few days we have interacted with fans from around the world, including Brazil, Spain, Italy and England. People are very curious about Oman and their response is very positive."



(Supplied photos)

In the last few days we have interacted with fans from around the world. People are very curious about Oman and their response is very positive

ABDULWAHAB AL BUSAIDI

He added that their initiative is part of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs' programme of spreading awareness about the region. "This cultural exchange programme aims to remove every negative impres-

sion among the visitors to Qatar about Islam."

Elaborating on how they engage visitors to the stall, Busaidi informed that the team tells them that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance and that

"we never stand by acts of terrorism and vandalism; we respect everyone irrespective of their faith and culture".

He observed that most visitors are curious and happy to know about the various practices of Islam, including prayer poses, fasting and family matters. "We must have such exchanges for a better world and such a sporting platform, which unites people, is a great time and place to do that."

Katara has been set up on the eastern coast between West Bay and the Pearl in Doha and is surrounded by restaurants and malls. It is a popular destination, in addition to Doha Corniche, Souq Waqif and the Museum of Islamic Art, for World Cup attendees.

The three Omanis in Katara, dressed traditionally, also talk to visitors about the sultanate's rich and diverse nature. "There are many who are unaware of Oman. We educate them and they are amazed when we say that Oman is blessed with lush green mountains, deep blue seas and vast deserts."

2,000 to attend 9-day youth festival in Duqm from Nov 25

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A nine-day mega youth festival, to be held in Duqm from Friday, will see the confluence of over 2,000 Omanis in a specially designed futuristic village discussing their aspirations for the sultanate.

As part of its efforts to support youth and channelise their energies into discussing and streamlining the future development of Oman, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth (MCSY) and the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones will hold an event called Amad Duqm 22 from Friday.

"The idea of Amad Duqm 22 emerged within the efforts to enhance the presence of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm as a modern, thriving city that embraces art, innovation and youth. Duqm will be one of the most prominent modern and futuristic cities in the sultanate, due to its independent administrative ca-



pabilities and various options for infrastructure and economic infrastructure," said Dr Said bin Khalifa al Tuwairshi, Head of Supervisory Committee, Amad Duqm 22.

An official at MCSY said, "The event, to be held in the Special Economic Zone at Duqm, aims to explore the aspirations of Omani youth for the future of Oman. It will include 30 activities in various fields such as innovation, technology, recreation, sports and culture."

According to the official, the event will be held in a specially designed integrated village spread over 500,000sqm area

and made an annual feature at the end of November.

The integrated village will include multiple facilities, including a Mars incubator, sports courts, a theatre for live performances, an arena to race drones and remote control cars, and a futuristic mosque, besides an area for mobile camping, display area for productive families, and electric scooters.

"Duqm was chosen to hold the event because it is the city of the future and the youth. It will also have a special site for artificial intelligence experiments. A mini experimental laboratory called Amad Village will encourage the aspirations of Omani youth as well help them achieve their goals," the MCSY official said.

The Amad Duqm 22 event is part of the Discover Duqm campaign launched at the beginning of 2021, which seeks to highlight the Special Economic Zone at Duqm as an emerging tourist and investment destination.

Citizens rejoice Saudi's stunning World Cup win

Continued from Page 01

Former national player Emad al Hosni said the game will go down as one of the historic upsets in World Cup. "This victory will motivate the Saudi team to play better. We congratulate them and wish them more victories."

Seeb resident Hamoud al Hadrami described the Saudi victory as a historic achievement for all Arabs. "I expect them to be on top of their group and qualify for the second round. I am very happy for Saudi Arabia's feat

achieved despite the presence of the mighty Lionel Messi."

But the Saudi win didn't surprise Sultan al Rawahi from Muscat. "The Saudis are a strong team and well prepared for the tournament. I wish they reach at least the final round. This win will also inspire all the participating Arab teams to do their best to try and reach the final round of the tournament."

Muscat resident Ahmed Hassan is "proud" of the Green Falcon's victory on Tuesday

"especially after the loss of the Qatari team".

Hassan believes the participating Arab teams will take heart from this upset win and perform better in the tournament being held for the first time in an Arab country.

"This championship is a great opportunity for the Arab teams to benefit from the encouragement of the Arab fans to reach the final rounds for the first time. I hope an Arab team reaches the finals," said Hassan.

Junior Science Café hosts session on fish

Muscat - Mawarid - the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation's Oman Animal and Plant Genetic Resources Centre - organised the second monthly session of Junior Science Café for the academic year 2022-2023 at Suhail bin Amro al Amri School in Muscat recently.

The session was on the olfactory bulb of fish, presented by Haitham al Busaidi from Mawarid. He reviewed the world of fishes and the amazing secrets and science still being studied.

One of the most significant researches in the study of fishes is the discovery of the olfactory bulb in the head of fish, which stores a huge variety of information - like an airplane black box - that helps fish perform various functions. The session included a



(Supplied photo)

demonstration on the anatomy of fish, the importance of the fish 'black box', the type of information fish analyse and how it is applied in marine habitats, including knowing its path in high seas and oceans.

The idea of the Junior Science Café emerged after the success of the Science Café events held for community members. It is an initiative for students aged 10-15 years and presented by qualified lecturers. Topics of presentation

The session reviewed the world of fishes and the amazing secrets and science still being studied

and discussion vary and are held in four categories - plant world, animal world, marine biology and microorganisms. The programme aims to educate students on important scientific topics which have a bearing on communities, while spreading awareness, encouraging curiosity and helping study Omani genetic resources and ensuring preservation of these.

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Sri Lanka	954.99

*Rates as on November 22
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

China unveils plan to shore up industrial economy

China announced that it will roll out a slew of measures to sustain the recovery momentum of the industrial economy, Chinese news agency, Xinhua, reported. Industry, region and enterprise-specific measures will be adopted to secure the sound development of key industries, boost coordinated regional development, and inject vitality into industrial enterprises, as per official document.

Efforts will be made to tackle key issues facing the industrial economy, including accelerating the construction of major projects, tapping into market potential to grow consumer demand, stabilising exports of industrial products, improving the resilience and security of industrial and supply chains, and fostering new growth drivers, the document said. It also stressed the importance of efforts to guarantee sufficient supplies of energy and raw materials to maintain the stable operations of key industrial and supply chains.

Additionally, China's monetary policy is providing vigorous support for the economy to withstand challenges from COVID-19 resurgences and external headwinds, the country's central bank governor said Monday.

Moody's affirms ratings of Sohar International, HSBC Oman following merger deal



Our Correspondent
Muscat

Moody's Investor Service has affirmed Sohar International Bank's and HSBC Bank Oman's deposit ratings, following the recent signing of a binding merger agreement between the two banks.

Moody's affirmed Sohar International's long-term foreign and local currency deposit ratings at Ba3. At the same time, the rating agency has maintained the outlook on the bank's long-term deposit ratings at positive, which continues to reflect Moody's positive outlook on the Omani government's issuer ratings.

'The affirmation of Sohar International's long-term deposit ratings at Ba3 reflects the affirmation of its baseline credit assessment (BCA) and adjusted BCA at ba3, which are at the same level as the sovereign rating. As a result, there is no government support uplift for the

bank's deposit ratings despite Moody's assessment of a very high likelihood of government support in case of need,' the ratings agency said.

The affirmation of the BCA at ba3 for Sohar International, captures the rating agency's view that the forthcoming merger between Sohar International and HSBC Oman is broadly credit neutral, Moody's noted.

On the other hand, Moody's affirmed HSBC Oman's long-term local and foreign currency deposit ratings at Ba2, its adjusted BCA at ba2 and its BCA at ba3. The rating agency changed the outlook on HSBC Oman's long-term deposit ratings to developing from positive.

'The developing outlook on HSBC Oman captures the differing directions in which the merger and the positive outlook on the Oman sovereign rating could affect its ratings. The finalisation of the merger would result in the bank's deposit ratings being downgraded to the same

level as Sohar International, as the two banks are merged and HSBC Oman ceases to exist,' Moody's said.

The merger between Sohar International and HSBC Oman - which remains subject to the regulatory bodies and shareholders' approval - is expected to be completed in the second half of 2023. Upon completion, Sohar International will be the surviving entity and acquire all HSBC Oman's liabilities and assets. The transaction is structured as an offering of Sohar International's shares, valuing HSBC Oman at book value, with the option to receive the consideration in cash up to 70 per cent of the value.

As per Moody's, capital buffers of the merged entity are expected to remain sound following the merger, supported by Sohar International's capital issuances (US\$414mn rights issue completed in September 2022) and sound profitability.

However, Moody's expects

Sohar International's capital buffers to decline in the scenario of HSBC Oman's shareholders opting for mostly cash payment at the time of the transaction settlement.

'Profitability will remain supported by Sohar International's strong corporate franchise following the merger (with 18 per cent estimated market share by assets) as well as by retail diversification from HSBC Oman,' Moody's said.

It said the deposit base of the merged entity will remain concentrated, although liquidity buffers are expected to increase at Sohar International after consolidation, and to remain adequate for the entity's market funding reliance.

Moody's also noted that although Sohar International will face integration challenges following the merger, and that synergies may therefore take some time to emerge, this is not expected to put downward pressure on the bank's ratings.



Dual carriageway project from Duqm Airport to Ras Markaz awarded

Duqm - Oman's Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) has awarded the construction contract for the dual carriageway from Duqm Airport roundabout to Ras Markaz, with a total length of 51km.

The move complements the implementation of the strategic road network within the comprehensive plan of the Special Economic Zone at Duqm (SEZAD).

Eng Ahmed Ali Akaak, chief executive officer in charge of SEZAD, said that the project to develop the dual carriageway of the main road from Duqm Airport to Ras Markaz is one of the important projects proposed within the main road network in SEZAD.

This road connects the southern part of the zone, which includes Ras Markaz reservoirs project, one of the most vital projects in the Zone, and Dhahr village with Duqm Airport roundabout. The road will connect those coming from the south to the central area of SEZAD and it will serve the growing movement

of people and cargo between strategic projects in the zone.

Akaak said that the total length of the roads are 51km, including 45km long dual carriageways and 6km single carriageway. The scope of work of the road project includes the development of a road junction to Ras Markaz as the starting point of the project, as the road consists of four traffic lanes; two in each direction. The two directions are separated by hard-scaped centre median with shoulders on both sides for each direction, in addition to eight roundabouts.

He pointed out that the project also comprises the installation of smart lighting (LED) poles and road signs. The road was designed with high specifications to avoid the accumulation of surface water and flooding, through the construction of concrete bridges over wadis.

Moreover, 10 per cent of the total value of the road construction works will be allocated to SMEs. ONA



Oman Cables rolls out share ownership plan for employees

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Cables Industry (OCI), the sultanate's leading manufacturer of energy cables and innovative service provider, celebrated the 52nd Oman National Day demonstrating a renewed commitment to employees by rolling out a company share-based variable remuneration and profit-sharing plan.

This scheme is rolled out by Prysmian Group - the strategic partner of OCI - and is based on an on/off condition in achieving specific local and regional target, awarding the employees with receiving Prysmian Group shares, according to a press statement.

Targeting a wide employee base with a focus on blue-collar workers, OCI's share-based plan will serve as a core driver to improve employee engagement, foster a sense of belonging, encourage employees to excel in their roles and maintain alignment with Prysmian Group's framework for future success while promoting stability.

The plan is part of OCI's 'Empowerment, Innovation and Excellence' vision, which extends from its products and services to

the opportunities available to its workforce.

Cinzia Farisè, CEO of Oman Cables, said, "The launch of our people-centric, profit-sharing plan comes in recognition of our employees' commitment to OCI and its culture, as we find new ways to reward our most integral asset through corporate diversity and inclusive value creation. We are confident that, by ensuring the involvement of all calibres in incentive-based initiatives, we can sustain innovation and safeguard the interests of all stakeholders, from employees to shareholders."

Created in line with Prysmian Group's Social Ambition 2030 goal of having 50 per cent of employees as shareholders, OCI's newest stock ownership plan will see eligible employees opt to convert some, or all, their monetary or production bonuses in company shares, incentivising participation and reinforcing increased engagement in the group's performance.

Enrolled OCI employees will receive a percentage of their monetary entitlement, a predetermined, countervalue equal to shares calculated on an annual and individual basis in accordance with bonus amounts.

Muscat - Birba Energy, the organisers of next month's Green Hydrogen Summit Oman (GHSO) 2022 Conference & Exhibition, received in their office in Muscat recently a delegation headed by H E Kim Kiejoo, ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Oman.

At a meeting that following, H E Kiejoo shared details of the Korea-Oman Green Hydrogen Strategic Forum 2022 that will take place against the backdrop of GHSO 2022 at the Oman Convention and Exhibition Center (OCEC). The latter event - a three-day showcase of Oman's future green hydrogen industry - will run during December 5 - 7, while the Korea-Oman forum will take place as a half-day event at the same venue on December 5.

Welcoming the Korean am-



Abdullah al Harthy (left) and H E Kim Kiejoo (Supplied photo)

bassador and his colleagues, Abdullah al Harthy, chairman of Birba Energy, said, "We were honoured to receive H E Kiejoo and discuss with him a seamless and impactful delivery of the Korea-Oman forum as one of the highlights of the main GHSO Summit. Korea is already one of

Oman's biggest energy partners and is now exploring opportunities for cooperation with the Sultanate in the green hydrogen space as well."

H E Kiejoo stated, "This forum will provide a great opportunity for Korea and Oman to share their respective priorities for de-

veloping their low-carbon economies. Both countries can capitalise on their competitive advantages to support each other in a mutually beneficial way to achieve their respective national objectives."

"With many public and private sector stakeholders in attendance, this forum will also provide an opportunity for both sides to share perspectives, vision and best practices for green hydrogen projects in the MENA region, as well as in Korea and Oman," he added.

Co-hosting the forum alongside the embassy is the Hydrogen Convergence Alliance of Korea (H2KOREA), a public-private consultative body established by the Korean government in 2017 to promote and develop the hydrogen economy.

In addition to H2KOREA, there will be presentations by high-level representatives from Posco Holdings, Samsung Engineering and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI). Speaking on behalf of Oman will be key officials representing the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, OQ Alternative Energy, Hydrom and Hy-Fly.

Meanwhile, an estimated 800 delegates are due to attend the main GHSO Summit organized by Birba Energy on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals.

The three-day conference and exhibition opens on December 5, 2022 with an exclusive executive roundtable for a select gathering of energy ministers, heads of international energy think-tanks and CEOs of global energy companies.

Musk delays launch of Twitter paid verification

San Francisco, US - Twitter boss Elon Musk has postponed the re-launch of paid verification on the platform, extending a suspension he previously said would end this month.

Adding a verification option for subscribers of Twitter Blue, open to all users for eight dollars a month, has been a major focus for Musk since he bought the platform in late October.

"Holding off relaunch of Blue Verified until there is high confidence of stopping impersonation," Musk tweeted on

Monday. "Will probably use different colour check for organisations than individuals."

Musk did not give a date for the relaunch, which was previously scheduled for November 29. Early this month, Musk said the relaunch of Twitter's paid subscription service would include account authentication, arguing the plan would upend the platform's "current lords & peasants system" and create a new revenue stream for the company.

A first attempt at launching



Elon Musk

the feature on iPhone saw an embarrassing spate of fake accounts that scared advertisers.

Verified accounts with mil-

lions of followers were banned after their user name was changed to "Elon Musk."

Twitter suspended paid verification and reinstated the gray "official" badge on accounts belonging to public figures and major organizations.

Musk has since reinstated some of the banned accounts that impersonated him, including that of comedian Kathy Griffin.

Before Musk acquired Twitter, the platform offered free identity verification for organizations and public figures, while Twitter Blue

offered unrelated customization features.

Twitter Blue is part of the billionaire's plans to diversify the sources of revenue for the company, whose financial health depends largely on advertising revenue.

Since the takeover, several major advertisers, including Volkswagen Group, General Motors and General Mills, have announced that they were suspending their advertising on Twitter.

AFP

Global GDP growth to slow amid high inflation: OECD

Paris, France - World economic growth is slowing due to decades-high inflation, the OECD said Tuesday, calling for "essential" further monetary policy tightening and "more targeted" government support.

Global GDP is set to grow 3.1 per cent this year - nearly half the rate for last year, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said.

The slide is due to continue next year, with global growth falling to 2.2 per cent before rebounding "to a relatively modest 2.7 per cent in 2024", the Paris-based organisation said.



OECD chief economist Alvaro Santos Pereira

Amid the effects of Russia's war in Ukraine, "growth has lost momentum, high inflation is proving persistent, confidence has weakened, and uncertainty is high", it said in its latest forecasts.

OECD chief economist Alvaro Santos Pereira said the global economy was "reeling from the largest energy crisis since the 1970s".

The energy shock has pushed inflation up "to levels not seen for many decades" and is hitting economic growth around the world, he added.

Inflation had already been on the rise before the conflict due to bottlenecks in the global supply chain after countries emerged from Covid lockdowns.

But the OECD said that inflation was set to reach eight per cent in the fourth quarter of this year in the Group of 20 top economies, falling to 5.5 per cent

in 2023 and 2024.

In a positive sign, several factors driving inflation have eased in the past year.

Supply chains that were disrupted during the pandemic have been restored, and maritime freight costs which had spiked have fallen back.

'Top policy priority'

"Our central scenario is not a global recession but a significant growth slowdown for the world economy in 2023, as well as still high, albeit declining, inflation in many countries," Santos Pereira said. Fighting inflation is a "top policy priority", the OECD said, as soaring prices erode people's purchasing power worldwide.

It recommended tightening monetary policy in countries where price rises remained high and targeted support for families

and firms to avoid exacerbating inflationary pressures, with energy costs "likely to remain high and volatile for some time".

"In these difficult and uncertain times, policy has once again a crucial role to play: further tightening of monetary policy is essential to fight inflation, and fiscal policy support should become more targeted and temporary," the OECD said.

The 38-member group called for an acceleration in investment in adopting and developing clean energy sources and technology to help diversify supply.

Gas and oil deliveries from major producer Russia have been severely disrupted following its invasion of Ukraine. Western allies sanctioned its energy exports and Russia slashed supplies in the stand-off over the conflict.

The upheaval has sent energy

costs spiralling and fuelled decades-high inflation in major economies, leading central banks to hike interest rates in a bid to tame runaway prices.

But the tighter monetary policies have stoked fears of hampered economic growth as borrowing becomes more expensive for businesses and individuals. The OECD warned that the northern hemisphere faced a "challenging" winter even though Europe has made efforts to replenish its natural gas reserves and curb demand.

High gas prices or supply disruptions would bring "significantly weaker growth and higher inflation" in the world in the next two years, the OECD report said, emphasising that securing and diversifying supplies was "imperative".

AFF

UK public finances worsen on energy support, inflation

London, UK - British state borrowing jumped last month on fallout from costly energy support and soaring inflation, official data showed Tuesday.

Public sector net borrowing hit £13.5bn (US\$16bn) in October, up from £9.2bn a year earlier, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

"October's high borrowing figure largely is a consequence of the government's decision to shield households from most of the surge in energy prices," said Pantheon Macro analyst Samuel Tombs.

The government of Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has maintained household energy support measures introduced by his predecessor Liz Truss to cushion a cost-of-living crisis, as prices rocketed after key producer Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Decades-high inflation, fuelled largely by sky-high energy bills, also saw interest on debt repayments balloon last month.

"It is right that the government increased borrowing to support millions of businesses and families," finance minister Jeremy Hunt said in response to the data.

"But to tackle inflation and ensure the economic stability needed for long-term growth, it is vital that we put the public finances back on a more sustainable path."

In a budget last week, Hunt hiked taxes and slashed spending to reverse Truss's unfunded tax cuts that had sent the pound sliding and UK borrowing costs surging.



UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks at the Confederation of Business Industry (CBI) conference in Birmingham on Monday (AFP)

Recession forecasts

The government also stated last week that the UK economy had fallen into a recession and would shrink 1.4 per cent next year.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development was more positive, however, forecasting a contraction of 0.4 per cent in 2023.

That would still be more than any of the world's seven most advanced nations next year, the OECD added in global forecasts given Tuesday. The organisation meanwhile took aim at the UK government's support efforts to cap energy bills, saying it would continue to push up inflation.

"Better targeting of measures to cushion the impact of high energy prices would lower the budgetary cost, better preserve incentives to save energy, and reduce the pressure on demand at a time of high inflation."

The ONS added that total

UK debt rose in October to almost £2.46tn or 97.5 per cent of GDP.

This was driven by the ongoing impact of emergency pandemic spending, in tandem with falling tax receipts in the faltering economy.

Keir Starmer, leader of Britain's main opposition party Labour, told business leaders Tuesday that his party would "give Britain the clear economic leadership it needs" if elected in the next general election not due until 2024.

"We will inherit an economy that's been damaged by the last 12 weeks and the last 12 years, and we need to fundamentally accept that," he told the annual conference of the Confederation of British Industry.

AFF

Russia unveils new icebreaker in push for energy markets

Saint Petersburg, Russia - President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday oversaw the launch of a new nuclear-powered icebreaker as Russia pushes to develop the Arctic and seeks new energy markets amid sanctions over Ukraine.

Addressing a Saint Petersburg ceremony for the launch of the Yakutia icebreaker by video link, Putin said such vessels were of "strategic" importance for Russia.

In addition to floating out the Yakutia, authorities also symbolically raised a flag on another nuclear-powered icebreaker, the Ural.

The Ural and the Yakutia are part of a fleet of nuclear-powered icebreakers that are meant to ensure Moscow's dominance over the melting Arctic.

The Kremlin chief vowed to develop his country's nuclear fleet despite current difficulties in Russia's economy and production in an apparent reference to Western sanctions over Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

"We will increase the capabilities of our nuclear icebreaker fleet," Putin said.

He said this should be achieved "using domestic equipment and components".

The Ural is expected to be-



People attend the float out ceremony of the nuclear-powered icebreaker Yakutia at the Baltic shipyard in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday (AFP)

come operational in December, while the Yakutia will join the fleet in late 2024, Putin said.

The vessels are designed to resist extreme weather conditions in the Far North, have a length of 173 metres (568 feet) and can smash through ice up to 2.8 metres thick.

The Russian leader said the ships were part of Moscow's efforts "to consolidate Russia's status as a great Arctic power".

He once again stressed the importance of developing the so-called Northern Sea Route,

which allows ships to reach Asian ports up to 15 days faster than via the traditional Suez Canal.

"This very important corridor will allow Russia to realise its export potential in full, and establish an effective logistics route to South-East Asia," Putin said.

Moscow has for years heavily invested in the route.

But Putin's military campaign in Ukraine and subsequent Western sanctions have given new urgency to plans to redirect

energy exports to Asia.

Russian industries have struggled with production in recent months, deprived of key Western-produced parts due to sanctions. The vessels are expected to be a game changer for Russia's use of the Arctic.

Transit in the eastern Arctic usually ends in November but Moscow is hoping the icebreakers will help it make use of the route - becoming more accessible due to climate change - year-round.

AFF

Gazprom says Ukraine diverting Moldova gas supplies

Moscow, Russia - Russian energy giant Gazprom said Tuesday that Ukraine was diverting natural gas supplies transiting to Moldova and threatened to curtail deliveries through a key pipeline to Europe in response.

The allegations are the latest point of tension over energy deliveries between Kyiv, European capitals and Moscow, which has

reduced consignments to Europe in response to Western sanctions over the conflict in Ukraine.

"The volume of gas supplied by Gazprom... for transit to Moldova via Ukraine is more than the physical volume transmitted at the border of Ukraine with Moldova," Gazprom said in a statement. The Saint Petersburg-based company said that

Ukraine had allegedly obstructed 52.52mn cubic metres from being delivered to Moldova and threatened cuts in response.

The threats come at a precarious moment for energy security in Europe, which scrambled to fill gas storage sites ahead of winter.

Ukraine is suffering a severe energy crisis in the wake of weeks of persistent Russian

strikes on its energy grid, which has also led to blackouts in neighbouring Moldova.

Chisinau's pro-European president, Maia Sandu, has warned that her country of 2.6 million people nestled between Romania and war-scarred Ukraine risks running out of gas and electricity this winter.

AFF



**MUSCAT CITY
DESALINATION
COMPANY SAOG**

PO Box: 1935, PC: 114, Muscat,
Sultanate of Oman
website www.mcdcoman.com

Notice and Invitation to Attend the Ordinary General Meeting

The Board of Directors of MUSCAT CITY DESALINATION SAOG (the "Company") has the pleasure to invite the shareholders to attend the Ordinary General Meeting, which will be held on Sunday at 3:00 PM on 11/12/2022, via the electronic platform to hold Ordinary General Meeting which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) and will be held in this location (Online). If the quorum requirement for holding the Annual General Meeting is not fulfilled, a second Ordinary General Meeting shall be held on Sunday at 3:00 PM on 18/12/2022, via the electronic platform which can be accessed through the website of Muscat Clearing & Depository Company (www.mcd.gov.om) to discuss the following agenda:

- To consider and approve the distribution of interim cash dividends of value 11.250 baiza per share to the shareholders who are registered in the Company's register as at the date of the OGM out of the retained earnings of the Company as reflected in the Company's audited financial statements for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2022.

According to the Company's Articles of Association and the controls for holding General Meetings using modern technology issued by the capital market authority, we would like to draw your attention to the following:

- Legal person, exclusively, has the right to delegate a natural person to attend the General Meeting and vote on its behalf through technical means, provided that this natural person has an investor number in MCD.
- Voting on any of the agenda items begins no more than three days before the date of the General Meeting until the voting process ends on the day of the General Meeting. If the shareholder's shares are increased or decreased, the voting process will be canceled, and the shareholder will have to vote again on the day of the General Meeting.

For any queries, please contact Jood Al-Amri on +968 96990724 or e-mail at: jood.alamri@dentons.com.

Chairman	Legal Advisor	Auditor
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A'soud Global School marks National Day

A'soud Global School in Salalah celebrated the 52nd National Day with its own grand programme of events on November 17, a press release said. Faiza Mohammed al Rahbi attended the school's event as guest of honour and was joined by Himansu Mohapatra, Group General Manager - Investment from Muscat Overseas Group and member of the school's senior management. School principal Damon Hewson said, "I am honoured to extend my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the Omani people on the glorious occasion of Oman's 52nd National Day." He expressed gratitude to all staff and students at AGS for their hard work and efforts.

ahli islamic to offer 1% gift on Qitaf deposits

ahli islamic has announced an exciting one per cent gift for new-to-bank deposits. The cashback offer is for all new-to-bank and existing customers of Qitaf for deposits of RO5,000 and above, and for those seeking to grow their fortunes with the Qitaf Savings account that is based on the Islamic Mudaraba principle. As per the scheme, the one per cent gift will be credited to the customer's Qitaf account after three-month deposit period. There will, however, be a cap of RO5,000 per cashback, per account. "We are leveraging the popularity of our Qitaf Savings Account to help new to bank customers establish a strong financial base," said Noora Sultan, AGM - Head of Retail Banking ahli islamic.

ISC - Himachal Wing celebrates Diwali Mela

Himachal Wing of Indian Social Club Oman organised a cultural event to celebrate Diwali festival in The Crowne Plaza Qurum's Sindbad Ballroom in Muscat on November 11. The event was graced by the chief guest H E Munir Abdulnabi Yousuf Makki, a businessman and former Ambassador of Republic of France with his wife. The chief guest in his introductory address conveyed his best wishes and honoured the parents of the members at the event. The event was also attended by the vice chairman of Indian Social Club Oman Karanjeet Singh Mathroo.

Muscat karatekas win silver in Okinawa

A team from the Bodhi Dharma Life Skills, pioneers in Ishin Ryu Karate in Muscat, has won several silver medals in the Okinawa World Karate Tournament held in Japan recently. The Okinawa tournament was attended by over 2200 karatekas from 27 countries, together with five students from Oman - Karthi, Kalyani, Ashwin, Mirsha and Kris. Under the supervision and guidance of the founder Renshi Kumar, they participated in the tournament and secured silver medals in various categories. Renshi Kumar undertook the qualifying exam and got enlisted as Referee for the World Tournament. The whole team has been undergoing rigorous practice for the last two years with the aim of securing medals in this tournament, a release said.

10% cash back on NBO credit card purchases

Bringing back its popular 'NBO Friday', National Bank of Oman (NBO) is offering Visa credit cardholders ten per cent cash back on e-commerce transactions on November 25. For one full day, customers will receive cash back of up to RO50 per customer, on all transactions at any of their favourite online retailers while also earning NBO Reward Program points. Since its introduction in 2018, 'NBO Friday' has been providing its customers with unique offers on this awaited day every year where many retailers offer massive promoted sales at discounted prices to service our clients' needs. "Our credit cards come with unparalleled benefits and as part of our commitment to reward customers," said Maha al Raisi, AGM and Head of Retail Products at NBO.

Changan Oman launches luxury sedan

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment LLC (AGAE) has launched the luxury sedan Changan UNI-V in Oman. Further expanding the Changan auto's luxury model range - the UNI series in Oman.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, "The all-new UNI-V 2023 model has stunning exterior design, premium interiors, impressive performance and drive assistance technologies which will create superior owner experience.

"The UNI-V continues its family tradition of a borderless grille and adapts a more agile and accurate design to help the model feel much sportier. It has exterior features that make it unique including Panoramic Glass sunroof, Split and Auto LED Headlamps, ORVM - electrically folding and Hidden door handles."

The new UNI-V has short overhang, long wheelbase and notchback design which creates the sporty feel of a luxury sport sedan. The wider front and rear wheel and longer axle length contributes to more agility for high-speed

driving and stability.

Under the hood, the UNI-V comes equipped with the Blue core 1.5L turbocharged engine making 188hp of power and a staggering 300Nm of torque. The engine is paired to a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission which powers the front drive system.

The tyre aspect ratio of 0.78 and the UNI-V wheel height which is half of the

car height makes the car body look lowered and comparable that of a luxury sports sedan.

The Changan UNI-V's interior design with hidden air vents, integrated center buttons create a sense of simplicity and sporty, the bright colors center console, armrest and dual panels add excitement. In addition, the asymmetrical design in instrument

cluster creates momentum and style.

The UNI-V adapts 3+1 Quadrapole screen layout which appears to be two screens, but which are interconnected, the Double 'D' design steering wheel looks distinctive of a sporty sedan.

All-new Changan UNI-V's extraordinary interior design is very formidable. It has a comprehensive set of advanced safety features such as front airbags, side airbags, curtain airbags, BS+EBD+ESP+TSC+HHC+HDC+TPMS, auto hold function, front and rear parking sensors, 360°

Camera HD, 360° dashcam, adaptive cruise control, forward collision warning, automatic emergency brake and lane departure warning.

Infotainment attributes include 10 instrument cluster, 10.25" infotainment screen, Navigation, Voice Control Function, mirror link with Apple CarPlay, wireless charger, radio, Bluetooth, USB (front and rear) and eight speakers. It has comfort features such as electronic parking brake, keyless entry with push start button, remote engine start/stop, rear air outlet, paddle shifter, electric tailgate and rear seat centre headrest.

Changan Auto Luxury brand is called UNI - positioned as futuristic and fashionable.

The UNI range features progressive design and smart technologies offered only in luxury brands.

AGAE has set up a spacious and state-of-the-art showroom in Al Qurum and service centre in Ghala, Muscat.

National Finance participates in Dar Al Atta'a Tamkeen initiative



In an effort to empower women in various fields, National Finance, the leading finance company in the sultanate, signed a partnership agreement with Dar Al Atta'a in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water Resources, to support 50 women with limited income by instilling skills for beekeeping and honey production.

The signing ceremony was held under the auspices of H E Dr Saud bin Hamoud al Habsi, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries Wealth and Water resources. The agreement was signed by National Finance Chief Executive Officer Tariq Sulaiman al Farsi and Dar Al Atta'a Chairperson Hon Maryam Issa al Zadjali.

Falling under Dar Al Atta'a 'Tamkeen' initiative, the women will acquire

knowledge and practice beekeeping in order to generate sustainable income through this training and development programme. The women's beekeeping project will target women in different governorates. Dar Al Atta'a, the programme's implementer, will manage the project, follow up with the participants and promote the venture. The beneficiaries will benefit from the trainers' knowledge and be provided with the necessary tools to initiate their own projects. Moreover, they will also enlist products under the brand name of Dar Al Atta 'Min Beiti'.

"We are grateful to National Finance for supporting this initiative and helping low-income women find an additional source of income. With the help of this, these women will be able to support their families' needs and en-

hance their lives. In turn, we will ensure the participants receive training in the essential skills to manage the project and supervise its implementation phases. Once they are able to develop their business, these women will receive further training over time to strengthen and expand their knowledge in this field," said Dar Al Atta'a Chairperson Hon Maryam al Zadjali.

The project seeks to boost honey production and commercialise bee products. It will inform the participating women about the proper techniques such as inspecting and feeding bee colonies, multiplying them, harvesting and preserving honey and controlling an infestation. These efforts will provide powerful tools for optimising sustainable honey production, said a press release.

Oman Sail partners with Barceló Mussanah Resort

Oman Sail has partnered with Barceló Mussanah Resort as the official hotel supporter of the Oman Sail Olympic Programme, sailing through until December 31. Mussanah's flagship beach resort will host the Oman Olympic squad as they train for the Sailing World Championships in 2023 and 2024, Asian Games 2023, and for the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, a release said.

Oman currently has ten Olympic athletes competing in ILCA, 49er, Windsurfing and Kite classes. Scheduled with an action-packed training period until the end of the year, the Oman Olympic squad will be able to train in the Sultanate's pristine blue waters. Barceló Mussanah Resort welcomes the national sailing team to the stunning property with complete access to the state-of-the-art facilities as the Olympic squad mentally and physically prepare themselves for the exciting championships ahead.

Those taking part in the Oman Sail

Olympic Programme are Waleed al Kindi, Musab al Hadi, Ahmed al Hasani and Abdulrahman al Mashari in 49er; Al Mutasim al Farsi - ILCA 6; Abdulmalik al Hinai - ILCA 7; Abdulmajeed al Hadhrami and Ammar al Qartobi in Windsurfing.

Dermot Birchall, General Manager of the Barceló Mussanah Resort, said, "We are humbled to be a part of the Oman Olympic Programme journey and support the Sultanate's endeavours to promote Oman as the destination of choice for global events. It is an honour to host Oman's national sailing team at our property and wish the sailors the very best of luck as they showcase the sultanate's pride at the upcoming Sailing World Championships, Asian Games and the Olympic Games."

"We are delighted to partner with Barceló Mussanah Resort. It is a very impressive resort and one we know very well," added Hashim al Rashdi, Head of Performance at Oman Sail.



Lahunna Oman partners with Visa, Bank Muscat

With an increasing number of women in the workforce and in running their own small businesses, Lahunna Oman has joined hands with global digital partnerships leader, Visa, and Bank Muscat to launch 'Rialy'.

A series of knowledge-sharing sessions, coaching and online programmes will be delivered to 900 Omani girls and young women to build their confidence in making responsible financial decisions. The initiative, starting this month, will shed light on the behaviour needed to lead financially sound lives - from planning, budgeting and saving, to spending and borrowing.

"Information is power and studies have consistently shown that financial education should be a continuous process from a young age, to unlock the full potential of the youth, so they can contribute to our community's development and our country's economic growth," said Lahunna Oman founder Shatha al Maskiry. "Rialy is one of many initiatives that serves our vision to cultivate the right mindset for our

dynamic and promising youth and instil financial confidence so they can have a positive impact on our society as a whole. We are confident that our partnership with Visa and Bank Muscat will support us in nurturing confident, driven, and successful women with stronger decision-making capabilities." Supported by Visa, Lahunna Oman and Protiviti Oman along with Bank Muscat will conduct in person and virtual workshops on financial literacy that will guide young women to plan their financial future effectively. As the programme's financial literacy partner, Visa and knowledge sharing partner, Bank Muscat, will provide participants with mentors, insights, and access to online material on how best to manage personal finances as well as offer guidance to entrepreneurs and start-ups.

"Visa is committed to ensuring that financial education and digital upskilling are available to individuals and small businesses," said Carl Manlan, Visa's Vice President, Social Impact for Central and Eastern Europe, ME and Africa.

'We Fan Together' campaign comes to life

Vodafone is kicking-off the adrenaline-pumped season with a purpose-built Entertainment Village in the heart of Al Mouj Muscat. Designed to bring the company's 'We Fan Together' campaign to life, the village is harnessing the nation's passion and excitement for football and bringing fun-filled activations for all ages. For 28 days, families big and small, will enjoy music shows, talent acts and freestyle performances, as well as competitions with exciting prizes, and giveaways.

The Entertainment Village will also feature a variety of other engaging mini football challenges such as penalties and fastest kicks to test the mettle of participants, a PlayStation corner with weekly tournaments, a play area for children ages 3 to 10, and F&B stations serving up mouth-watering local and international dishes for all palates. Vodafone customers with RED Elite plan or above will enjoy free access to the Entertainment Village.

"Vodafone is delighted to be working with Al Mouj Muscat to connect fans in Oman and share the excitement



of the football season together through our family-friendly Entertainment Village," said Sultan al Qamshouai, Vodafone's Senior Marketing Specialist. "There will be something for everyone, from music performances to football challenges, paying tribute to our football-loving nation and creating a highly memorable experience for all."

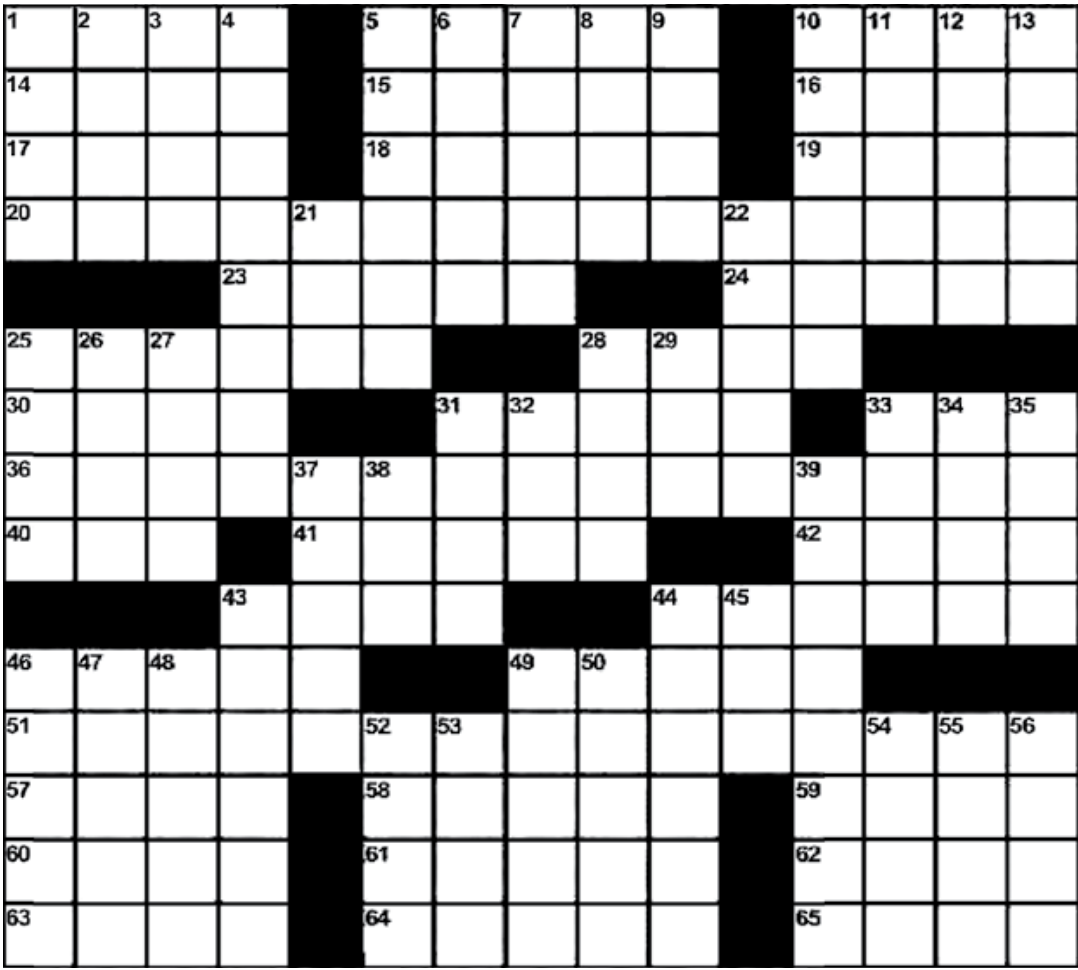
The 'We Fan Together' campaign was launched earlier this month, with a dedicated microsite <https://togetherwecan.digital/wefantogogether> created to provide access to a wide range of specially curated content for the public to enjoy and download for free.

From the campaign's song, also titled 'We Fan Together', to fun football sound-bites, picture-editing features, GIFs and stickers, fans can showcase their love for the game in their own way. Vodafone's 'Victor Predictor' game has also gone live on the App, where registered customers can answer daily questions on the games for a chance to win great-value prizes throughout the football season.

Vodafone customers journeying from Oman can take their home tariff with them, enjoying the benefits in Qatar. Special Visitors Plans are available for those coming to Oman, along with two new International Calling Add-ons, with international minutes that can be used in 32 countries.

Vodafone is available across Oman through the My Vodafone App on Apple App Store, Google Play Store, Huawei AppGallery and in more than 3,500 partner outlets across Oman.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Inferior horses
- 5) Tarots, e.g.
- 10) Audio effect
- 14) Bite in black and white
- 15) "Hello" or "goodbye"
- 16) Revealing photo?
- 17) Casting need
- 18) Bicuspid neighbor
- 19) Pedestrian staff
- 20) Head directly toward
- 23) Salad green
- 24) Elusive Himalayans
- 25) More gossamer, in a way
- 28) Pinochle play
- 30) Cross to bear
- 31) "Aida" premiere city
- 33)_ de deux (two-person dance)
- 36) What the U.S. decided to do in 1789
- 40) It is dynamite
- 41) Beguiling woman
- 42) "Do_ others as ... "
- 43) Adolescent embarrassment
- 44) Angora attractor
- 46) Music sign
- 49) Dome openings, in

architecture

- 51) Be more than opportunistic
- 57) Ancient
- 58) Deserve a punishment
- 59) Bouquet
- 60) Gift on "The Bachelor"
- 61) Octagon or square, e.g.
- 62) It's in the arm
- 63) Part of 60-Across
- 64) Classified, as blood
- 65) Appear

DOWN

- 1) Benchmark
- 2) Field of study
- 3) Nerd
- 4) Grammatical error
- 5) Cause to arch slightly
- 6) Fugard's "A Lesson From_"
- 7) Billing matters
- 8) Indian lentil dish (Var.)
- 9) Dress for an eater of 8-Down
- 10) Go above and beyond
- 11) Woodcarving, e.g.
- 12) Asian capital

- 13) Some court hearings
- 21) "_ you serious?"
- 22) Hose material
- 25) Industrial-style apartment
- 26) Any day now, poetically
- 27) Abrupt
- 28) Appearance
- 29) "To _ is human ... "
- 31) Apple leftover
- 32) Fifth, e.g. (Abbr.)
- 33) New York train station, briefly
- 34) Not behind
- 35) "Cut it out!"

- 53) Hurting and sore
- 54) Like some rumors

- 55) _ the wiser
- 56) Metric unit

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Some days are perfect for bringing big ideas and plans to life. Other days are better suited to taking care of the smaller details. This is one of those other days. Take advantage of the time to get your bills paid and your desk organized. Go through your emails and either archive or delete anything that doesn't have immediate relevance. Then when the day for big things comes along, you won't be bogged down by the boring details.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

It looks like introverted tendencies can even happen to you. Rare as these occurrences may be, you need to deal with them from time to time just like everyone else. Rather than trying to force yourself into social situations, take some time to step back and just be yourself by yourself. Focus on more solitary tasks like figuring out what you want to do with your future. That's a big one and could easily take long enough that by the time you're done you're back to your social self.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

That boss of yours can sure drive you crazy sometimes, right? Don't let it get to you. Everyone has to deal with difficult authority figures from time to time. Instead, try to immerse yourself in the details of your work. Make sure every t is crossed and every i is dotted. You might not get the recognition you deserve for all your hard work now, but have no fear. Your time is coming. And it might arrive sooner than you think.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. In a casino, what is the name of the box that holds multiple decks of playing cards?

- A. Slope
- B. Cast
- C. Shoe
- D. Glove

02. What embroidery technique is to gather fabric so that it can stretch, and was commonly used in cuffs, bodices, and necklines in garments where buttons were undesirable before elastic?

- A. Couching
- B. Smocking
- C. Sashiko quilting
- D. Broderie Anglaise

03. Although much reduced and fragmented, the Atlantic Forest stretches where?

- A. The coasts of southern Greenland
- B. Along the coasts of the Gulf of Guinea
- C. The coasts of Nova Scotia
- D. Along the Brazilian Atlantic coastline, and inland

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. D



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Don't hold back. If there's something beautiful out there that you want (and there are plenty), go for it. The more beauty you surround yourself with, the happier you are. And the happier you are, the more beautiful you are. And the more beautiful you are, the more people will be attracted to you. Hmmm, are you starting to sense a pattern? Get out and do what you enjoy and people won't be able to stay away from you.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Is there anything that you can't accomplish? Take a look at your to-do list and prepare yourself to get everything crossed off quickly. And then you can start helping your friends get all of their dirty work done. Why would you want to do that? So that when you all go out, none of you will have anything in the back of your mind preventing you from having complete and total fun. Enjoy!



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

You're grounded, you're focused, and you can accomplish anything you set your mind to. How about setting your mind to something a little more unusual for a change of pace? When was the last time you talked to your college roommate or your date to the senior prom? Maybe it's time to reconnect. If you don't have their contact info, do a bit of research and see what you can find. An email from a long lost friend could make anyone's day.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Sure, dealing with the family can be something of a challenge from time to time, but things seem a little out of control right now. Tempting as it is to get right in the center of things and let everyone know exactly where you stand, you'd be better off holding back. Focus on something else instead. Get your bills paid, reorganize your bedroom, become a workaholic for a day. You'll have a sense of accomplishment, and you'll be able to smooth things over with the family later.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Bills are piling up, your email is way too backed up, your closet's so disorganized you can't find matching shoes. There's so much going on that it's completely overwhelming. Well, maybe you should just let it go and forget about it for a day or so. The stars are giving you permission to procrastinate (unless you have something that's actually due today or tomorrow, of course). Go ahead and let things slide one more day. You'll be back on track soon enough.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You already know this, but it must be said anyway: things aren't always what they seem. And that's especially true in your business affairs. So make sure you're paying close attention to every detail, reading all the fine print, and then reading in between the lines as well. You've got to keep yourself grounded right now. Things will fall into place eventually, but it'll happen sooner if you can maintain your focus and not let anything slide.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've got so many thoughts flying around in that head of yours. Grab a friend and just start talking it all through. You have quite the analytical mind right now, and you'll be shocked by just how many solutions you can come up with to any number of problems or issues. Even better, the gabfest is a great way to reconnect to someone close to you, and with any luck, you might even be able to help them solve a few of their dilemmas.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

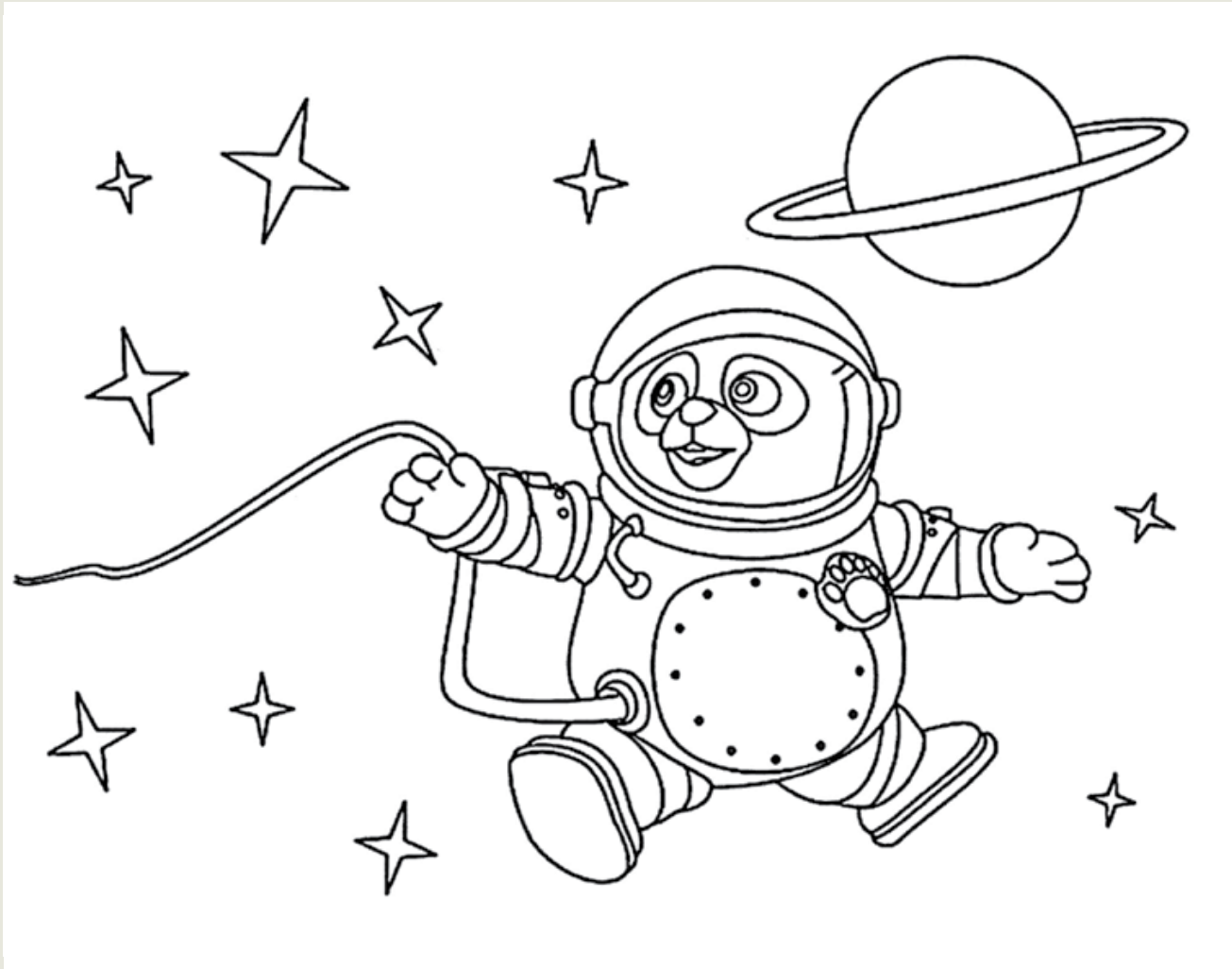
You've got things pretty well under control right now. So instead of focusing on yourself, maybe you should take a look at what your friends are up to. It's very possible that one of them is in need of a favor but unwilling to speak up about it. Or perhaps someone has a secret that they're dying to share but hasn't found the right person to tell. Well, you're good at helping people and you're great at listening, so you might just be what your friends have been looking for.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Don't think about it. That's right. Don't plan, don't vacillate, don't consider what could go wrong, don't do anything that could slow you down. Just close your eyes and jump. You've got the perfect idea and you need to put it into action now! It's kind of amazing how great ideas have a way of falling into place even when they seem to come out of nowhere, and the same thing will happen here. The details will work themselves out if you can just make that first move.

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

M	E	M	Y
W	O	A	R
O	A	P	E
N	A	B	R

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

US, China defence chiefs meet in Cambodia

Both sides described the talks as productive, but held on to their core positions

Siem Reap, Cambodia - US Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin met his Chinese counterpart Wei Fenghe in Cambodia on Tuesday, with both sides describing the talks as productive without backing away from their core positions.

The rival powers have clashed over a host of issues including Taiwan, security and human rights, but there have been attempts to lower the temperature since a rare summit between the leaders of both countries last week.

US President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping tried to cool the rhetoric but the differences were clear - and the exchange between their defence chiefs was similar.

A senior US defence official said the talks between Austin and Wei on the sidelines of a

conference of defence ministers in Siem Reap were 'productive' and 'professional'.

'Both sides agreed that it's important that our countries work together to ensure that competition does not veer into conflict', but 'competition remains the defining feature of the relationship', the official told journalists.

Austin sought the 'reopening of a number of military-to-military dialogues and mechanisms to help manage that competition responsibly', the official added.

That was a reference to procedures and exchanges that were scrapped after US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan in August despite furious warnings and threats from Beijing.

The US official said Austin and Wei had a 'lengthy exchange' on Taiwan during the meeting, which lasted for an hour and a half.

A Chinese defence ministry spokesman described the meeting as 'sincere, in-depth, practical and constructive'.

"Both sides acknowledged that both militaries should earnestly implement the important consensus reached by both heads of state, maintain communication and contact, strengthen crisis management, and work



China's Defence Minister Wei Fenghe arrives for a meeting with his US counterpart Lloyd Austin in Siem Reap on Tuesday (AFP)

hard to uphold regional peace and stability," the spokesman said.

"China attaches importance to developing bilateral military relations, but the US must respect China's core interests."

Red line

China claims Taiwan is a part of its territory to be taken one day, by force if necessary.

Wei said in the meeting that Taiwan is a red line for China, the spokesman said.

"Taiwan is China's Taiwan, it is a matter to be resolved by the Chinese people alone, and no external forces have the right to interfere." Beijing lashes out at any diplomatic action that might lend Taiwan legitimacy and has responded with growing anger to visits by Western officials and politicians.

Both sides acknowledged that both militaries should earnestly implement the consensus reached by both heads of state and maintain communication and contact, strengthen crisis management

CHINESE DEFENCE MINISTRY

It reacted to Pelosi's Taiwan visit with its largest and most aggressive exercises around the island since the 1990s.

Austin told Wei that US policy towards Taiwan has not changed and that Washington still op-

poses unilateral changes to the status quo on the island.

Russia, North Korea

Austin and Wei also discussed other issues including Russia's invasion of Ukraine and North Korea, according to a readout by Pentagon Press Secretary Brigadier General Pat Ryder.

"Secretary Austin discussed Russia's unprovoked war against Ukraine and underscored how both the United States and (China) oppose the use of nuclear weapons or threats to use them," Ryder said.

Austin also expressed concern about 'increasingly dangerous' behaviour by Chinese warplanes in the Asia-Pacific region, the readout added.

Austin called on China - Pyongyang's main diplomatic backer - to 'fully enforce' UN Security Council resolutions against North Korea over its weapons programmes.

The defence chiefs' meeting followed a brief exchange between Xi and US Vice President Kamala Harris at an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok. That was followed by a meeting between Xi and US Vice President Kamala Harris at an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok on Saturday.

AFP

Car bomb explodes in Thailand, one dead

Bangkok, Thailand - One person died and more than two dozen were injured in Thailand after a car bomb exploded outside police accommodation on Tuesday, a provincial governor said.

The attack took place around noon in Narathiwat, one of the country's southernmost provinces.

A low-level conflict has simmered in Thailand's south since 2004, killing more than 7,000 people, as rebels in the Muslim-majority region battle for greater autonomy from the state.

Narathiwat governor Sanan Pongaksorn told AFP a suspect had driven a car into police accommodation before abandoning the vehicle.

A bomb exploded shortly after the car was parked, the governor said, adding that police were checking security camera footage to identify the suspect and investigating possible motives.

He said one person was killed and 28 others were injured, including two in critical condition.

AFP

US VP Harris visits Philippine island near waters claimed by China

Puerto Princesa, Philippines - US Vice President Kamala Harris on Tuesday visited a Philippine island near waters claimed by China to show support for the longtime US ally and counter Beijing's growing influence in the region.

Harris is the highest-ranking US official ever to visit the western island of Palawan, the closest Philippine landmass to the Spratly archipelago in the hotly contested South China Sea.

Beijing claims sovereignty over almost the entire sea and has ignored an international court ruling that its claims have no legal basis.

The Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei have overlapping claims to parts of it.

Harris met with fisherfolk in a coastal village and members of the Philippine Coast Guard.

In a speech, Harris said 'international rules and norms' must be upheld and the UN-backed tribunal decision rejecting China's claims over the South China Sea respected. "The United States - and the broader international community - have a profound stake in the future of this region," she said, on board a Philippine Coast Guard vessel.



US Vice President Kamala Harris and her husband Douglas Emhoff wave as they depart Puerto Princesa on Tuesday (AFP)

"As an ally, the United States stands with the Philippines in the face of intimidation and coercion in the South China Sea."

Harris's trip to Palawan comes a day after she held talks with Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos in Manila.

She reaffirmed the United States' 'unwavering' commitment to defending the Philippines if its vessels or aircraft were attacked in the South China Sea. Washington has a decades-old security alliance with the Philippines that includes a mutual defence treaty and a 2014 pact, known by the acronym EDCA, which allows for the US military to store defence equip-

ment and supplies on five Philippine bases. It also allows US troops to rotate through those military bases.

EDCA stalled under former president Rodrigo Duterte, but the United States and the Philippines have expressed support for accelerating its implementation as China becomes increasingly assertive.

Rebuilding relations

As regional tensions rise, fuelled by China's recent wargames around Taiwan, Washington is seeking to repair ties with Manila, whose cooperation would be critical in the event of a conflict. Relations between the

two countries fractured under the mercurial Duterte, who favoured China over his country's former colonial master.

Marcos has sought to strike more of a balance between his superpower neighbours, insisting he will not let China trample on Manila's maritime rights.

Harris's visit conveyed a 'stronger sense of commitment' to the Philippines' position on maritime claims, but also underscored the need for EDCA's continued implementation, said Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines's Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea. "The US cannot adequately carry out its obligations if it is forced to stay several thousand kilometres away in Japan or Guam," he said.

Of all the claimants to the South China Sea, Beijing has in recent years pressed its stance most aggressively.

Hundreds of Chinese coast guard and maritime militia vessels prowl the waters, swarming reefs, harassing and attacking fishing and other boats, and interfering in oil and gas exploration as well as scientific research.

AFP

Cuban singer Pablo Milanes dies

Havana, Cuba - Acclaimed Cuban singer, songwriter and guitarist Pablo Milanes died early on Tuesday in Spain, where he had been hospitalised in recent days, his agent said. He was 79.

"It is with great pain and sadness that we inform you that the maestro Pablo Milanes died this morning, November 22, in Madrid," his agency said on the singer's official Facebook page.

"May he rest in the love and peace he always transcended. He will remain forever in our memory." Cuba's Prime Minister Manuel Marrero Cruz said on Twitter that 'culture in Cuba is mourning the passing' of Milanes. The writer of songs such as *Yolanda* and *Breve Espacio* had been hospitalised in Madrid, where he had lived since 2017 so that he could receive medical treatment.

On November 11, his office said he was 'stable' and being treated for a series of recurrent infections that in recent months had been affecting his health.

The artist rose to prominence following the Cuban revolution of 1959, and gained renown both on and off the island as he became a leader of the Nueva Trova movement alongside fellow Cuban musi-



This file photo shows Pablo Milanes singing during the inauguration of the XXXVI Latin-American Cinema Festival on December 4, 2014 (AFP)

cians Silvio Rodriguez and Noel Nicola. He inspired and was influenced by artists from a variety of musical genres in Latin America as well as Spain, Portugal and Puerto Rico.

Nueva Trova, born in the years following the revolution, was smiled upon by Fidel Castro's government for lyrics that gave voice to its stated political and social imperatives, including the battles against sexism, colonialism and racism.

Milanes had to cancel his final concerts planned for later this month in Spain and the Dominican Republic.

He at first embraced the Cuban revolution but later distanced himself, though he never broke the bond that united him

with Cubans through his music.

In June he made one last visit to Havana, after a three-year absence, where the performer known in Cuba as 'Pablito' gave an emotional concert before about 10,000 fans.

After nearly three years without performing in his homeland, white with gray hair and with mobility issues, Milanes had not lost the light in his myopic eyes, his affable smile and the strength of his voice.

He was born on February 24, 1943 in Bayamo in Cuba's east to soldier Angel Milanes and dressmaker Conchita Arias.

Conchita moved the family to Havana so her son could attend a prestigious music school.

AFP

Malaysia's Anwar says 'no decision yet' on PM impasse

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Malaysian politician Anwar Ibrahim said on Tuesday there was 'no decision yet' on the country's next prime minister despite him and a rival being summoned to the king's palace to break a post-election impasse.

No clear winner emerged from Saturday's election, leaving the nation of 33mn people in extended political limbo.

Malaysia's king, Sultan Abdullah Ahmad Shah, had summoned Anwar and his rival Muhyiddin Yassin in a bid to break the deadlock, but the two left without any answers. "There is no decision yet," Anwar told reporters after meeting the king, adding that 'no timeline' was set.

Muhyiddin, who is backed by an Islamist party, later told reporters that since no bloc had enough numbers, the king asked

him and Anwar to form a 'unity government'. He said he told the king his bloc could not work with Anwar's group. His Pakatan Harapan coalition won the most seats

No clear winner emerged from Saturday's election, leaving the nation of 33mn people in political limbo

at 82 in the weekend's vote, on an anti-graft message - but fell short of the required majority.

The reformist leader held talks with his old foes at the graft-tainted outgoing coalition Barisan Nasional (BN), to get their support.

But BN's vice-president and caretaker prime minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said they had decided not to support any bloc and preferred to become the opposition. A palace statement said the king will meet with BN members on Wednesday to get their views.

"His Majesty called and advised all the people to be patient and calm until the process of forming a new government and the appointment of the 10th prime minister of Malaysia is completed," the palace said.

'Negative signal'

BN, the once-mighty political juggernaut, is dominated by ex-leader Najib Razak's scandal-hit party, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO). Several UMNO leaders are also facing corruption charges.

Najib is serving a 12-year jail

term for money laundering and abuse of power for his role in the massive 1MDB financial scandal.

UMNO suffered its biggest defeat since Malaysian independence in 1957 at the recent polls, but had been doubted by Anwar for its 30 seats.

Malaysia, one of Southeast Asia's biggest economies, has had three changes of government in as many years.

Asrul Hadi Abdullah Sani, deputy managing director at BowerGroupAsia, said the continuing impasse will send a negative signal to foreign investors and local businesses. "The new prime minister will have the difficult task of building a new coalition or a unity government that is able to decide on difficult and necessary economic policies," Asrul told

AFP



Malaysia opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim waves as he leaves after meeting with Malaysia's King at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur on Tuesday (AFP)

Indonesia quake toll jumps to 268, rescuers hunt for survivors

Cianjur, Indonesia - The death toll from an earthquake on Indonesia's main island of Java jumped to 268 on Tuesday, as rescuers searched for survivors in the rubble and relatives started to bury their loved ones.

As body bags emerged from crumpled buildings in Indonesia's most populous province, West Java, rescue efforts turned to any survivors still under debris in areas made hard to reach by the mass of obstacles thrown onto the roads by the quake.

The epicentre of the shallow 5.6-magnitude quake on Monday was near the town of Cianjur where most of the victims were killed, hundreds were injured and dozens feared trapped as buildings collapsed and landslides were triggered.

The death toll jumped dramatically again later on Tuesday from 162 to 268, Suharyanto, the head of Indonesia's national disaster mitigation agency, or BNPB, told a press conference.

At least 151 people remain missing and more than 1,000 have been injured, said the official, who like many Indonesians goes by one name.

"The focus is still on the search and evacuation of victims. That's the priority," he said. "When the emergency response ends, hopefully everyone has been found."

At a burial in a village near Cianjur, relatives of 48-year-old victim Husein, who was killed while building a house when the quake struck, broke into hysterical wails before his body was lowered into the ground.

"I just lost a brother 10 days ago. Now I've lost another brother," said his sister Siti Rohmah as she sobbed uncon-



Rescue workers carry the body of a victim in Cianjur on Tuesday

trollably. "I kept waiting, hoping he would survive and that nothing bad would happen to him."

One of the dozens of rescuers, 34-year-old Dimas Reviansyah, said teams were using chainsaws and excavators to break through piles of felled trees and debris to find survivors.

"I haven't slept at all since yesterday, but I must keep going because there are victims who have not been found," he said.

Drone footage taken by AFP showed the extent of a quake-triggered landslide where a wall of brown earth was only punctuated by workers using heavy machinery to clear a road.

President Joko Widodo visited the area on Tuesday, offering compensation for victims and ordering disaster and rescue agencies to 'mobilise their personnel'.

'State of shock'

Many of those killed were children, according to the head of Indonesia's national rescue agency Basarnas.

"They were at school, at 1pm, they were still studying," Henri Alfandi told a press conference on Tuesday.

Some of those dead were students at an Islamic boarding school, while others were killed in their homes when roofs and walls caved in on them.

The search operation on Tuesday was made more challenging because of severed road links and temporary power outages in parts of the largely rural, mountainous region.

Those who survived camped outside in near-total darkness surrounded by fallen debris, shattered glass and chunks of concrete.

Doctors treated patients outdoors at makeshift wards after the quake, which was felt as far away as the capital Jakarta.

One father carried his dead son wrapped in white cloth through the streets of his village near Cianjur.

Others searched for their missing relatives in the chaos. Rahmi Leonita's father was riding a motorbike to Cianjur when the quake struck.

"His phone is not active. I am in a state of shock now. I am very worried but I am still hopeful," said the 38-year-old, tears falling down her face as she spoke.

'Nothing I could save'

At a shelter in Ciherang village near Cianjur, evacuees sat on tarpaulins stretched over the cold morning ground.

Nunung, a 37-year-old

woman, had pulled herself and her 12-year-old son out of the rubble of their collapsed home.

"I had to free us by digging. Nothing is left, there is nothing I could save," she told AFP from the shelter, her face covered in dried blood.

The devastation caused by the quake was made worse by a wave of 62 smaller aftershocks that relentlessly shook Cianjur, a town of about 175,000 people.

The Geological Agency of the Indonesian Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources said in an analysis posted online on Monday that the soil make-up of the area could have exacerbated the impact of the quake.

It said the area's 'undulating to steep hills' were made up of 'weathered' and 'young' volcanic debris.

AFP



Damaged cars are seen outside a building in Honiara on Tuesday after a strong earthquake (AFP)

Strong quake rattles Solomons, none injured

Honiara, Solomon Islands - A 7.0-magnitude earthquake struck the Solomon Islands on Tuesday, swaying buildings, hurling items off shelves and briefly knocking out power in parts of the capital Honiara.

There were no reports of serious injuries or major structural damage.

"This was a big one," Joy Nisha, a receptionist with the Heritage Park Hotel in the capital, told AFP.

"Some of the things in the hotel fell. Everyone seems OK, but panicky."

At one recently built mall, chunks of cladding were shaken loose, crushing the bonnet of a car and breaking the windshield.

The roof of an annexe at the Australian High Commission also collapsed, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told parliament in Canberra, stating 'there are no known injuries'.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said damage as-

sessments were ongoing and it was too early to know what military assistance might be sent to help. "We always stand ready to support our Pacific neighbours," he told AFP by phone from Siem Reap, Cambodia.

"We will no doubt look at what the needs are... and go from there."

An AFP reporter in Honiara said the shaking lasted for around 20 seconds.

Power was immediately knocked out in some areas of the capital and phone lines were also down.

Across the city, people fled their homes and workplaces for higher ground, fearing a tsunami.

"I was really scared because this is the first time I felt this kind of earthquake," said a manager at the Pacific Casino Hotel, who asked not to be named. "The building was really violently shaking... It was really strong, it made you move side to side."

AFP

38 killed in a fire in China

Beijing, China - Thirty-eight people were killed and two were injured in a fire at a factory in central China, state media said on Tuesday, with authorities blaming workers for illegal welding.

The fire broke out at a plant in Anyang city in Henan province on Monday afternoon, news agency Xinhua reported. Rescue services first received reports of a fire at 4:22pm (0822 GMT) at Anyang Kaixinda Trading Co., Ltd, according to state media. "After receiving the alarm, the municipal fire rescue detachment immediately dispatched forces to the scene," state broadcaster CCTV said.

It added that the fire was extinguished by around 11pm local time. Footage from the

scene shared by CCTV showed thick plumes of black smoke from the fire, with at least two trucks in position to battle the flames.

In addition to the dead, two were sent to hospital with injuries that were not life-threatening, the state-run *People's Daily* said. Authorities said 'criminal suspects' had been taken into custody in connection with the fire.

CCTV then reported, citing local officials, that a preliminary investigation had found the fire was caused by 'electric welding in which workers violated safety measures'. Chinese President Xi Jinping issued a directive later, ordering officials to 'go all-out in treating the injured'.

AFP

Boat carrying migrants docks after Greek rescue

Athens, Greece - A boat believed to be carrying hundreds of migrants was safely towed to the Greek island of Crete on Tuesday after a dramatic rescue complicated by near gale-force winds, the coastguard said.

The asylum seekers 'were towed to port, they have yet to disembark', a coastguard spokeswoman told AFP.

The fishing boat docked in the small Cretan port of Palaiochora. State TV ERT showed footage of the rusty vessel, crammed with people. No information was immediately available on their nationalities.

The coastguard had earlier said up to 500 people were believed to be on board, based on the distress call they sent after midnight on Monday whilst sailing south of Crete.

ERT put the number on board



A boat carrying about 400 migrants is seen upon its arrival at Palaiochora harbour following a rescue operation by Greece's coastguards, at the island of Crete, on Tuesday (AFP)

at 430. A Greek navy frigate, two cargo ships, a tanker and two Italian fishing boats were dispatched to lend assistance to the vessel that was adrift in winds of over 30km (19 miles) an hour, the coastguard said.

Because of bolstered patrols by the Greek coastguard and EU border agency Frontex in the Aegean Sea, migrant smugglers are increasingly employing the longer and more perilous route south of Crete, Greek officials

say.

"Eighty per cent of flows from Turkey go straight to Italy," Migration Minister Notis Mitarachi told Skai TV last week.

Last month, one of the sailboats believed to have 95 people

on board sank at the island of Kythira, south of the Peloponnese peninsula.

The boat went down beneath a huge vertical cliff. At least eight people died and survivors - mainly from Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan - were hauled to safety with ropes and a construction crane in a frantic pre-dawn operation.

Greece, Italy and Spain are among the countries used by people fleeing Africa and the Middle East in search of safety and better lives in the European Union.

The Greek coastguard has said it has rescued about 1,500 people in the first eight months of the year, compared with less than 600 last year.

Dozens more have perished in sinkings over the last month.

AFP

Released Australian tells of Myanmar jail squalor, torture

Sydney, Australia - An Australian economist released after nearly two years in a Myanmar jail has told of interrogations in leg irons, squalor and the sounds of screams from tortured cellmates during his time behind bars.

Sean Turnell, who returned home to Sydney on Friday after being released as part of an amnesty of almost 6,000 prisoners, gave the first public details of his incarceration in an interview with *The Australian* newspaper.

The former adviser to deposed Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi was detained by the military in February 2021 shortly

after its forces seized control of the country.

Turnell told the paper in an interview published on Tuesday that he was initially kept at Yangon's Insein prison in a six metre by 2.5 metre concrete cell in which an iron chair with leg irons had been bolted to the floor.

He then endured two months of interrogations, the paper said, sometimes being taken from his bed to be locked in the irons.

Officials accused him of working for British intelligence and gun-running, and quizzed him about his work for Suu Kyi, the economist was quoted as saying.

He told the paper on Monday



Australian economic adviser Sean Turnell (left) and Australian Charge d'Affaires to Myanmar Angela Corcoran, after Turnell's release (AFP)

that he had been infected with COVID-19 five times and kept in solitary confinement for months.

In the early days of his confinement, Turnell said he could hear the sounds of people outside banging pots and pans at night in protest against the military coup.

"Then came the explosions and gunfire and people being tortured in rooms nearby. I thought, they're not going to do that to me surely? Then after a while, I started thinking, maybe they will. I think they wanted me to hear it."

'Ate out of a bucket'

Turnell said he had expected to

be treated 'with kid gloves'.

"They didn't stick electrodes to me, but I was thrown into filthy cells. The food they used to deliver to me (came) in a bucket. For 650 days, I ate out of a bucket." In the Naypyidaw detention centre, to which he was later transferred, 'it wasn't even a new bucket, they were paint buckets', he said.

"They didn't beat me, but they did push and shove me."

In Naypyidaw, prisoners were locked away for 20 hours a day, Turnell said. "In the monsoon, the roof would leak and we would sit there all night sometimes with water just pouring down through the roof, clutching

your clothes and blanket to try to keep them dry," he said.

Turnell said his wife, Ha Vu, an economist at Australia's Macquarie University, helped him survive with phone chats and by regularly sending books, cookies and cake through the Australian embassy.

The economist was sentenced in September to three years' imprisonment for breaching Myanmar's Official Secrets Act - charges he denied - before being released in last week's amnesty along with former British ambassador Vicky Bowman and Japanese journalist Toru Kubota.

AFP

Erdogan signals ground operation into Syria

Istanbul, Turkey - President Recep Tayyip Erdogan vowed on Tuesday that Turkey would 'soon' launch a ground operation into Syria against Kurdish targets defying mounting international pressure.

Ankara launched a series of air strikes in Operation Claw-Sword on Sunday - hitting dozens of Kurdish targets across Iraq and Syria - and announcing that its military was once again 'on the top of the terrorists'.

The air raids followed a bombing in Istanbul that killed six people and wounded 81. Ankara blamed the attack on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which is blacklisted as a terror group by the European Union and the United States.

The Turkish leader has threatened a new military operation into northern Syria since May and upped those threats in the wake of this month's attack.

"We have been on top of terrorists for a few days with our planes, cannons and drones," Er-

dogan told a ceremony in the Black Sea province of Artvin.

"God willing, we will root out all of them soon with our tanks, artillery and soldiers."

The PKK, which has waged an insurgency against the Turkish state since 1984, denied any role in the November 13 bombing, which was the deadliest in five years after a spate of attacks in Turkey between 2015 and 2017.

'De-escalation'

The United States late on Monday urged de-escalation and Russia said on Tuesday it hoped Turkey would exercise 'restraint' and refrain from 'excessive use of force' in Syria.

"We understand and respect Turkey's concerns regarding its own security... We still call on all parties to refrain from steps that could lead to seriously destabilising the situation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Erdogan said on Tuesday his government knew 'who protects,



Syrian fighters ride in a convoy during a military drill by the Turkish-backed 'Suleiman Shah Division' in the opposition-held Afrin region of northern Syria on Tuesday (AFP)

arms and encourages those terrorists', in a veiled reference to Washington, which relied heavily on Syrian Kurdish forces in the fight against the Islamic State

group.

He said Turkey was patient enough, 'not because it was desperate', but because it was loyal to diplomacy.

"The road has come to an end for those who think they can keep Turkey waiting by playing with letters and changing the name of the terrorist organisation," said

Erdogan.

Turkey has launched three offensives into Syria since 2016 aimed at crushing Syrian Kurdish fighters, whom it charges are allied to the PKK. A base in north-eastern Syria used jointly by Kurdish forces and the US-led coalition was hit in a Turkish drone strike on Tuesday, the Kurds and a war monitor said.

"A joint base north of Hasakeh used for planning and executing joint operations against the Islamic State group has been hit by a Turkish drone," a spokesman for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces, Farhad Shami, told AFP, adding that two SDF fighters had been killed.

A Britain-based monitoring group, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, confirmed the joint base had come under attack but was not immediately in a position to say whether coalition forces had been present at the time. There was no immediate comment from the US-led coalition.

'Robust campaign'

Erdogan has repeatedly called for a 30km (19-mile) 'safe zone' to protect Turkey against cross-border attacks from Syrian territory.

At least three people, including a child, were killed in a Turkish border town on Monday by a rocket strike fired from Syria.

Anthony Skinner, a Turkey expert and a political risk consultant, told AFP that conditions 'are in place for a particularly robust campaign' against Kurdish fighters ahead of Turkish presidential and parliamentary elections in June. "Erdogan wants to bolster support for his AKP and its (nationalist) MHP allies, so he is playing the nationalist and security card. Hence the noise," he said.

"Erdogan effectively used the security and stability cards in the run up to the rerun of the general election in 2015. But his work is cut out now because of economic and socioeconomic pressures."

AFP

Five dead, 40 injured in Iraq rooftop gas tank explosion

Dohuk, Iraq - Five people died and 40 were injured when a gas tank exploded and sparked a fire in a student dormitory in northern Iraq, authorities said on Tuesday.

The blast hit on Monday night when a rooftop gas tank leaked at a building housing the student accommodation and a bakery in the Kurdish city of Dohuk.

"The gas leaked, reaching the students' rooms, and police arrived to evacuate them," Dohuk's governor, Ali Tatar, told AFP. "Unfortunately at that moment, the explosion occurred."

A student, a bakery worker and three policemen who arrived as part of the emergency response were killed, including the unit's deputy director, Tatar said.

It was the second explosion of a liquefied petroleum gas tank in Iraqi Kurdistan in less than a week. Last Thursday, 15 people died in Sulaimaniyah when an LPG tank exploded and caused the collapse of a building.



A view of the wreckage left by a gas leak explosion at a student dormitory building in Dohuk on Tuesday (AFP)

Following Monday's deaths, authorities in the semi-autonomous Kurdish region announced a ban on LPG tanks for domestic use.

The Dohuk blast was the latest tragedy to highlight Iraq's dilapidated infrastructure and lax

safety standards.

On November 15 and 17, two fires broke out at Baghdad International Airport. And in late October at least nine people were killed when a gas tanker exploded in Baghdad.

AFP

UN rights council eyes probe of Iran crackdown

Geneva, Switzerland - The United Nations' top rights body will hold an urgent meeting this week to consider launching an international investigation into the deadly crackdown on mass protests rocking Iran.

The UN Human Rights Council is due to host a special session on Thursday on 'the deteriorating human rights situation', following a request by Germany and Iceland. The meeting follows two months of protests in Iran sparked by the death of 22-year-old Mahsa Amini, after she was arrested for an alleged breach of the country's strict dress rules for women based on Islamic sharia law.

At least 378 people, including 47 children, have been killed in the crackdown since Amini's death, according to the Norway-based group Iran Human Rights (IHR). The demonstrations have spread across the country and grown into a broad movement against the theocracy that has ruled Iran since the fall of the shah in 1979.

Thousands of peaceful pro-



Iranian protesters marching and chanting slogans in Piranshahr, in western Iran, on Monday (AFP)

testers have also been arrested, according to UN rights experts, including many women, children and journalists, and six people have so far been handed death sentences over the demonstrations.

'Gender dimensions'

During Thursday's session, diplomats will consider a draft resolution presented by Germany and Iceland calling on the council to

create a high-level international investigation to probe all alleged violations connected with the ongoing protests in Iran. The so-called independent international fact-finding mission should include 'the gender dimensions of such violations' in its investigations, according to the text.

The draft resolution, which could still change, calls for the investigators to 'collect, consolidate and analyse evidence of

such violations, and to preserve evidence,' with a view to future prosecution.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock, who will be present for the session, stressed recently on Twitter that such an investigation is vital because we 'know how important it is for the victims that those responsible are held accountable.'

The draft text called on Tehran to 'cooperate fully' with the investigators, who it said should present a full report in March 2024. Rights groups hailed the special session.

"We're seeing such serious abuses in response to the protests," Lucy McKernan of Human Rights Watch told AFP.

"It is incumbent on the council to react," she said, voicing hope that countries would back the investigation, 'so that at least in the future there is a chance of accountability'. The support of 16 of the Human Rights Council's 47 members - more than a third - is required to convene a special session.

AFP

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Models pose backstage before displaying creations by designer Mzukisi Mbane, founder of *Imprint* during the African Fashion International (AFI) fashion week in Sandton

AFRICAN FASHION

S Africa’s Precious Moloi-Motsepe, champion of African fashion, says Africans remain under-represented among the major global brands. She hopes to provide African designers the much needed global exposure



'PRECIOUS' TONES

South African Precious Moloi-Motsepe, one of the richest women in Africa, is a staunch promoter of fashion designers from the young, vibrant and culturally diverse continent.

Style has coursed through her veins since she was a young girl growing up in Soweto township, and for her the time is ripe for African designers to shine on the international platform.

A decade and half ago, she founded the Johannesburg and Cape Town fashion weeks that bring together designers from across the continent with the aim of setting them up for the global stage. Her goal is now starting to bear fruit, she said, at a brand new luxury boutique in an affluent district of Johannesburg, South Africa’s economic capital.

“Now more than ever, African designers are getting recognition here at home,” said the 58-year-old, elegantly wearing her make-up and a flowing black trousers with a silk blouse.

“At big events on the continent, musical awards, football events, you will find celebrities wearing local designers,” said the wife of Confederation of African Football president Patrice Motsepe. “They definitely have become household names”.

With her husband, Africa’s the 9th richest man according to Forbes, they are South



A model presents a creation by fashion brand Kreyann' during the African Fashion International fashion week

Africa’s most prominent ‘power couple’.

Elsewhere, “celebrities, Michelle Obama or Beyonce,... now wear African brands,” she said, adding that the Wakanda phenomenon, linked to the Black Panther movie has “spread our culture, our heritage, to the world. That has an impact on driving fashion as well”.

Moloi-Motsepe grew up in Soweto, a poor township that was a hotbed of resistance to apartheid regime. It was there where she acquired a sense of style.

“My grandmother made her

own clothes,... and she wore them so elegantly,” she said. Soweto people loved to dress up, albeit closely shaped by and following American trends and brands.

Later on, she had an opportunity to travel and attended a Paris fashion show by the talented designer John Galliano. It was a shocking eye-opener, realising that ‘designers get their inspiration from history, heritage, culture, which I thought Africa had plenty of’.

Africa seemed to be a source of inspiration for Western designers, “but I didn’t see many African designers on runways,”

she said.

Changed mindset

That was the trigger to create a space to propel the best of African creators to global acclaim, a project that the medical doctor-turned philanthropist and creative art financier, set about with vigour.

“First I had to make sure that they were well-recognised here at home, that we changed mindsets, make people appreciate and value African fashion designers,” not just as tailors but as respected designers. That was an ambitious challenge, not yet realised but well

Africa seemed to be a source of inspiration for Western designers, but I didn’t see many African designers on runways

PRECIOUS MOLOI-MOTSEPE

underway.

“African consumers are now recognising their own designers are as valuable any of the brands they buy globally,” she said.

One of those showcasing at the fashion week in Johannesburg last week was Cameroon-ian fashion designer, Anna Ngann Yonn whose label ‘Kreyann’ is making a name for itself in Afrialsoca and beyond.

The fashion weeks she launched in South Africa, featuring super models such as South Sudanese Alek Wek and prestigious guests from New York, Milan and Paris, have enabled designers to showcase their work, network with other designers, get attention from media.

The next leg of the mission is to take them to international platforms to ensure the presence of Africa in the global fashion dialogue. Africans in the diaspora are serving key role as ambassadors.

The entrepreneur remembers taking some African designers to exhibit in Paris on the sidelines of fashion shows a few years back.

Some the feedback, was “positive, some not so positive,” she said, laughing softly. “But we took that as step in the right



Precious Moloi-Motsepe poses for a portrait at the AFI boutique in Sandton

direction. What was important for the young designers and what we thought were established designers back then, and still now, is the voice,” she added.

Africans remain under-represented among the major global brands. And in many parts of Africa, sporting foreign brands is still a symbol of social success, she agreed.

“We have a lot of work to do,” she said, but the African fashion advocate is not discouraged.

AFP

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FORMAL ATTIRE



HOW TO DRESS FOR OFFICE

Formal attire goes well in an office, depending on your role and position in the company hierarchy. Yet, after the pandemic when 'work from home' ruled, many firms have relaxed dress codes. The key lies in wearing comfortable as well as presentable attire that gets the best out of you



If the thought of retiring your comfortable sweats and choosing a new outfit to leave the house each morning is an intimidating prospect, you may not be alone. Most office-goers think likewise.

After a good year or two of 'work from home', many have readjusted to being back in an office - a prospect that may come with numerous challenges, but perhaps, none greater than one looming concern - what to wear?

This guide with inputs from four fashion insiders (in a recent article published in CNN Style) should help you get back in the right mindset for dressing up (or simply getting dressed) for work.

Shop your wardrobe

When in a sartorial panic, there's a tendency to solve it with a shopping spree. But as we all wise up to the impact of our consumption habits on the planet, consider this sustainable alternative - Get your hand out of your pocket and dig deep inside your wardrobe instead.

"It's a first step," said Los Angeles-based stylist Cassandra Dittmer, who suggests you figure out what you have, what you love, what needs repair and what you might want to pass on. You would eventually uncover some hidden gems.

"At the end of the process, you should feel a deeper connection to your wardrobe, find the gaps that need filling and give yourself a great basis to work from each day when putting your outfits together with ease. Buy clothes that fit you across your widest part and tailor the rest inward," she says.

If you live in a country with hot and cold



seasons, pack your summer clothes away when fall arrives. You'll be surprised by the aura of newness they take on when you retrieve them from storage months later.

Dittmer, who has built her styling business around eco-conscious values, suggests, "Document your looks and take pictures of outfits you love and feel most confident in. A convenient folder on your phone will make a quick and handy reference point when you are scrambling to pack for a work trip or getting ready in the morning."

Polished comfort

There's a way to dress comfortably without looking bedraggled, and with many employers loosening up on the rules, it's a great time to try a polished but casual look.

Joanna Dai, who left her job in finance to start her own eponymous fashion brand, has noticed a trend away from overly formal office fashion conventions like formal suits and restrictive pencil skirts.

"In the new normal, things have gotten more casual in office," said Dai, noting that, as companies recognise the importance of well-being at work, many have adopted more relaxed dress codes that allow for jeans and sneakers or done away with dress codes altogether.

Embracing more casual attire while also looking professional begins with understanding the importance of quality materials, fit and colour.

"Never underestimate the power of a good fit," Dittmer said. "I'm not talking expensive, Savile Row tailoring, but making sure your trousers are cut to the most flattering fit can be a huge improvement and make you feel really well put together. Most dry cleaners offer very accessible tailoring services."

Focus on fabrics and functionality

Model and the founder of size-inclusive fashion brand Henning, Lauren Chan, agreed a good tailor is important, adding, "Here's a secret - clothes aren't actually meant to fit you. They're built to fit an 'av-

erage build' which is - actually - no one. Buy clothes that fit you across your widest part (for me, it's my waist) and tailor the rest inward."

When it comes to materials, most linens, while beautiful, wrinkle easily and are not going to be your friend throughout an eight-hour day at a desk job. On the other hand, polyester is pretty wrinkle-resistant, but it's a synthetic fabric that's terrible for the planet and doesn't breathe - putting you at risk of unsightly sweat patches and a guilty conscience.

Dai also puts a lot of emphasis on what she calls 'high-functioning' environmentally friendly materials, such as micro-modal (made from the cellulose of natural beechwood trees in a closed-loop, carbon neutral process) or recycled polyamide

If you don't feel comfortable in what you wear, it can reflect on how you present yourself and your productivity

OLIE ARNOLD



(made from plastic waste like fishing nets and carpet).

Many of the items in her lines are made from wrinkle-resistant, machine washable, stretch materials that are great for people with busy schedules who don't have time to iron or make regular trips to the dry cleaner.

Olie Arnold, style director at menswear e-commerce site Mr Porter, suggests opting for unlined suits. "Go for suits and jackets which are unlined and deconstructed with a breathable fabric," he said, "as they will give you a smart look with a comfortable fit."

And, he advises, if you want to relax your suit further, don't bother with a formal shirt. "If you can push the envelope a little at your workplace, a merino wool long-sleeve polo is a perfect companion, breaking up your outfit without losing that professional look."

A note for newbies

Whether you landed a new role or your first ever job during the pandemic, you might be looking at walking into your office without any prior reference for what people used to wear before Covid.

First off, just ask - it's totally reasonable to ask your colleagues or manager what the vibe is. And if you're still unsure, remember this sound advice from Arnold - "Be yourself, dress for the occasion and make sure you feel comfortable. If you don't feel comfortable in what you wear, it can reflect on how you present yourself and your productivity."

The golden rule - Create your own uniform and then build on it

Set yourself up by establishing some staple pieces that can form the basis of your work wardrobe. A great pair of black trousers, a blazer and some quality shirts can go a long way.

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FIFA WORLD CUP

Qatar2022



WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2022 MUSCAT DAILY 13

POINT PROVEN

Feisty Tunisia hold Eriksen's Denmark to goalless draw



Denmark's Christian Eriksen (L) and Tunisia's Issam Jebali fight for the ball during their Group D match at the Education City Stadium in Al Rayyan on Tuesday (AFP)

Doha, Qatar - Tunisia held Denmark to a goalless draw in their World Cup opener on Tuesday, kicking off their Group D campaign with a strong performance against one of the pre-tournament dark horses.

Tunisia have never reached the World Cup knockouts in five previous attempts but Jalel Kadri's side will be encouraged both with a point at Education City Stadium and with how they performed against the fancied Danes.

Since Kadri took charge of the team in January Tunisia have only lost to Brazil and they frustrated Denmark in front of thousands of noisy North Africans.

Christian Eriksen was largely anonymous on his return to major

tournament football after nearly dying on the pitch at the European Championship last year, wilting in the face of ferocious defending.

Denmark had come into the match as favourites but Tunisia tore into their more illustrious opponents from kick-off, flying into tackles. The massed ranks of Tunisians in the stands created a crackling atmosphere and they cheered every tackle and clearance.

The African side nearly took the lead in the 11th minute, with Mohamed Drager's long-range effort clipping off Andreas Christensen and drifting just wide.

The Danes began to get a foothold in the game but talisman Eriksen struggled to shake off the attentions of Tunisia's well-organ-

ised backline, and although they got into dangerous positions any attacks were comfortably snuffed out.

The Tunisians came closest to taking the lead in the opening period, Copenhagen-born Anis Ben Slimane straying offside before slotting past Kasper Schmeichel, who then made sure the scores were level at the break with a wonderful stop.

Issam Jebali managed to break through onto Youssef Msakni's smart pass but his dinked finish was brilliantly tipped away by the on-rushing Schmeichel.

Tunisia kept up the intensity but it was Denmark who had the two best chances of a tight second half.

Eriksen was denied what would have been a fine goal by Aymen

GROUP D		
	DENMARK	0
	TUNISIA	0

Dahmen's fingertip save in the 69th minute and from the subsequent corner substitute Andreas Cornelius somehow headed onto the post from close range.

That would have probably won the match for Denmark as Tunisia failed to match their physical efforts with much real creativity.

After surviving a late penalty scare they celebrated a precious and unexpected point with their passion-ate supporters.

AFP

Penalty misery for Lewandowski

Doha, Qatar - Robert Lewandowski suffered fresh World Cup misery as the Poland striker's penalty was saved by Guillermo Ochoa in a 0-0 draw against Mexico on Tuesday.

Lewandowski has never scored at a World Cup and the Barcelona striker had admitted it would be a "huge dream" to finally get off the mark on the global stage.

Instead, the 34-year-old's dream turned into a nightmare when he won a second-half penalty, only to see Ochoa deny him from the spot.

Lewandowski, Poland's record scorer with 76 goals, has netted 18 times in 19 appearances for Barcelona, the club he joined in the close-season after bagging 344 goals in eight trophy-filled years at Bayern Munich.

Yet the World Cup has proved hellish for Lewandowski, with this latest goalless outing coming after he failed to score in Poland's three games when they bowed out in the group stage four years ago.

Saudi Arabia's stunning 2-1 win over Argentina earlier on Tuesday had blown open the race to progress to the last 16 from Group C. But this was a frustrating draw for both



Poland's Robert Lewandowski looks despondent after missing a penalty against Mexico in their Group C match at Stadium 974 in Doha on Tuesday (AFP)

teams, with Lewandowski wasting the best chance of a cagey game and Mexico ruing their failure to turn territorial dominance into goals.

Mexico boss Gerardo Martino had endured stinging criticism from fans and media following some poor pre-tournament performances, prompting him to dub himself "public enemy number one".

That didn't stop thousands of Mexico supporters making the long journey to support 'El Tri' in Qatar.

The unique Stadium 974 - whose structure was partially created from a colourful tapestry of shipping containers - overlooks Doha's port and the area was transformed into a colourful fiesta as green-clad, sombrero-wearing Mexicans partied ahead of the evening kick-off.

It was an even more vibrant scene inside the stadium, with the estimated 40,000 capacity almost entirely filled with vociferous, flag-

GROUP C		
	MEXICO	0
	POLAND	0

waving Mexicans.

As the main threat to their team's hopes, Lewandowski was immediately subjected to ear-splitting jeers from the Mexico fans.

Lewandowski tried to silence the din with an early header but his effort deflected harmlessly wide.

With Poland curiously content to sit back for long periods and Mexico's energy levels almost matching their raucous fans, it was Martino's side who carried the greater threat.

Lewandowski couldn't be contained forever and his tenacity earned the 57th-minute penalty when he barged into the Mexico area, forcing a crude challenge from Hector Moreno that was ruled a spot-kick after VAR intervened.

But Lewandowski's World Cup woe wasn't over as Ochoa plunged to his left to make a fine save, leaving the striker holding his head in despair.



Bruno Fernandes trains at Shahaniya Sports Club on Sunday (AFP)

Bruno Fernandes: From tough defender to Portugal's World Cup playmaker

Sao Mamede de Infesta, Portugal - Bruno Fernandes has excelled at Manchester United and is expected to be a similarly creative force for Portugal at the World Cup - a far cry from his days as a bit of a journeyman and even a de-fender in his youth.

That often-haphazard journey began in the suburbs of Porto, where Fernandes played between the rows of low-rise council houses and in the playground of his primary school.

"That toughened him up because he was playing with his big brother or with us, and we were all two years older than him. He had character," recalls Lucio Fernandes, who is no relation.

With the help of Lucio, Fernandes was given a trial by the local team in the town of Sao Mamede de Infesta, whose outdated facilities are wedged between rows of houses and a motorway interchange.

"After training I said to the president, 'This kid has to stay.' You could see he had talent and that we needed to make the most of it," says Sergio Marques, who was Fernandes' first coach.

His parents couldn't drive so FC Infesta had to find a way to get the youngster to training - at age eight, little Bruno was so talented that the coach decided to offer him a one-on-one session each week.

'One step ahead'

At the time the club played on a dirt pitch which has since been re-placed by an immaculate synthetic surface. Back then, Fernandes was a defender.

"I used to play him as a central defender because he was always one step ahead of the attackers, but when the game was easy I let him play in midfield," says Marques, who still calls Fernandes by his other family name, Borges.

After one season at FC Infesta, Fernandes became a target for the two leading clubs in the

region, FC Porto and Boavista.

His family opted for the more modest Boavista, who laid on a mini-bus to take him to training.

But first he was loaned out to another local side, ADR Pasteleira, where coach Antonio Ribeiro arrived when Fernandes was 15.

"When I came to the club Bruno's team wasn't winning any games. He was playing as a central defender and I decided to make him the playmaker. It was from that moment on that we started to win games," says Ribeiro, now 63.

"He was scrawny but wasn't

He was scrawny but wasn't afraid to get stuck in. And off the pitch he was a really humble teenager

ANTONIO RIBEIRO

afraid to get stuck in. And off the pitch he was a really humble teenager. But on the pitch he had a strong personality and so was often squabbling."

Fernandes was 17 when he returned to Boavista and was moved up an age group on the request of then-coach Joaquim 'Martelinho' Silva, a former winger for the club when they won the Portuguese title in 2001.

In the 2011/12 season Fernandes appeared to be on the verge of breaking into the first team, but a corruption affair that shook Portuguese football left Boavista in the third division.

Fernandes moved to Italy, joining Serie B Novara for 40,000 euros. For a spell he was a bit of a journeyman as spells at Udinese and Sampdoria followed, before he re-turned to Portugal and this time became a star at Sporting Lisbon.

AFP

FIFA WORLD CUP

Qatar2022

ARABIAN KNIGHTS

Salem al Dawsari scores the winner as Saudi Arabia stun Lionel Messi’s Argentina

Doha, Qatar - Saudi Arabia stunned Lionel Messi’s Argentina on Tuesday, beating the two-time winners 2-1 in one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history.

Salem al Dawsari hit a stunning winner to sink the red-hot favourites, bringing the South American side’s 36-match unbeaten run to a shuddering halt.

The win was fully deserved after Saudi Arabia came from behind after Saleh al Shehri cancelled out an early Lionel Messi penalty.

Playing a risky high defensive line, the athletic Saudis rode their luck in the first half when three times Argentina had the ball in the net only to be denied by an offside call.

But in a chaotic start to the second half, the Saudis swarmed all over Lionel Scaloni’s team and scored twice as the Arab nation beat the South Americans for the first time in five attempts.

In a first half dominated by Argentina, it seemed only a matter of time before Saudi Arabia’s risky defensive tactics would cost them.

That condensed the game into a sliver of green turf around the halfway line as the Asian side happily allowed Argentina’s back four to pass the ball among themselves.

It seemed Saudi Arabia were facing a long afternoon after VAR intervened to award a penalty when Saud Abdul-



hamid wrestled Leandro Paredes to the ground in the box at a corner.

Messi waited for goalkeeper Mohammed al Owais to dive to his left before coolly rolling the ball into the opposite corner.

But if the Saudis felt aggrieved at the technology, it would later help keep them in the game.

Three times Argentina had the ball in the net only to be denied by razor-tight offside calls, the first given by VAR.

There was no controversy about the equaliser three minutes into the second half, though, as Al Shehri ran onto a touch from Feras al Brikan, beat Cristian Romero on the outside and

slotted the ball back across goal-keeper Emiliano Martinez and into the far corner.

The sizeable Saudi contingent in the Lusail stadium - where the World Cup final will be held - exploded in joy.

Suddenly the Argentines were rattled and five minutes later the turn-around was complete.

Al Dawsari’s clever turn in the box beat two defenders before he shifted the ball past a third and rifled an unstoppable shot into the top far corner.

The crowd was going wild and Hassan al Tambakti punched the air in delight after his desperate sliding tackle denied Messi a clear shot at goal.

MOMENT IN TIME



Saudi Arabia’s Abdulrahman Al-Malki offers his prayers as Argentinian captain Lionel Messi leaves the pitch disappointed after their match.

Bale to the rescue as Wales snatch US draw on return to world stage

Al-Rayyan, Qatar - Gareth Bale scored a late penalty to snatch a 1-1 draw with the United States in Wales’ first World Cup game in 64 years on Monday.

Welsh skipper Bale lashed home an 82nd-minute spot kick to break American hearts moments after earning the penalty when defender Walker Zimmerman crashed into the former Real Madrid star.

The penalty drama cancelled out Tim Weah’s superb first-half goal for the Americans which had threatened to ruin the celebratory mood surrounding Wales’ long-awaited first World Cup appearance since the 1958 finals in Sweden.

Bale’s equaliser triggered roars from a large and raucous contingent of Wales fans in a crowd of 43,418 fans at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium on the outskirts of Doha.

Bale said afterwards a rousing half-time team talk by manager Rob Page had helped inspire Wales after a lacklustre first-half performance.

“Obviously a difficult game. First half was not how we wanted to play,” said Bale.

“The US played well and we played poorly. We played really well in the second half.

“Good point, but we would have loved to have had three.”

Page paid tribute to the 33-year-old Bale’s nous in winning the penalty.

“He’s very good at finding those spaces,” Page said. “He’s intelligent, he’s got a wise head to get in those positions and he used all his wisdom



Gareth Bale of Wales celebrates after scoring against the US in their Group B match at the Ahmad Bin Ali Stadium in Al Rayyan, west of Doha on Monday (AFP)

He (Gareth Bale) is very good at finding those spaces. He’s intelligent, he’s got a wise head to get in those positions and he used all his wisdom there.

ROB PAGE

there.”

Until the late penalty it looked as if Wales were heading for a defeat, struggling to break down a skilful and energetic US squad that is the second youngest at the tournament.

Coach Gregg Berhalter admitted his team had been left dejected by failure to hang on for victory as they now contemplate a daunting Group B game with England on Friday.

“Taking a point in the first game is

not the end of the world,” Berhalter said.

“Walking into the locker room after the game you could see the disappointment in the group. The guys worked hard.

“In the end we fell a little bit short of the victory.”

Wales were outplayed for long periods of the first half, with manager Page’s decision not to start towering centre-forward Kieffer Moore depriving them of a crucial attacking outlet.

AFP

Saudi Arabian star Al Dawsari writes name in lights

Doha, Qatar - Saudi Arabia’s Salem al Dawsari grabbed the world’s attention with his match-winning wonder strike against Argentina on Tues-day but the winger has been a star in his home country for years.

The 31-year-old helped the Saudis to a stunning 2-1 victory over the twice world champions when he took out two defenders with a clever turn before rifling the ball into the net.

It was a typical piece of brilliance from a player who has long been known as one of Asia’s best.

Al-Dawsari has won two Asian Champions League titles with his Saudi club Al Hilal, and scored a crucial goal in the 2019 final to help them beat Japan’s Urawa Reds.

He was also named player of the tournament as Al Hilal lifted the trophy again in 2021.

He has over 70 caps for his country and scored in the 95th minute to give Saudi Arabia a 2-1 win over Egypt in their final group game at the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

Al Dawsari has served Al Hilal

with distinction, but he also got a taste of European club football when he joined Villarreal on loan in 2018 as part of a deal between La Liga and Saudi football chiefs.

His goal against Argentina has now seared his name on the world’s consciousness.

‘Saudis very well prepared physically’

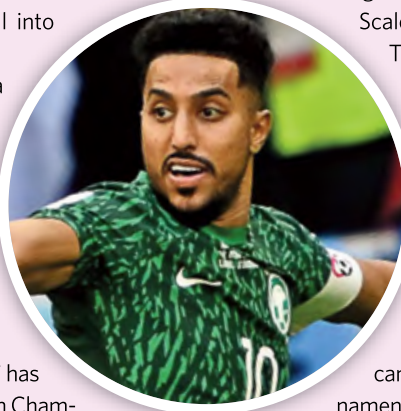
Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni insisted on Tuesday his team had not taken Saudi Arabia lightly ahead of their shocking 2-1 World Cup defeat in Qatar.

Argentina came into the tournament on a 36-match unbeaten run and were one of the favourites to win the entire tournament, let alone Tuesday’s Group C opener against the Asian minnows.

“We fully respect Saudi Arabia as we do with other teams, that’s not the reason for our defeat,” said Scaloni, whose team had not lost since July 2019.

“They are a good team with technical players, they are very well prepared physically.”

AFP



TODAY'S
MATCHES


MOROCCO
VS
CROATIA
2 PM


GERMANY
VS
JAPAN
5 PM


SPAIN
VS
COSTA RICA
8 PM


BELGIUM
VS
CANADA
11 PM



their match at the Lusail Stadium on Tuesday (AFP)

BIGGEST
UPSETS

Saudi Arabia produced one of the greatest World Cup upsets in history on Tuesday, stunning South American giants Argentina in a 2-1 group stage victory in Doha. Here are five other famous upsets in World Cup history.

1950

USA 1 ENGLAND 0
England arrived in Brazil as one of the tournament favourites after electing to play in the World Cup for the first time. But England's status as one of football's superpowers was destroyed by a rag-tag band of players representing the United States, Joe Gaetjens scoring the winning goal that sealed victory in Belo Horizonte.

1966

NORTH KOREA 1 ITALY 0
Pak Dook wrote his name into World Cup folklore with the goal that stunned a powerful Italy team and sent the Azzurri crashing out of the tournament. The Italian squad returned to Rome to be pelted with tomatoes by disgruntled fans. North Korea's run ended in the quarter-finals with a 5-3 defeat to a Eusebio-inspired Portugal.

1982

ALGERIA 2 WEST GERMANY 1
Algeria arrived at the World Cup finals in Spain as rank outsiders, the north African side playing in its first ever World Cup. But goals from Rabah Madjer and Lakhdar Belloumi either side of a Karl-Heinz Rummenigge goal secured a famous victory. Algeria's tournament would end in heartbreak however with the in-famous "Disgrace of Gijon", when West Germany beat Austria 1-0 in a mutually beneficial result that sent both teams through to the second round.

1990

CAMEROON 1 ARGENTINA 0
Argentina began the finals in Italy as defending champions after their Diego Maradona-inspired victory at the 1986 tournament in Mexico. But not even Maradona was able to prevent Cameroon's 'Indomitable Lions' from pulling off a huge upset with Francois Omam-Biyik scoring the winner at the San Siro in Milan. Cameroon, who finished the game with nine men, would go on to reach the quarter-finals.

2002

SENEGAL 1 FRANCE 0
The 1998 World Cup champions and Euro 2000 winners France were expected to once again make a deep run at the World Cup in South Korea and Japan. But Senegal, playing in their first World Cup, derailed French hopes with Papa Bouba Diop scoring the only goal in another tournament-opening upset. France would go on to be eliminated in the first round.



It's a very heavy blow, a defeat that hurts, but we must continue to have confidence in ourselves. This group is not going to give up. We will try to beat Mexico

LIONEL MESSI



The clock shows 10 minutes of additional time in the second half of England-Iran match

The additional
time quandary:
added strain or
added drama?

Doha, Qatar - Do not adjust your television sets: England and Iran really did play nearly half an hour of injury time in their World Cup game.

And that was not the only match in Qatar to drag on well beyond the allotted 90 minutes.

It is early days at this World Cup, but already a very noticeable trend has emerged: games are going on much, much longer than normal.

So what is going on? It is no accident.

Prior to the World Cup kicking off on Sunday, Pierluigi Collina, chairman of FIFA's referees committee, said fourth officials would be keeping a firm eye on time lost during games.

That could be due to injuries, substitutions, red or yellow cards, video assistant referee interventions and also some old-fashioned time-wasting from teams trying to hang on to a lead.

"In Russia (World Cup 2018), we tried to be more accurate in compensating for time lost during games and that's why you saw six, seven or even eight minutes added on," he told reporters at a pre-tournament briefing.

"Think about it: if you have three goals in a half, you'll probably lose four or five minutes in total to celebrations and the restart."

'A long time to focus'

For players and coaches already worried about the sheer amount of football squeezed into an already congested season, this can only be bad news.

England coach Gareth Southgate was delighted with many aspects of his side's 6-2 hammering of Iran on Monday, but noted the amount of stoppage time.

Largely because of a nasty facial injury to Iran goalkeeper Alireza Beiran-

vand, the first half dragged on for nearly an hour instead of 45 minutes.

Similarly, Mehdi Taremi's consolation penalty, nearly the last kick of the game, came in the 13th minute of stoppage time.

"We had, I think, 24 minutes of added time across the game," Southgate told the BBC, suggesting his players were drained and more susceptible to conceding a goal as the game ebbed deep into added time.

"So it's a long time to focus, but we just lost concentration and when we play at a slower tempo, we're nowhere near as effective."

According to statistics experts Opta, those elongated halves in the England-Iran game, plus added time in the second half of the United States versus Wales (10 mins 34 secs) and second half of Senegal against the Netherlands (10:03), were the most stoppage time in the World Cup on record, going back to 1966.

All happened on Monday, the second day of the Qatar tournament, suggesting this is just the start.

Marc Wilmots, the former Belgium coach, said it was harmful to the players.

"What amazes me are the cramps, the injury problems and the players are already exhausted," he told broadcaster RTBF.

The coaches - or least those winning the match in question - also may not like it, but observers sick of players time-wasting are applauding FIFA's hardline stance.

"Enjoying the amount of time that is being added on by the officials at the Qatar World Cup 2022, there is too much time wasting in football!" former England defender Jamie Carragher tweeted.



Saudi Arabia's French coach Herve Renard shouts instructions during their match against Argentina (AFP)

All the stars in the sky were
aligned for us, says Renard

Doha, Qatar - Saudi Arabia's French coach Herve Renard warned his players not to celebrate for too long after their "totally crazy" 2-1 win against Argentina in their World Cup opener on Tuesday.

The Saudis bounced back from conceding an early Lionel Messi penalty to produce one of the great World Cup shocks thanks to a Saleh Al-Shehri equaliser and a sublime Salem Al-Dawsari winner at the Lusail Stadium.

"All the stars in the sky were aligned for us, but don't forget Argentina are still a fantastic team," said Renard.

"This is football, sometimes totally crazy things can happen," added the French coach, who previously led Zambia and the Ivory Coast to Africa Cup of Nations glory.

As for enjoying the moment, Renard was eager to look ahead to the Saudis' next Group C matches against Poland and Mexico.

"(We can) just have a good celebration during 20 minutes and that's all, there are still two more

games.

"When you come to the World Cup, you need to believe in yourself, anything can happen in football."

However, Renard said he was not entirely happy with his team, despite the stunning upset.

"Tactically we were not good in the first half. Our block was compact but our pressure on the centre-backs and (defensive midfield-er) Leandro Paredes was not enough," said the 54-year-old.

"If we had conceded a second goal at that time, the game would have been finished.

"During half-time I wasn't happy because the pressure wasn't good enough, the determination wasn't good enough and when you come to the World Cup, you need to give everything. We can't play as we did in the first half."

And Renard said it would have been no surprise if Argentina had taken his side lightly.

"Sometimes the opposition does not have the best motivation, it's normal, it also happened to us when playing lower teams."

INDIA CHAMPIONS

Rain-hit tie hands India T20 series win in New Zealand

Napier, New Zealand - India sealed a Twenty-20 series win over hosts New Zealand after Tuesday's rain-hit third match finished in a tie in Napier.

The Black Caps were bowled out for 160 in their innings. India then laboured to 75 for four in their nine overs before the rain started.

Under the Duckworth-Lewis-Stern method, the match was a rare tie in Twenty-20 cricket.

India took the series having won the second match on Sunday at Mount Maunganui, where morning rain threatened to delay the start before Suryakumar Yadav smashed 111 off 51 balls in a 65-run win.

The first match was washed out by heavy rain in Wellington on Friday.

"We would have liked to have won by playing the full overs, but it's how it is. We don't mind getting the trophy and the win," said India captain Hardik Pandya.

Fast-bowler Mohammed Siraj



India's Mohammed Siraj celebrates the wicket of New Zealand's Mark Chapman in their third Twenty20 match at McLean Park in Napier on Tuesday (AFP)

was the man-of-the-match after taking four wickets for 17 runs, supported by Arshdeep Singh's 4-37.

"All three matches were affected by the weather, but we are happy to have won the series," said Siraj.

After setting India 161 to win, the Black Caps' bowlers struck early with India's openers Ishan Kishan and Rishabh Pant dismissed to leave the visitors on 21-2. With Kane Williamson sitting out due to a medical appointment, New Zealand's stand-in skipper Tim Southee took the wickets of Pant and then Shreyas Iyer in successive balls.

India were in trouble at 23 for three before Suryakumar Yadav went for just 13.

Pandya steadied the ship with a solid 30 off 18 balls to steer his side to 75 for four from nine overs when rain stopped play.

Having won the toss and elected to bat, New Zealand made a strong start with Glenn Phillips smashing 54 off 33 balls. Devon Conway hit 59, including five fours and two towering sixes.

The Black Caps were cruising at 146 for three when Conway was caught by Kishan in the deep before New Zealand collapsed to lose their last seven wickets for just 14 runs.

AFP

Head, Warner plunder centuries as Australia crush England in final ODI



Australia's Travis Head (L) and David Warner scored centuries in their third ODI against England at the MCG on Tuesday (AFP)

Melbourne, Australia - Dominant centuries from Travis Head and David Warner helped Australia thrash a tired England by 221 runs Tuesday in the third and final one-day international at the Melbourne Cricket Ground to sweep the series 3-0.

After a six-wicket loss in Adelaide and a 72-run defeat in Sydney, England's long tour ended with a crushing defeat at the same venue where they won the Twenty20 World Cup this month.

Australia made a formidable 355-5 on the back of Head's 152 and Warner's 106 in a rain-hit game reduced to 48 overs, with the pair's 269-run stand the ninth-highest opening partnership in 50-over cricket and the biggest at the MCG.

It left England needing 364 to win under a DLS-adjusted target, an ominous score they never looked like getting against a disciplined attack led by pacemen Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood and Adam Zampa's spin.

"It's been fantastic, all three

games," said Australian skipper Cummins. "Everything has really clicked.

"Good to finish it off here, that's just about the best ODI I've been a part of. Everything was perfect."

With Phil Salt sidelined for a concussion check after hitting his head while fielding, Dawid Malan was elevated to open for England with Jason Roy but he fell for two to Hazlewood.

It did not get any easier for the England batsmen, who were restricted to just 49-1 off the opening 10 overs, already well behind the required run rate.

Cummins accounted for Roy (33) and Sam Billings (7) in quick succession, while James Vince ground out 22 off 45 balls before Sean Abbott broke his resistance.

When Zampa removed skipper Jos Buttler (4) and Chris Woakes in successive balls, then Moeen Ali (18) in his next over, England were 95-7 and their hopes over. Zampa ended with 4-31.

AFP

Canada win Desert Cup T20I title

Muscat - Canada stamped their overall superiority to lift the 2022 Desert Cup T20I Series with an emphatic eight-wicket win over hosts Oman in the final at the Oman Cricket Academy (OCA) grounds on Monday.

Except for one defeat at the hands of Bahrain in the group stage, Canada's dominating display in the four-nation tournament culminated in the title win.

Opting to field first, Canada's decision proved to be the correct one they restricted Oman to 137.

Oman lost opener Jatinder Singh early and were soon down to 17 for three in five overs with Jeremy Gordon's double strike off successive balls dismissing Kashyap Prajapati and in-form skipper Zeeshan Maqsood.

Canada bowlers were on top as Oman were tottering at 23 for four in the seventh over. Mohammed Nadeem and Ayaan Khan tried to stem the rot but Nikhil Dutta broke the stand to leave the hosts at 50 for five. The procession of Oman batters continued and with just over five overs to go, they were 74 for eight.

It was a blistering counter-attack by wicket-keeper-batter Naseem Khushi that aided Oman cross the 100-mark as he stayed



Canada players celebrate with the trophy after defeating Oman in the final on Monday

Canada's players dominated the individual awards as Johnson was the best batter while Ammar Khalid was the highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 12 scalps

unbeaten with a gutsy 47 off 23 balls that included two boundaries and five sixes.

Gordon's three for 36 was the best figures while Dilon Heyliger took 2-29.

With Oman making just 137,

the favourites, who had won their previous match against the hosts narrowly on Sunday with a ball to spare, began their chase on a rousing note as Aaron Johnson, who finished at the tournament's top run-scorer with 402 runs,

and his opening partner, Srimantha Wijeyeratne, sent the Oman bowlers on a leather hunt.

The two hammered the rival attack to all parts of the park in a sizzling 124-run stand in 12 overs to secure the game.

Johnson, who had earlier hammered a century in the tournament, was finally out for a 41-ball 68.

His innings was studded with eight fours and four maximums. Besides Johnson, the only other centurion in the tournament was

Oman captain Zeeshan Maqsood.

Wijeyeratne remained unbeaten on a solid 51 off 35 balls as Canada achieved the target in 14 overs, scoring 139/2.

In a third-place playoff match, Saudi Arabia defeated Bahrain by 32 runs to record their second successive win in two days over the same rivals.

Batting first, Saudi Arabia rode on Saad Khan's 69 to reach 155 for eight. Imran Javed of Bahrain was the pick of the bowlers with 4-24. Saudis then restricted their opposition to 123-5 with Ahmer Bin Nasir staying unbeaten on 55.

Canada's players dominated the individual awards as Johnson was the best batter while Ammar Khalid was the highest wicket-taker of the tournament with 12 scalps.

Oman Cricket (OC) chairman Pankaj Khimji presented the winner's trophy to Canada skipper Saad Zafar.

Also present were OC vice-chairman Paul Sheridan, OC chief development officer Duleep Mendis, other board officials and a large number of fans.

Oman and Canada will now play a two-match 50-over series on November 25 and 26.

Pooran gives up captaincy of West Indies white ball teams

Miami, United States - Nicholas Pooran has resigned as captain of the West Indies white ball teams following a disastrous showing last month at the T20 World Cup in Australia, Cricket West Indies said Monday.

West Indies, which won the title as recently as 2016, failed to advance from the group stage after losses to Scotland and Ireland.

"I have given the captaincy a great deal of thought since the enormous disappointment of the T20 World Cup," said Pooran who also relinquishes the captaincy of the one-day international team.

"I took on the role with great pride and dedication and have



Nicholas Pooran

given it absolutely everything over the past year.

"The T20 World Cup is something that must not define us and I will readily get involved in the

upcoming reviews.

"Whilst it will be several months until we reconvene as a squad, I want to give CWI plenty of time to prepare for the

matches against South Africa in March and beyond."

That tour, which includes two Tests, three ODIs and three T20s, is the next time the West Indies white ball line-up will take to the field.

The 27-year-old Trinidadian wicketkeeper, who has yet to play a Test, said his goal was to focus better as a player by removing the captain's mantle.

"This is not me giving up," Pooran said. "I remain ambitious and still view the captaincy of West Indies cricket as an honour that is bestowed upon you. There is no doubt I remain fully committed to West Indies cricket and I look forward to providing my services as a senior player in a

supportive role.

"By stepping down now as the West Indies white ball captain I believe it is in the best interests of the team and for me personally, as I need to concentrate on what I can deliver to the side as a player."

Pooran led the West Indies in 2021 and this year in the absence of Kieron Pollard, taking a home T20I series victory over Australia by 4-1.

He was officially appointed white ball captain in May when Pollard stepped down.

In all, Pooran guided the team in 17 ODIs and 23 T20s, with series wins over Bangladesh and the Netherlands.

AFP