

'Received warmest welcome in Oman'



Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan overwhelmed by Omani hospitality; visit fortifies the promising future for strong Oman-Tanzania ties

Shaddad al Musalmay
Muscat

Tanzanian President Samia Suluhu Hassan stated that the warm welcome she received from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik while in Oman was overwhelming and that her visit fortifies the promising future for strong Oman-Tanzania ties.

Addressing a gathering of Tanzanian residents and Omani well-wishers on Monday, President Samia said, "The hospitality I have received in Oman is memorable. I did not expect His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to receive me at the airport. This was the biggest honour for me. Also, I am humbled by the fact that he met me all three days. The leader of no country in the world does that."

She reaffirmed the keenness of the two countries to enhance economic ties based on historic and deep-rooted relations. "Social connections have contributed to bolstering relations. While in Oman, I felt at home and the best thing is that I felt no need for security because Oman is the most peaceful country," President Samia said.

She also addressed the issue of houses belonging to Omanis in Zanzibar that were confiscated. "We will look into the matter seriously."

With close to 30,000 Tanzanians in Oman engaged in different sectors, including education, engineering and oil and gas, President Samia said there is a plan to set up a Tanzanian association in Muscat. "There's also a plan to resettle Tanzanians back home after returning from Oman following retirement."

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, Said al Marjibi, an Omani researcher of African affairs, described President Samia's visit as an opportunity to boost economic relations between the two nations. "I am very optimistic about the outcome of her visit; it was overdue. There are high hopes that both Tanzania and Oman will benefit from investment opportunities, particularly in the fields of industry, agriculture, fisheries, mining, tourism and renewable energy," he said.

Marjibi noted that trade volume between the two countries has been low in the last 50 years. "Also, in this many years, only two Tanzanian presidents visited Oman. The third visit, by President Samia, has been more fruitful in terms of agreements. With the signing of ten agreements, there is great hope of boosting trade to the required level."

Oman exported goods worth more than US\$36mn in 2021 to Tanzania, while the volume of imports was around US\$9.5mn. "The volume of trade requires serious attention from both sides. Both Oman and Tanzania should work hard to explore opportunities of expanding economic cooperation, the time for which is now."

On cultural and people-to-people contact, Oman and Tanzania have a rich history. "In the recent past, there has been much excitement among Omanis to visit Tanzania," said Maher al Barwani, Omani biker and blogger, who has travelled across several African countries, including Tanzania.

"President Samia's visit brings back memories of my visit and meeting her while in Tanzania. It is good that now the relationship between Oman and Tanzania is being enhanced once again. I look forward to an era of strong cultural and trade exchange. I wish the authorities look into making it easier for Omanis to visit Tanzania by waiving visas fee. This will boost people-to-people contact."

Barwani said the two countries can maximise cooperation by establishing a bloc of Swahili-speaking countries. "This will bolster cooperation and communication, like many other regional groups in the world. Undoubtedly, the fundamental basis for developing bilateral relations between the two countries is already available but more work is required to bolster bilateral trade."

BRIEFED ON INVESTMENT POTENTIAL IN FREE ZONES

DISCUSSES ROLE OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT WITH CEOs

SEE PAGE 03 >>



President Samia Suluhu Hassan meets H E Sheikh Ahmed al Khalili, Grand Mufti



President Samia visits Royal Opera House Muscat, learns about its role in promoting arts and culture

Hotel revenues rise 117.5% till April

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Total revenues of Omani hotels of three-to-five star category rose 117.5 per cent, totalling RO60.239mn, in the first four months of 2022, according to the monthly statistics of National Centre for Statistics and Information.

The number of hotel guests increased 34.7 per cent to 511,429, and occupancy rate increased 14.5 per cent till April 2022 compared to the corresponding period of 2021.

Among nationalities, European guests recorded the largest growth - 802.1 per cent - to

154,712 against 17,151 in the first four months of 2021.

The number of Omani guests decreased by 15.1 per cent to 217,032 compared to 255,708 last year.

Visitors from the Gulf states also grew substantially - 501 per cent - to 31,425 in April 2022, compared to 5,229 in the same period last year. The number of American visitors increased by 181.9 per cent to 18,791, while visitors from the African continent grew 63.6 per cent to 2,430.

The number of Asian guests dropped by 14.4 per cent to 55,052, compared to 64,310 in 2021.

OCCI appeals exemption of expat visa medical fee

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) appealed to the Ministry of Health (MoH) on Monday to exempt expatriate workers from medical examination fee in its efforts to support the private sector. A medical check-up is a prerequisite for new visas.

The request was raised at the OCCI Dhahirah governorate branch's third meeting of 2022 headed by Saif bin Said al Badi, head of OCCI Dhahirah.

Badi said, "OCCI values the Royal Directives to provide facilities to small and medium enterprises, which in turn will enhance their capabilities and resources. It



will also help them grow and increase their contribution to the GDP."

Speaking to *Muscat Daily*, an

OCCI official said, "The chamber's members appealed to MoH to exempt expatriate workers from medical examination fee

currently charged by MoH in order to facilitate business owners and support economic activity."

All expatriate workers are required to get a medical examination done in a private sector hospital, following which, MoH stamps the medical certificate for a RO30 fee.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, expatriate workers were required to get a check-up done at MoH medical centres for visa processing and were charged RO30.

The OCCI Dhahirah branch meeting also discussed the establishment of an exhibition to promote Omani products in the governorate. The exhibition will support SMEs and encourage cit-

izens and residents to buy Omani products.

"The meeting discussed a proposal to establish the third forum of women entrepreneurs in the governorate, which will be held soon. It will include several training courses for women entrepreneurs for the skills and expertise necessary to start new projects. The meeting also discussed a proposal to send a commercial delegation to Saudi Arabia to look for new investments opportunities," the OCCI official.

A resolution approving the organisation of a seminar - Education, Quality and Growth - to enhance the quality of private sector education in the governorate was also passed during the meeting.



In 1983, my brother and I were in a car when we met with an accident. I was driving. My brother died on the spot. I was in the hospital and needed a lot of blood. Several people donated to save my life. That's when I made a promise – to donate blood regularly for the rest of my life

AHMED BIN HAMAD AL KHARUSI



(Supplied photos)

3 Omanis donate blood 535 times

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As Oman celebrated World Blood Donor Day – observed on June 14 annually – the need for blood donations now is more crucial than ever.

On the occasion, *Muscat Daily* spoke with three Omanis who have all together donated blood more than 535 times.

On an average, Ahmed bin Hamad al Kharusi, 59, donates blood five times a year. Despite his frequent donations, he has never experienced any weakness or health issues.

But it's not just Kharusi who has selflessly donated blood to hospitals during urgencies. Other members of his family have followed his footsteps; his wife has donated 25 times, and his four daughters have made the gift of life 13 times each.

Having donated 182 times to date, Kharusi has been recognised not just for donating blood in Oman and abroad but also for his efforts to raise



Whenever I donate, I realise just how active my heart and body are. Donating blood increases your self-confidence, because you understand the meaning of saving someone's life

SAIF SALEM AL SHUKAILI



Human beings are the only source of blood. I urge everyone in the community to come forward and volunteer for this task, if they are able to

TALAL YAHYA MOHAMMED AL SAADI

awareness on the significance of blood donation and its health benefits for donors.

Kharusi said, "In 1983, my brother and I were in a car when we met with an accident. I was driving. My brother died on the spot. I was in the hospital and needed a lot of blood. Several people donated to save my life. That's when I made a promise – to donate blood regularly for the rest of my life."

Thirty-six years after his first blood donation, he feels a sense of fulfillment every time he donates even today. "I feel happy about such humanitarian work and community service," Kharusi said.

He informed that blood banks in Oman need about 7,000 units of blood per month, and the Central Blood Bank in Bausher requires over 120 donors a day to meet the demand of health institutions.

Need for blood

Blood donated by one person can benefit three others, said Saif Salem

al Shukaili, 50, who has made 180 donations. He made his first donation in 1996.

"There is great need for blood currently. Whenever I donate, I realise just how active my heart and body are. Donating blood increases your self-confidence, because you understand the meaning of saving someone's life," he explained.

"Blood donation also helps identify any underlying health issues you may have," Shukaili added.

Children with cancer

Talal Yahya Mohammed al Saadi, 39, who has donated blood 173 times, said, "I started to donate blood in 2000. Children with cancer and people involved in accidents need large volumes of blood. My biggest motivation for donation is to help such people.

"Human beings are the only source of blood. I urge everyone in the community to come forward and volunteer for this task, if they are able to."

An act of solidarity

The Ministry of Health, represented by the Department of Blood Banks Services, marked World Blood Donor Day on Tuesday under the theme 'Donating blood is an act of solidarity.'

Despite the pandemic, blood donations increased 14 per cent in 2021, according to Central Blood Bank statistics, indicating rising community awareness.

Initial data for the first five months of 2022 also show an increase in blood units collected by Central Blood Bank, up 16 per cent compared to the same period of 2021.

University of Technology and Applied Sciences Electronic Local Auction Announcement

The Internal Tender Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Ibra Technical College) announces the offering of the practices shown in the following table:

M	practice number	Subject	Companies that are eligible to participate	Document's Price	Last date for electronic purchasing	Last date bid submission
1	10/2022 ١٠٢٠٢٢ ١٠٢٠٢٢	Providing a team to service and operate the buildings of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (Ibra Technical College)	Companies and institutions specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board Excellent degree	(25) Twenty five Riyal Omani	30/06/2022 14:30 pm	05/07/2022 at 10:00 am

Those interested can obtain electronic auction documents from Thursday 16/06/2022 starting from (07:30 am) through the link:

<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>

- All bidding companies must attach with their bids electronic temporary tender bond in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, not less than (1%) of the bid value, addressed to the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, and valid for a period of (90) days from the date of bid submission. The bid must be submitted sealed by the authorized person, and submitted with the electronic bidding system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the name and number of the tender only.
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.

The University shall not be bound to accept the highest or any other bid.

19 violation notices issued to eateries in Samail

Muscat - An inspection campaign was carried out in cafes and restaurants in the wilayat of Samail on Tuesday to ensure these businesses adhere to necessary health requirements while preparing food.

A statement issued by Dakhliyah Municipality said that its officials inspected 95 eateries in Samail, following which it issued 19 violation notices and destroyed 15.5kg of unfit food.

The municipality reiterated that both service providers and consumers must follow health guidelines and hygiene standards, including disinfection of all surfaces frequently and ensuring proper ventilation.

'There is need to provide appropriate personal protective equipment to each employee,' the civic body stated.

EA discusses issue of invasive bird species



(Supplied photo)

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) held a meeting on Tuesday to address the problem of invasive birds in the sultanate.

In a statement, EA said, 'The authority discussed the issue of invasive bird species in Oman with officials and representatives of relevant authorities. The meeting deliberated on intensifying efforts towards this end and limiting the damage caused by these birds.'

EA informed that invasive birds, such as the Indian jungle crow and mynah, are increasing in

Oman. These birds cause widespread damage by destroying crops, eating bees and transmitting diseases, parasites and fleas to humans as well as animals.

In April, the authority formed a team to conduct a study on checking the spread of these birds and developing a national strategy. EA has on-boarded an international ornithologist and prepared an integrated plan to confront invasive bird species.

Mynahs, originating from India, China, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal and Indonesia, belong to the starling family. These birds are 22-25cm long with wingspans of 36.5cm.

Mynahs affect the food chain in the areas of their existence. These birds attack other birds' nests and kill the young ones. In 2000, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature declared the bird among '100 of the World's Most Invasive Species'.

The Indian jungle crow (*Corvus culminatus*) is a species found across the Indian subcontinent south of the Himalayas.

It is an opportunist and generalist omnivore. It softens its food by dropping it in water and has also been observed to eat sand after feeding on meat from carcasses. These birds have a range of cawing vocalisations.

Tanzanian President meets women CEOs

President Samia briefed on investment opportunities in economic, industrial and free zones

Our Correspondent
Muscat

President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania was briefed on the investment potential in economic, industrial and free zones around ports in Oman.

A presentation was made by the Public Authority for Special Economic Zones and Free Zones (OPAZ) at Al Alam Palace Guesthouse on Tuesday for President Samia.

Ahmed Hassan al Dheeb, Deputy Chairman of OPAZ, said that the meeting provided an opportunity to respond to the queries related to investing in



these zones and means of cooperation between the two countries in the fields of port services and free zones.

He informed that a Tanzanian investment in a free zone is currently being looked into, which will trigger the start of several other projects between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by H E Dr Rahma Ibrahim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation and Head of the Mission of Honour, H E Saud Hilal al Shidhani, Ambassador of Oman to Tanzania, H E Abdallah Abasi Kilima, Ambassador of Tanzania to Oman, and officials from both sides.

In another engagement at Al Alam Palace on Tuesday, the Tanzanian President met women chief executives from the public and private sectors in Oman and Tanzania and discussed the need of strengthening cooperation in various areas. More specifically, the meeting explored the role of women in development and in boosting trade and investment exchange.

On the agenda were discussions on empowering women at the international level and in leadership roles in the fields of business, economy and policy-making, besides deliberations on cooperation between Oman and Tanzania.

President Samia views logistics solutions of Asyad Group

Muscat - President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania visited Asyad Group's Fulfilment Centre on Tuesday to get familiarised with the competitive advantages and logistic services provided by the group.

The Tanzanian President was briefed on the services provided by Asyad Group in ports, free zones, shipping, dry dock and its competitive logistic solutions. These solutions include direct lines for container transportation, freight forwarding, cold chain, e-commerce and last mile express delivery services.

The guest was acquainted with the centre's operations as an ideal model in supporting supply chain activities across various local and global markets.

President Samia was also briefed on the partnership between Asyad Group, represented by Oman Post and Asyad Express, and the Tanzanian Posts Corporation. As per this partnership, the two sides will exchange expertise and knowledge on the latest technologies and innova-



forts exerted by Asyad Group in providing competitive and international logistic services, as well as in solidifying the business and economic relations between the two countries.

The visit underscored the strategic importance of the existing cooperation between Asyad Group and Tanzanian Posts Corporation through logistics operations to create promising opportunities that boost trade exchange between Omani and African markets and link Omani entrepreneurs with the rapidly growing African market. The African market gives access to more than 400mn consumers.

Asyad Group seeks to expand in global markets, including in e-commerce services, especially considering the Tanzanian market is the fourth largest consumer base in the field of e-commerce in the African continent. This expansion will consolidate Oman's position as a pivotal centre for e-commerce, linking consumers with producers in regional and global markets.

A joint postage stamp initiative will document the historical and cultural ties between Oman and Tanzania

solutions in the fields of e-commerce and postal services to implement best practices and experiences between the two countries.

She was also familiarised with a joint postage stamp initiative that documents the historical and cultural ties between Oman and Tanzania.

At the conclusion of her visit, President Samia lauded the ef-



Sayyid Badr meets Tanzanian energy minister, reviews ties

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received in his office January Yusuf Makamba, Energy Minister of Tanzania, on Tuesday as part of the official visit of President Samia Suluhu Hassan of the United Republic of Tanzania to Oman.

The meeting reviewed bilateral relations between the two countries, besides joint cooperation projects that the two sides are striving for in the energy sector.

The meeting was attended by Khalid Hashel al Muselhi, head of the Minister's Office Department, Mulham Bashir al Jarf, acting deputy chairman of Oman Investment Authority, and officials from both sides.

In a separate meeting, H E Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs in the Foreign Ministry, received Mabrouk Nasser Mabrouk, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and East African Cooperation of Tanzania.

During the meeting, bilateral relations between the friendly countries and international and regional issues of common interest were reviewed.

ONA

جامعة التكنولوجيا والعلوم التطبيقية

University of Technology and Applied Sciences

Electronic Local Auction Announcement

The Internal Tender Committee at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences announces the offering of the practices shown in the following table:

M	practice number	Subject	Companies that are eligible to participate	Document's Price	Last date for electronic purchasing	Last date bid submission
1	12/2022	Purchasing antivirus for 4 branches of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences)	Companies and institutions specialized in this field and registered with the Tender Board	(25) Twenty five Riyal Omani	Thursday 14/07/2022 14:30 pm	Sunday 24/07/2022 at 10:00 am
2	13/2022	Providing cleaning services for the buildings of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences at the Higher College of Technology in Muscat		(25) Twenty five Riyal Omani		

- Those interested can obtain electronic auction documents from Wednesday 15/06/2022 starting from (07:30 am) through the link:
<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om/>
- All bidding companies must attach with their bids electronic temporary tender bond in the form of a bank guarantee or a cheque certified by one of the banks operating in the Sultanate, not less than (1%) of the bid value, addressed to the name of the Chairman of the Internal Tender Committee, and valid for a period of (90) days from the date of bid submission. The bid must be submitted sealed by the authorized person, and submitted with the electronic bidding system of the University of Technology and Applied Sciences in the name and number of the tender only.
- Preference in awarding will be given to small and medium enterprises registered with the Authority for SME development and whose bid includes the biggest percentage of Omanisation and a biggest purchase percentage of national products.

The University shall not be bound to accept the highest or any other bid.

سلطنة عمان
وزارة النقل والاتصالات وتقنية المعلومات
Sultanate of Oman
Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology

**إعلان مناقصة
Tender Notice**

The Internal Tender Committee at the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology invites for the Following Tender:

TENDER NO	TENDER NAME	DATE OF PUBLISHING	LAST DATE TO PURCHASE TENDER DOCUMENT	SUBMISSION DATE	COMPANIES WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN THIS TENDER	DOCUMENT PRICE
(Recall) MTCIT15/2022 /HQ-3	REDESIGN AND BUILT OF BOATS CRANE DOCK AND COMPLETE THE REMAINING WORKS IN BUILDINGS AT HARMUL HARBOR (SOHAR PORT)	15-06-2022	29-06-2022	17-07-2022	EXPERIENCED COMPANIES AND REGISTERED WITH THE SECRETARIAT GENERAL OF TENDER BOARD (EXCELLENT CLASS)	(25/-) TWENTY FIVE OMANI RIAL NON-REFUNDABLE

Interested Companies registered with the Secretariat General of Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E-Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om> against non-refundable payment as mentioned above for each set of document. Tenders should be submitted online on given website. In addition to Tender Bond as Bank Guarantee issued by local bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of (1%) of the Tender value validity for (90) days.

CORRESPONDANCE:

- Tender Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the TENDER Inquiry must be online at e-Tendering System. (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
- E-Tendering System Inquiry: All correspondence pertaining to the e-Tendering System technical support must be directed to the following helpdesk email address and phone number:
Tel: +968 24402200 e-mail: etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om

INTERNAL TENDER COMMITTEE

@mtcitoman www.mtcit.gov.om

Send your comments to muscatdaily@apexmedia.co.om

MARKET WATCH

MSX30 4,121.21
Sensex 52,693.57

FOREX RATES

(ROI equals)	
Indian Rs	202.64
Pakistani Rs	535.62
Bangladeshi taka	241.39
Philippines peso	138.45
Sri Lankan Rs	906.94

*Rates as on JUNE 14
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Turkey begins laying Black Sea gas pipeline

Turkey's president hailed the start of the construction of an underwater pipeline to tap a Black Sea natural gas field that the government hopes will help wean the country off its dependence on energy imports. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan watched via video link as the first pipeline section was laid and connected to the seabed from the port of Filyos, around 400km east of Istanbul on the Black Sea coast.

He said the Sakarya gas field could produce 10mn cubic metres by the first quarter of 2023. The Sakarya gas field, 170km out to sea, was discovered in August 2020. At the time, Erdogan described it as "the largest natural gas field in Turkey's history", citing estimated reserves of 320bn cubic metres.

CORRIGENDUM

In the report 'Sohar Steel to build RO7mn plant at Sohar Freezone' published in *Muscat Daily* (Page 4) on June 14, 2022, there was an inadvertent mention of another company called Sohar Steel in the headline. The correct company name is Sohar Steel Rolling.

Ahlibank launches Tamkeen crowdfunding initiative to boost SMEs growth

Our Correspondent
Muscat

ahlibank on Tuesday launched its first-of-its-kind 'Tamkeen' crowdfunding initiative at a press conference at Sheraton Oman hotel.

The crowdfunding initiative is part of ahlibank's endeavour to support Oman's small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and bolster the national economy. This pioneering initiative comes after signing a strategic partnership agreement between ahlibank and Beehive to offer this unique online financial lending solution in Oman, specifically for the SMEs to support their business endeavours and create a sustainable ecosystem.

The Capital Market Authority (CMA) in November last year announced and approved the legislative system for launching crowdfunding platforms in Oman.

Taher al Balushi, DGM - head of strategy and transformation at ahlibank, said, "We are pleased to announce the launch of our 'Tamkeen' crowdfunding initiative, which is the first-of-its-kind, in an exclusive collaboration with Beehive. SMEs form the backbone of any economy and their role has continued to become significant, aligning with the sultanate's efforts towards diversifying a more inclusive economy as part of the Oman Vision 2040 objective."

Elaborating on the importance



of crowdfunding initiative, Balushi added, "Through Tamkeen, ahlibank hopes to contribute towards a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem that allows SMEs to prosper. In particular, we think this will benefit micro SMEs become key players in both nation's economic progress and contributing to the local human resource talent pool by creating high-quality traineeships and jobs with the funding they receive."

The Tamkeen platform aims to narrow the funding gap by offering quick and seamless access to financing for SMEs and will allow them to avail financial packages ranging between RO20,000 and RO80,000. It also provides benefits such as competitive pricing, streamlined procedures, and simple repayment terms without the need to provide any security or collateral.

Such offerings will work to financially empower local businesses in order to augment their growth and provide them with wider national economic benefits.

Speaking at the press conference, Hassan al Lawati, AGM - head of SMEs at ahlibank, said, "The numbers of SMEs in the last few years have sharply increased in Oman. The idea of running a side business has been growing among Omanis. Once Tamkeen is launched, we expect lots of enquiries from entrepreneurs. This initiative shall cater to all types of businesses and ventures. This model has witnessed good response in the UAE and Saudi Arabia and we expect the same in Oman." Beehive's peer-to-peer Fintech platform will allow ahlibank to reach local businesses through the provision of cutting-edge digital lending solutions that are accessible, cost-effective,

provide enhanced security, and encourage sustainable financial inclusion.

The CMA's recent framework for equity crowdfunding will also enhance financial inclusion, ensure improved access to unsecured finance and mitigate cash flow barriers that are generally affecting the sustained growth of SMEs in the country.

According to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) data, total number of SMEs registered with the SME Development Authority in Oman had increased by 44.3 per cent to 75,800 in April 2022 compared to 52,524 establishments during the same period in 2021. These figures are a solid indication that given an ideal environment to grow, local businesses can become effective contributors to nation's economy.



Takaful Oman raises its capital by RO6mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Takaful Oman, an Islamic insurance company, on Tuesday announced the successful completion of its RO6mn rights issue.

Earlier, through the rights issue the company had offered 150mn additional shares at a price of 41bz per share (including issue expenses of 1bz per share). The issue was fully subscribed, therefore, increasing the company's capital from RO10mn to RO16mn, Takaful Oman said in a press statement.

A bell-ringing ceremony was held at the Muscat Stock Exchange (MSX) to mark the occasion of listing of additional capital on MSX on Tuesday which was attended by senior officials of the CMA, MSX and the company.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohamed Abdulla al Khonji, chairman of Takaful Oman said, "This marks an important milestone in the journey of Takaful Oman which is still a relatively young player in the Omani insurance and takaful sector. The

rights issue is in line with Takaful Oman's long-term growth strategy and will meet the company's solvency requirements. Through the proceeds of its rights issue, the company also seeks to positively impact the Islamic insurance industry, aid in wealth creation, and drive sustainable economic growth."

"Keen to leverage opportunities in the growing Islamic finance industry, Takaful Oman will use the new capital to further strengthen its operations, develop innovative and embedded products, and focus on the evolving needs of its growing customer base of 200,000," he added.

Neelmani Bhardwaj, acting CEO of Takaful Oman said, "I would like to specially thank our regulators the CMA for their continued guidance and support throughout this process. I would also like to express our gratitude to all the subscribers and shareholders for their unfaltering support, faith, and confidence in the future of this company and we will do our utmost to live up to their expectations."

Green Tech Energy signs distribution deal for Huawei solar inverters

Muscat - Green Tech Energy and Water (GTEW), the region's premier provider of renewable energy solutions, and Solis Depot, Huawei's value added partner in Oman, recently signed an official distribution agreement.

The agreement was signed by managing director of GTEW Fabian Mueller and business unit manager of Solis Depot Mohammed Alqadi.

Under the agreement, GTEW is the authorized distributor of Huawei FusionSolar products in Oman. GTEW offers the following Huawei FusionSolar products: 3-phase inverters ranging from 3kw to 100kw and their accessories, as well as residential energy storage systems on a lithium-ion basis.



Following this commemorative milestone for both companies, GTEW attended Huawei FusionSolar Day, which was powered by Huawei and Solis Depot. The event was held at the Crowne Plaza OCEC on June 5 and was attended by key stakeholders of the solar energy industry in Oman, including

developers and installation companies, as well as top experts from several electricity distribution companies and the Distribution Code Review Panel.

The speakers introduced the cutting edge Huawei FusionSolar line of Solar PV (photovoltaic) inverters, their accessories, both on a residential and commercial/industrial as well as utility scale. Huawei shared the plethora of innovative features that distinguish their products, including an exciting roadmap for what lies ahead. The solar industry in Oman represents merely the tip of the iceberg, with vast potential for renewables in all sectors, coupled with professional industry stakeholders; the future is as bright as the sun itself.

CMA adopts risk-based approach to calculate insurers' solvency margin

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To protect the rights of insurance policyholders, the Capital Market Authority (CMA) has adopted a new risk-based approach for calculating the solvency margin of insurance companies.

The solvency margin reflects the ability of an insurance company to discharge its obligations towards insurance policyholders.

This risk-based approach for the calculation of solvency margin measures the amount of insurance company's capital to support its business in light of the risk exposure, which varies from one company to another.

Previously, the calculation of the solvency margins was measured



according to the adequacy of assets compared to the liabilities, the CMA said in a statement.

The CMA had issued Decision No (18/2022) regarding amendment of certain provisions of the Executive Regulations of

the Insurance Companies Law published in the Official Gazette No (1428) on February 6, 2022, which includes the necessary amendments for the calculation of risk-based solvency margin.

"This move comes after consideration of the most appropriate approaches used in calculating the solvency margin of insurance companies in order to develop methods, processes and basis for risk management in the sector companies in the sultanate," the CMA said.

The risk-based approach for calculating solvency margin is one of the best internationally applicable practices in recent years recommended by the International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS).

The CMA emphasises that the risk-based calculation of solvency margin approach contributes to achieving a number of objectives such as enhancing the capital of insurance companies and the possibility of identifying the risks to which each company is exposed.

The CMA calls on all insurance companies to adjust their situations during the current year in accordance with the requirements of the new solvency calculation approach in preparation for the actual implementation on the audited financial statements for the financial year that ends in December 2022, as the first financial statements to which the new approach will be applied for calculating the solvency.

Media giants buy IPL cricket rights for \$6.2bn

Mumbai, India - India's cricket board said Tuesday it has sold the broadcast rights of the IPL tournament for the next five seasons to global media giants for an eye-popping US\$6.2bn.

"IPL is now the 2nd most valued sporting league in the world in terms of per match value!" tweeted Jay Shah, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary, announcing the results of a hotly contested three-day online auction.

The amount paid for the rights to one of the world's most watched sports contests dwarfs the US\$2.55bn that Star India paid in 2017 for the previous five seasons to 2022.

Star, owned by US behemoth Disney, retained the domestic

TV rights for the coming five seasons of the annual two-month competition from 2023 to 2027 for US\$3.01bn, the BCCI said.

But the digital rights were auctioned off for even more - US\$3.04bn - reflecting the expectation that more people in India and abroad will watch the matches on digital devices.

The buyer was Viacom18, a joint venture between Reliance - owned by Indian tycoon Mukesh Ambani - and US group Paramount Global as well as an investment group reportedly backed by James Murdoch.

"So digital turned out to be bigger than linear TV this season in #IPLMediaRights," BCCI treasurer Arun Dharmal wrote on



Mukesh Ambani

Twitter.

"I would like to thank all the participants for their interest in the best 'Made in India' sports property!"

Also sold were the international broadcast rights, split between Viacom18 and the international arm of India's

Times Group.

Big salaries

Attracting some of world cricket's top stars with bumper salaries, the pioneering IPL helped make Twenty20 - a shorter format of the sport - hugely popular, attracting hun-

dreds of millions of viewers and spawning copycat events worldwide.

Last season it expanded to include 10 franchises battling it out in 74 matches, climaxing in a final in the world's biggest cricket stadium in Ahmedabad in front of 105,000 fans - and millions more watching on television and smartphones.

Also in the auction for the rights was Japan's Sony, which televised the IPL for the first 10 years after its inception in 2008.

Jeff Bezos's Amazon, which has spent hundreds of millions of dollars on rights for European soccer and American football, had earlier reportedly shown interest in the IPL but pulled out.

Asia's richest

The deal is a major win for Ambani, Asia's richest man with a net worth according to Forbes of US\$97.6bn who is reputedly a confidante of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Reliance's multi-billion-dollar fortune was made in oil and petrochemicals businesses, but it has diversified into new areas including telecoms, retail and renewable energy in recent years.

Reliance shook up the Indian telecom sector with the launch of Jio in 2016 with ultra-cheap data and calls, forcing several competitors to throw in the towel after years of losses.

Major global players such as Google, Facebook, Intel have invested billions of dollars into Re-

liance's digital unit, Jio Platforms, in recent years.

Ambani's wife Nita Ambani owns the Mumbai Indians franchise in the IPL, the richest and most successful side in IPL history with five titles to their name.

"Mr Ambani is all set to redefine the contours of OTT (over-the-top streaming services)," Sandeep Goyal, managing director at advertising agency Redifusion, told AFP.

"But it could well be redefining not just OTT, but entertainment, cricket consumption, customer connectivity, e-commerce and a lot of other stuff, which is interconnected to this whole game of having such massive viewerships in your control." AFP

Facing energy 'blackmail' by Russia, EU turns to Israel

Beersheba, Israel - The European Union wants to strengthen its energy cooperation with Israel in light of Russia's use of gas supplies to "blackmail" its members over the Ukraine conflict, European Commission chief Ursula von der Leyen said Tuesday.

Her remarks came as Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, also visiting Israel, said Rome was seeking to boost gas supplies from Israel as EU members eye options to diminish their reliance on Russian energy.

"The Kremlin has used our dependency on Russian fossil fuels to blackmail us," von der Leyen said in a speech at the Ben Gurion University in the southern Israeli city of Beersheba.

"Since the beginning of the war, Russia has deliberately cut off its gas supplies to Poland, Bulgaria and Finland, and Dutch and Danish companies, in retaliation for our support to Ukraine."

But Moscow's conduct "only strengthens our resolve to break free of our dependence on Russian fossil fuels," she said, noting the EU was "exploring ways to step up our energy cooperation with Israel," with work on an underwater power cable and a gas pipeline in the eastern Mediterranean.

Israel exports gas to Egypt, some of which is then liquefied and shipped to Europe. A significant increase in gas exports would require major long-term infrastructure investments.

In talks with Energy Minister Karine Elharar on Monday, von der Leyen reiterated "the EU



Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett (right) and his Italian counterpart Mario Draghi give a joint press statement at the Prime minister's office in Jerusalem on Tuesday (AFP)

need for Israeli gas," the minister's spokesperson said.

The spokesperson said there had been talks since March on establishing the legal framework to enable more Israeli gas exports to Europe via Egypt.

Another option would be the EastMed project, a proposal for a seafloor pipeline linking Israel to Greece and Italy via Cyprus.

But US President Joe Biden's administration has questioned the viability of the project, given its huge cost and the time it would take to complete.

Speaking alongside Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Jerusalem, Draghi said Italy

and Israel were "working together on the use of gas resources from the eastern Mediterranean and for the development of renewable energy".

"We want to reduce our dependence on Russian gas, and accelerate the energy transition towards the climate goals we have set ourselves," Draghi added.

Lebanese maritime dispute

Bennett described Europe's need for alternative gas supplies as "good news."

An Israel-Turkey pipeline

project, estimated to require three years and US\$1.5bn, is another option to get Israeli gas to European markets.

Bennett directed fresh criticism at Israel's northern neighbour, Lebanon, with which it remains technically at war.

The two countries have a long-running maritime border dispute and Washington has been brokering talks aimed at demarcating a border and allowing both sides to ramp up exploration.

Lebanon had backed away from the talks, but Israel has urged Beirut to re-engage.

"I look forward to the day

Lebanon will decide to take advantage of the natural gas in its economic water," said Bennett.

"It's a shame that Lebanon's leadership, instead of extracting gas for its people, is busy fighting internally and externally," he added.

Israel is estimated to have gas reserves of at least one trillion cubic metres, with domestic use over the next three decades expected to total no more than 300bn.

Von der Leyen was due to hold talks with Bennett later Tuesday, before travelling on to Egypt.

AFP



US wholesale prices spike in May on surging fuel costs

Washington, US - Another surge in gasoline prices last month sent US wholesale prices spiking following a slowdown in April, according to government data released Tuesday.

The producer price index (PPI) jumped 0.8 per cent in May compared to April, double the increase in the prior month, the Labor Department reported.

Goods prices soared 1.4 per cent in the month, with more than two-thirds of that increase caused by rising fuel costs, and 40 per cent was attributed to the 8.4 per cent jump in gasoline alone, the report said.

However, the data showed food prices were flat.

The headline PPI jump followed a similar resurgence of the consumer price index, which economists had expected would continue to slow.

Red-hot inflation will put pressure on the Federal Reserve to act aggressively to raise interest rates, and has sparked increasing speculation the central bank will make an aggressive 0.75-percentage-point increase this week to signal its determination to cool the economy.

The Fed's policy-setting Fed-

eral Open Market Committee is due to announce its decision on Wednesday at the conclusion of its two-day meeting.

"Following a stinging May CPI print, the latest PPI data confirm that inflation pressures continue to build across both the goods and services sectors, pressuring the FOMC to act decisively to restore price stability," said Mahir Rasheed of Oxford Economics.

"However, the Fed's blunt toolkit won't do much to alleviate supply side disruptions, which remain plagued by the ongoing war in Ukraine and re-imposed social distancing measures in China," he said in an analysis.

In the latest 12 months, PPI cooled slightly, rising 10.8 per cent - a tenth lower than in April and below the 11.5 peak in March.

But Rubeela Farooqi of High Frequency Economics said the rate remains "uncomfortably high," with costs rising at a near-record pace.

She still believes the Fed will hike interest rates by a half-point but acknowledged "a non-negligible risk of a more aggressive move."

AFP

UN urges WTO not to impose food export restrictions



Geneva, Switzerland - The United Nations on Tuesday begged world trade ministers meeting at the WTO not to impose export restrictions on food for humanitarian purposes, amid a food security crisis.

The UN's human rights chief Michelle Bachelet and its trade and development head Rebecca Grynsman said Russia's war in Ukraine was increasing the risk of hunger and famine for tens of millions of people who are already food insecure or approaching food insecurity.

Countries meeting at the World Trade Organization's ministerial conference in Geneva this week are trying to reach a consensus position on food security. Mindful of less-developed countries, net food-importing developing countries and those reliant on the UN's World Food Programme, the two UN chiefs said that in 2020, African countries imported about 80 per cent of their food and 92 percent of their cereal from outside the continent.

They urged WTO members

to "refrain from imposing export restrictions on essential foodstuffs purchased by LDCs and NFIDCs as well as those purchased by WFP for non-commercial humanitarian purposes".

Russia's invasion has heightened concerns for global food security as Ukraine's Black Sea ports are blocked, preventing the country from exporting its produce.

Before the February invasion, Ukraine was the world's fourth-largest supplier of wheat and maize.

India concerns

India capped sugar exports to safeguard its own supplies and ease inflation, days after its ban on wheat shipments sent global prices soaring.

Immediately after the May 25 sugar announcement, WTO chief Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala urged countries not to block or restrict exports of basic foodstuffs given the tensions on global food markets.

A decision on food security and export restrictions is one of

the main expected outcomes at the WTO ministerial conference, which opened Sunday and runs until Wednesday.

A second text aims to ban export restrictions on WFP purchases but India and Tanzania oppose the move.

The UN leaders said they would work with WTO members to address anti-competitive and unfair business practices.

"Hoarding, excessive stockpiling of basic foodstuffs and associated speculation, especially during global food shortages, adversely affect the enjoyment of the right to food and erodes efforts to achieve food security for all," they said.

EU trade commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis met India's Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal for talks at the WTO on Monday.

"We need all members to show the same level of ambition and spirit of compromise to make this WTO ministerial a success," the EU executive vice president said afterwards.

AFP

Al Jenaibi International Automobiles L.L.C.
الجنبيبي العالمية للسيارات ش.م.م.

BMW SERVICE CAMPAIGN

BMW E46- Model Year 2001 - 2004

Date of Campaign: 15/6/2022
Recall Segment: Replacing the front passenger airbag (HAH / PSPI)
Recall Type: Performance Action
Product Description: BMW E46

Year	Make	Model	Affected vehicle VIN/Chassis range	No. of affected vehicles
2001	BMW	E46	FV86790	1
2003	BMW	E46	CK02940 - JP86296 EH30287 - KC05578 EX12870 - KC07344 EX13774 - KC08323 KN51887 PE01234 PK44201	11
2004	BMW	E46	PK45068	1

Description of Defect: When the front passenger airbag is activated in the regular fashion, it may result in high internal pressure in the gas generator. In unfavorable cases, the gas generator may split and metal parts - possibly fatal - cause injuries.

Procedure Check : Replace front passenger airbag.

For More Information: Customers of affected vehicles may please contact. Al Jenaibi Automobiles LLC for further Details/booking appointments from 15/6/2022 onwards.

Contact Details: Toll free no. 80050008 on all working days (Sunday to Thursday) between 8.00 A.M-5.30 P.M

Bank Muscat offers guaranteed cash prizes for Asalah referrals

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in the sultanate, has announced guaranteed cash prizes worth up to RO2,000 for successful Asalah referrals in line with its strategy of offering maximum benefits to its customers.

All that existing Asalah Priority Banking Customers have to do is to successfully refer new customers to Bank Muscat's Asalah Priority Banking during the promotional period which runs till December 31. A reward of RO100 per successful referral will be paid out for each referral once the referred customer meets all eligibility criteria for a minimum of three months after opening an Asalah account with the bank, a press release said.

To provide referrals, the referral form available on the bank's website should be filled up and emailed to AsalahReferral@bankmuscat.com. The salary/deposit transfer of the referral should be credited within a maximum of 30 days from the date of referral, for the referral to be eligible for participation in the scheme. Cash rewards of RO100 each will be credited directly to both the referrer's and referee's account for



maintaining the eligibility criteria during the 3-month review period. Customers having a monthly salary of RO5,000 or those who maintain a savings deposit of RO30,000 are eligible for Asalah Priority Banking. Existing customers can win up to RO2,000 by making up to 20 successful referrals during the year.

Asalah customers enjoy a range of unrivalled benefits including access to a team of dedicated Relationship Managers, 39 Asalah Centres across Oman and a dedicated 24/7 Asalah call centre. Exclusive lifestyle benefits include the Asalah Entertainer App, which has more than 3,500 'Buy 1, Get 1 Free' offers in Oman and at international desti-

nations as well as rewards of indulgence and merchant discounts across fine dining, entertainment, leisure, and the beauty and wellness segments.

The Asalah Debit Card offers access to 50 lounges worldwide and has a higher ATM withdrawal limit of RO1,000. Asalah VISA Signature credit cardholders can enjoy airport lounge access at more than 1,000 lounges worldwide, and a 24/7 global concierge service. The Credit Card also offers 1% cashback on purchases as well as free multi-trip travel insurance for customers and their direct family members. Cardholders can also enjoy complimentary chauffeur service to and from the Muscat International Airport. Asalah

customers also enjoy access to an integrated wealth management platform that allows them to invest in global asset classes through a single touchpoint. They also get the latest updates and reports on local and international investment opportunities.

Asalah Priority Banking reflects the bank's commitment for continued leadership of Oman's banking sector. As a prolific innovator in the financial sector, Bank Muscat has won a number of international and local awards including the Signature Luxury 100 award. The bank was also listed by Forbes Middle East as one of the Top 50 Banks in the region as well as one of the Top 100 Listed Companies in the Middle East in 2021.



Saudi female racer to soon appear in Goodwood Festival

Theeba Motorsport confirms that it will attend the 2022 Goodwood Festival of Speed in the UK later this month with founder and Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver Reema Juffali.

Driving the team's state of the art Mercedes-AMG GT3 EVO, Reema will complete a total of six exhibition runs on Goodwood's iconic hill climb circuit, a press release said.

Performing two exhibition runs per day, Reema will join multiple figures from international competition including For-

mula One World Champions Sir Jackie Stewart, Mika Hakkinen and Jenson Button, and nine-time Le Mans 24 Hour winner Tom Kristensen.

The Goodwood Festival of Speed was first held in 1993 and in its 29th edition in 2022, will celebrate the 'Masterminds of Motorsport' from June 23 to 26.

With over 600 cars and motorcycles from the automotive and motorsport industries, the event is the world's greatest celebration of motor racing and car culture.

Reema Juffali, founder and

driver, Theeba Motorsport, said, "The Goodwood Festival of Speed has always been one of my favourite events of the year. It is also where I first set my eyes on some of the greatest machines ever built.

As Saudi Arabia's first female racing driver, Reema has moved from strength to strength in her career and founded Theeba Motorsport in 2022. Competing in the International GT Open, the team seeks to improve Saudi access, participation and representation in motor racing through a variety of opportunities.

Ooredoo networking event highlights ICT capabilities for businesses

As part of its ongoing journey to help businesses be digital, Ooredoo recently held a special networking event for its corporate customers.

Held at the Crowne Plaza Muscat, the event drew large number of attendees from different corporations within private and public sector. There, they were presented with Ooredoo's full portfolio of innovative solutions comprising of IP telephony, secured connectivity, ICT and IoT solutions, a press release said.

"We were delighted to welcome businesses to a highly interactive session where many were amazed by the different products and services the Ooredoo business team has launched in the market.

Due to the economic situation, up-front investment is challenging for many business customers, but with our managed IP telephone offerings, cus-



tomers can have the flexibility to make monthly payments according to their budget and still enjoy the latest technology in the market," said Saied Sadiq, director of Business Marketing & ICT So-

lutions at Ooredoo.

Having secured connectivity is the dream of every company but it often comes with heavy costs, but with Ooredoo's DDoS Secured Internet, it's no longer a

problem. Business customers can secure their internet connectivity by subscribing to Ooredoo's DDoS solution.

Ooredoo has pioneered the IoT domain by connecting smart water meters within Oman and is on track to launch new use cases, which were demonstrated during the event. Ooredoo continues to offer businesses smart solutions to enhance their IT infrastructure, while keeping them connected, working and engaged every day.

Capitalising on its seamless network and customer-centric approach, its innovative products include cloud services, IoT solutions, cloud storage and contact centre solutions. Serving customers across a multitude of economic sectors, the company's tailored solutions are shaped to transform businesses of all sizes to help them achieve growth and contribute to Oman's development.

SRMG participates in the Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity

SRMG, one of the largest global media groups in the Middle East, is heading to Cannes Lions International Festival of Creativity for the first time, showcasing the best and brightest MENA media creatives and innovators.

Now in its 68th year, the Cannes Lions festival is world-renowned as the destination of creative excellence with its annual forum for the media and creative industries, a press release said.

SRMG CEO Jomana Rashed al Rashid said attending Cannes

Lions is the perfect opportunity for SRMG to highlight the vast array of talent and partnership opportunities available in MENA on a global stage.

"As one of the Middle East's most established and largest media groups and the only publicly listed media company, SRMG is uniquely placed to celebrate the success of the industry and explore future trends. Participating in the Cannes Lions festival gives SRMG an opportunity to showcase what we, and the MENA region, have to offer in terms of

talent, innovation, and creativity.

Media as we know it is changing and SRMG is taking a leading role in the transforming media landscape and preparing for opportunities that the future of media presents," she said.

The Cannes Lions' 2022 theme is 'Focus on the Future' and SRMG has crafted a bespoke programme of activations with experts from leading global and MENA companies, industry thought leaders and some of the world's biggest creative innovators.

Highest dinner show in Dubai opens

'53', the highest dinner show in the GCC, located on the 53rd floor of the Sheraton Grand Hotel on Sheik Zayed Road, opens today (June 15).

The brainchild of a team of industry specialists, innovators, and distinguished hospitality and event production experts, 53 is

entering the luxury-dining and experiential fun-dining scene with the focus of creating the '360 dining experience,' a press release said.

Boasting stunning interior décor with views over the Dubai skyline from its glass windows, inviting patrons to enjoy sun-

downers from an early evening and a unique approach to multicultural and Mediterranean cuisine, 53 is set up to raise to the top as a Dubai-based luxury-dining and experiential dinner show.

The founders of 53 saw an opportunity to deliver something currently lacking in the market.

AGAE's Changan EADO PLUS now available at low EMIs

Arabian Gulf Automobiles and Equipment (AGAE), which is part of Bahwan International Group, has announced a low EMI on Changan EADO Plus model 2023.

Customers can now avail an exceptionally low EMI rate of RO104 on Changan EADO Plus model (terms and conditions apply). EMI is calculated based on 20% down payment for eight years loan tenure. It is subject to credit approvals from banks and applicable on vehicles purchased for personal use, a press release said.

The all-new Changan EADO Plus 2023 model comes with two engine variants - 1.4 Turbo and 1.6ltr engine. The 1.4 Turbo is equipped with 7speed dual clutch transmission and 1.6ltr engine is equipped with CVT.



The 'beyond your expectation' Changan EADO Plus is a compact yet aggressive family sedan with premium styling, luxurious interior, and plenty of safety features. With intelligent safety fea-

tures to assist, EADO Plus lets drivers be at peace when on the road. The top of the line EADO Plus comes with Dual 10" screens for driving convenience, adaptive cruise control,

panoramic sunroof, 360 degree camera, side airbags, navigation, dual exhaust features available mostly in luxury sedans.

A spokesperson for AGAE said, "We are pleased to offer a low EMI on the 2023 model of Changan EADO Plus. It is truly beyond one's expectation. It is stylish, energetic, and practical and has a perfect design that integrates fashion with function. As a family car it impresses with its appealing exterior, luxurious and spacious interior, interactive dashboard, driver-assist features for utmost safety."

Some of the standout features of Changan EADO Plus 1.4 Turbo are Star Eye LED Headlamp with point grille, 7" Dual Tone Alloy Wheels, Full

LCD Integrated Dual Screens, Sport Seats in Leather, Rear AC vents, Front Collision Warning and fuel efficiency of 18.3 Km / Ltr as per GSO conditions

The Changan EADO Plus 1.6ltr has attractive features such as LED DRLs with

Star eye LED Headlamp, Dual Tone 16" Alloy Wheels, Electric Sunroof, 10" Infotainment Touch Screen, Digital Instrument Clus-

ter, remote engine start/stop with keyless entry, front airbags, rear view camera and electronic parking brake.



Phaze Ventures expands partnership with Microsoft

Venture capital firm Phaze Ventures and Microsoft deepened their commitment to supporting Oman's economic vision on the third day of COMEX 2022 by announcing the expansion of their partnership to empower startups and entrepreneurs in the sultanate.

The two companies signed a new Memorandum of Understanding that will see Microsoft support startups and entrepreneurs which the Omani venture capital group identifies to develop the necessary foundational capabilities for their business ventures to scale and grow with Microsoft Cloud, a press release said.

Under the agreement, Microsoft and Phaze Ventures will work together on a roadmap and go-to-market plan to promote and accelerate the growth of the country's small business and startup ecosystems by driving bottom-line business value and accelerating innovation.

Additionally, Microsoft will provide guidance to Phaze Ven-



tures-sourced startup leads to register for the Microsoft for Startups program and invite eligible startups to Microsoft's available skilling workshops.

As part of the collaboration, Phaze Ventures will consider Microsoft Azure as the preferred cloud platform for current and future startups and entrepreneurs with reference to the Microsoft Founders Hub programme and continuously sync with Microsoft on upcoming business ventures.

"Like Phaze Ventures, Microsoft understands that the impact of the startup sector on an

economy can be astronomical as they significantly contribute to employment, development and growth," said Mohammed al Wahaibi, co-founder of Phaze Ventures.

"This partnership with Microsoft will enable us to ensure that entrepreneurs are able to continue to fuel innovation and enhance Oman's competitiveness."

"Oman's startup and entrepreneurship ecosystem has showcased significant resilience and is expanding steadily as the country pursues its vision to become an innovation hub," said Sheikh Saif Hilal al Hosni, country manager at Microsoft Oman and Bahrain. "As a trusted partner in the sultanate's digital transformation, it is our ambition to empower startups and entrepreneurs across Oman to harness technology that will power their innovation, enable them to scale and grow, and ultimately facilitate the development of a competitive, diversified and integrated economy."

Inaction on climate change could cost US\$178tn

A new report from the Deloitte Center for Sustainable Progress (DCSP) released during the World Economic Forum's annual meeting last week indicates that — if left unchecked — climate change could cost the global economy US\$178 trillion over the next 50 years, or a 7.6% cut to global gross domestic product (GDP) in the year 2070 alone.

If global warming reaches around 3°C toward the century's end, the toll on human lives could be significant — disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable and leading to loss of productivity and employment, food and water scarcity, worsening health and well-being, and ushering in an overall lower standard of living globally, a press release said.

Deloitte's Global Turning Point Report is based on research conducted by the Deloitte Economics Institute. The report analyzed 15 geographies in Asia Pacific, Europe, and the Americas, and found that if global leaders unite in a systemic net-zero transition, the global economy could see new five-decade gains of US\$43tn — a boost to global GDP of 3.8% in 2070.

"The numbers speak for themselves and businesses should be reimagining their practices to help build a more sustainable future for all. Taking small steps in the right direction will pay dividends in the future. It has become clear that if businesses do not prioritise sustainability and understand the impact they are having on the environment, valuable talent, revenue and market share may be lost," said Mutasem Dajani, CEO, Deloitte Middle East.

Transforming the economy for a low-carbon future will require extensive coordination and global collaboration throughout industries and geographies. Governments will need to collaborate closely with the financial services and technology sectors — leading the charge on sustainable progress through global policymaking, greater investment in clean energy systems, and a new mix of green technologies across industries.

According to the Deloitte Economic Institute's research, collectively pivoting from an economy reliant on fossil fuels to an economy primarily powered by renewable energy would spur new sources of growth and job creation. Global cooperation and regulation are vital to setting the stage for a successful transformation.

"It's important that the global economy evolves to meet the challenges of climate change," said Dr Pradeep Philip, Deloitte Economics Institute. "Our analysis shows that a low-carbon future is not only a societal imperative but an economic one. We already have the technologies, business models, and policy approaches to simultaneously combat the climate crisis and unlock significant economic growth, but we need governments, businesses, and communities globally to align on a pathway toward a net-zero future."

"In order to find new and lasting solutions to these societal challenges, we must model new forms of cooperation and pursue a multi-party, holistic approach. The Turning Point analysis lays a powerful foundation of economic benefit and growth for decision-makers, and influencers to work from for individual and shared prosperity," said Prof Dr Bernhard Lorentz, founding chair of DCSP and Deloitte Global Consulting Sustainability & Climate leader.

UAE, KSA retain regional CSR leadership

The UAE and KSA have emerged as regional leaders in the awareness and adoption of corporate social responsibility (CSR) practices based on the findings of the second edition of the MENA CSR Survey Report.

The survey was conducted by Cicero & Bernay Communication Consultancy (C&B), a leading MENA agency headquartered in Dubai, in partnership with 3Gem Research and Insights, a global research partner, a press release said.

The annually conducted survey studies the understanding and impact of CSR across select countries in the GCC, Levant, and North Africa. In this year's report, the UAE and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia lead the way and emerge as leaders, retaining their position from the report's previous 2020 edition.

In total, 263 C-suite government, aviation, automotive,



banking and finance, construction and real estate, healthcare, and transport executives and corporate leaders from across the MENA region were surveyed, including the UAE, the KSA, the greater GCC, and Egypt. The respondents were asked a series of CSR-related questions to gauge overall regional perception.

Nine in ten respondents from the MENA region feel that adopting CSR practices will have a positive effect on a company's business. Around 81% of UAE managers state that the CSR for their company is either part of their DNA or one of the top priorities, while a soaring 95% in the KSA agree to the same. Also, nine in ten managers in the UAE, compared to eight in ten in the KSA, chose their own country as being the most active in terms of CSR.

Ahmad Itani, founder and CEO of C&B and chairman of

PRCA MENA, said, "Our annual CSR Survey report is a way of gauging the comprehension and adoption of CSR among C-suite executives in the region. For us in the UAE, we were privileged to witness firsthand the positive impact of CSR over the past two years, under the guidance of our wise leadership. When we published our survey in 2020, our aim was, and still is, to inspire more regional social responsibility among organisations and highlight the incredible benefit such initiatives have on corporate cultures and their stakeholders on the path towards positioning the MENA at the forefront of global CSR."

Darren Ryan, global creative director - 3Gem Research and Insights, added, "It was encouraging to find that C-suite executives' understanding of corporate social responsibility in the MENA region is very high."

Trend Micro launches most powerful and complete security platform

Trend Micro Incorporated, a global leader in cybersecurity solutions, announced the launch of Trend Micro One, a unified cybersecurity platform with a growing list of ecosystem technology partners that enables customers to better understand, communicate, and lower cyber risks.

Organisations are battling on all fronts to face mounting cyber risks from their complex and growing attack surface with stretched teams and siloed security products.

The unified security platform approach delivers a continuous lifecycle of risk and threat assessment with attack surface discovery, cyber risk analysis, and threat mitigation and response, a press release said.

"Enterprises of all sizes in Oman and across the MEA region have undergone a transformational shift due to the accelerated digital transformation in the last few months," said Dr Moataz Bin Ali, area



vice president and managing director, MEA, Trend Micro.

"The recent changes have also presented a more complex threat environment for organisations to navigate through. With the continued migration to the cloud and the emergence of hybrid cloud op-

erations, bad actors are growing more sophisticated in their attacks, and we are confident that Trend Micro One is the perfect shield to counter them.

"This next-generation solution, which combines numerous sources of asset and risk visibility, will assist regional

firms in achieving the strongest security posture while accelerating their digital journey, resulting in a safer digital environment to do business and thrive."

As a unified platform, Trend Micro One delivers powerful risk assessment capabilities, but the ecosystem partners extend that to make it the most complete in the industry.

Aiming to create greater impact, the new Trend Micro One can be a necessary tool to battle the current and future challenges of the evolving threat landscape, as highlighted in the latest Trend Micro 2021 Annual Cybersecurity Report: Navigating New Frontiers. In the MENA region, industry-leading solutions have detected and blocked over 436 million (436,085,099) email threats, more than 20.5 million (20,572,364) malware attacks, and over 80 million (80,191,815) URL victims' attacks.

GCET holds 'space' contest on urban planning

The Department of Urban Planning and Environmental Management in Global College of Engineering and Technology (GCET) organised a 'Space' competition for its students to design and plan the external spaces of the college campus.

Students submitted suggestions and ideas along with the plans and drawings required for the external spaces of the college campus, including seating and rest areas for individuals and groups.

Additionally, they visualised planting trees, increasing green areas to overcome high temperatures exposure, and building a multi-purpose plaza or an external theater for outdoor activities and corridors covered with green shade structures, a press release said. As an essential requirement, students carried out their designs and blueprints within a limited budget set by the college. Therefore, out of motivation, the best design would only be implemented.

Dr Amna al Saadi, head of the Department of Urban Planning and Environmental Manage-



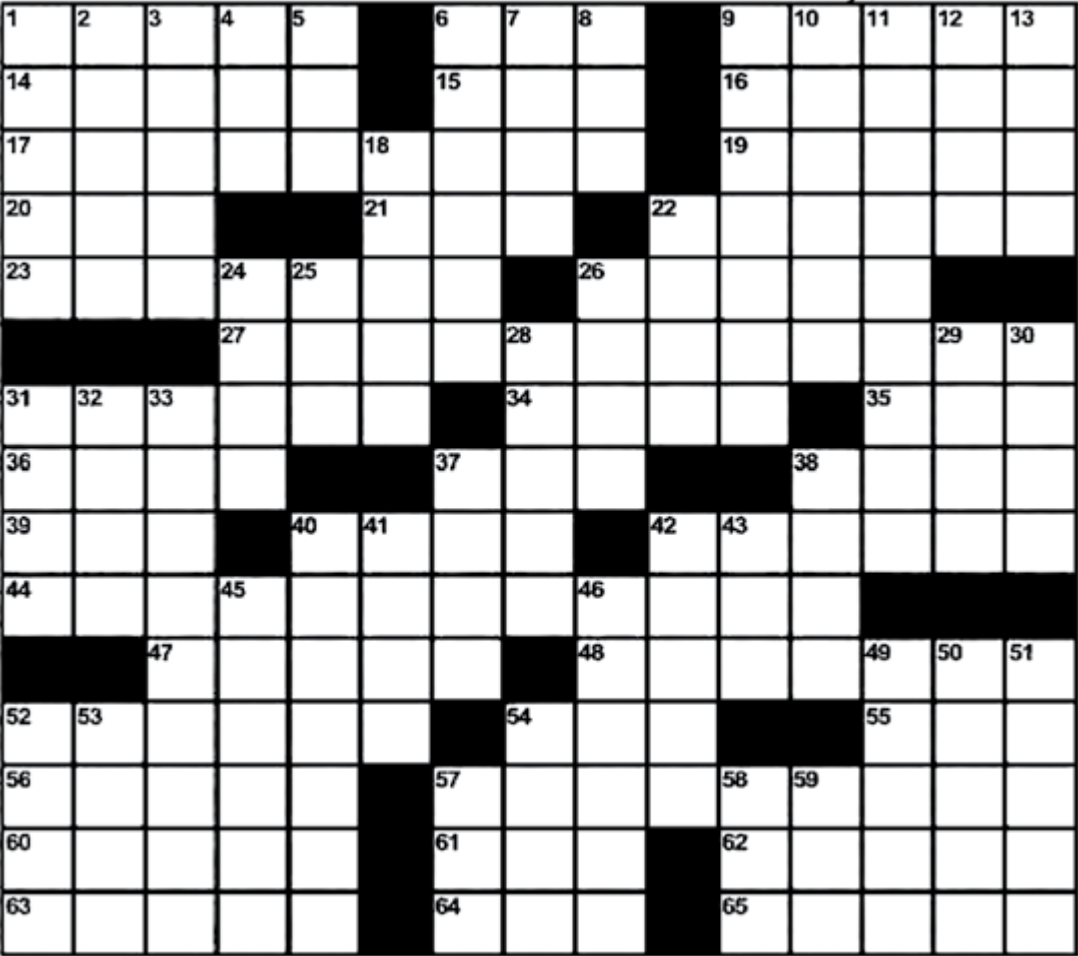
ment, said, "Such competitions encourage students to think creatively, and enhance the role of the department's various academic majors, which are Urban and Regional Planning, Environmental Management and Practices, and Architecture and Design Technology, to create integrated and sustainable solutions.

The winning projects achieved the evaluation criteria which were to meet the user's needs at lower costs in order to adapt to the surrounding environment and contribute to its preservation.

In the future, the department will organise similar competitions to refine students' skills and boost their role in providing solutions that involve smart cities industry development."

In this regard, she added, "GCET aims to achieve the method of teaching by applying what they have learned in practice and evaluate themselves. As a result, this would motivate them to continue with self-learning."

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**

 - 1) Mentally acute
 - 6) Masseuse employer
 - 9) "Otherwise ... "
 - 14) Minute amounts
 - 15) Female turkey attitude
 - 16) "If a tree falls in the forest
 - 17) Adjective for a he-man
 - 19) Bonehead
 - 20) Kind of card
 - 21) Writer Kesey
 - 22) Cried out, as in pain
 - 23) Like some mounted
 - 26) Silly prank
 - 27) Features of some
 - 31) Consolation prize recipients
 - 34) Egyptian cross
 - 35) Love handles, essentially
 - 36) "Joie de vivre"
 - 37) Moneypenny's trio
 - 38) Round flatbread
 - 39) Zinger deliverer
 - " 40) Fiddling with a bow
 - 42) "I couldn't care less"
 - 44) Marathon at Camden

Yards
- 47) Bose product
 - 48) Dead end
 - 52) Become conscious
 - 54) Move on snow
 - 55) Treat, as a hide
 - 56) Words to a hitchhiker
 - 57) David Lynch TV series
 - 60) Big-time social gathering
 - 61) Contained
 - 62) Goodbye, in Aries
 - 63) Wetland plant
 - 64) Trip for a narcissist?
 - 65) Be the_ for wear

DOWN

 - 1) Shankar's instrument
 - 2) Book category
 - 3) Makeup of matter
 - 4) The "so few" Churchill referred to
 - 5) Letters on tires
 - 6) "Fiddler on the Roof" setting
 - 7) Ball_ hammer
 - 8) " _ I quote ... "
 - 9) Comprehensive
 - 10) More disgusting
 - 11) Charitable organization, often
 - 12) "Going_ going ... "
 - 13)_ off(angry)
 - 18) Cold-water shorebirds
 - 22) Give a good tug
 - 24) Genesis garden
 - 25) Mangy mutt
 - 26) Inmates
 - 28) Birch bark boat
 - 29) Groundwork for plaster
 - 30) Order to a dog
 - 31) Like blue limericks
 - 32) Eclectic assortment
 - 33) Soaked through and through
 - 37) Sound in an empty room
 - 38) "Chute" or "mount" attachment
 - 40) Somewhat firm, as pasta
 - 41) Equestrian's strap
 - 42) _ asst. (office aide)
 - 43) Cheerleader's asset
 - 45) Using the oven
 - 46) Japanese martial art
 - 49) Landing connector
 - 50) "Goodness_ alive!"
 - 51) Follow afterward
- 52) A G rating admits them all

53) Fairly common contraction

54) Ill-gotten gain

57) Common title word

58) Furry foot

59) Tokyo, once
- NOTE PAD**
-

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You've got quite a day ahead of you, so get yourself in high gear as soon as possible. Of course, no one has ever really had to prompt you to get your show on the road, and you're pretty much always the first one in line.

Today, though, you're the one who's talking everyone nearby into or out of whatever you see fit, and you should have remarkable success at it too.

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

The vibes you're emanating right now can only lead to one thing, no matter what: serious attraction! If you're already looking for love, you're pretty much guaranteed success. Your romantic target simply can't resist. If you're not already happily partnered, that's a different story. Move some of that charm away from the person you've been inadvertently charging up and practice being a bit less irresistible, for the sake of the future.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

You're pretty used to having a strong fan base.

That's thanks in part to your well-known hypnotic effect on the average person, but also because of all the energy and enthusiasm you put out every single day. At the moment, though, you'd better wield this weapon carefully, because your already formidable charm is even harder to resist. It's downright impossible for mere mortals to say no to you.

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

You've always been respectful to your elders, and you've done everything you can for all parties concerned for as long as you can remember.

You've gone even further above and beyond the call of duty in recent days and weeks, so it's definitely time for you to take off and do your own thing for a while. Fasten your seat belt and prepare for some well-deserved fun!

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

You've always been no-nonsense, especially when it comes to your work. Your colleagues are more than willing to attest to that, but if some higher-up drops the ball in any way now, no one needs to say a word.

You're definitely ready to let them have it, no matter where you are or who happens to be in the vicinity. Just be careful. Regular paychecks come in handy!

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Once again you're asked to take charge of a situation that's been left unmanaged. Fortunately, you enjoy this sort of challenge. And with recent successes under your belt, you should be even more confident. You're also in the mood for it, which always helps. Remind everyone who wants some of your recreational time that you don't have any coming up soon.

They're sure to understand.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Everyone knows when you're excited. In fact, it's usually the natural state of affairs when your eyes are open! You approach almost every day with the kind of excitement most people only see (and love) in children. It's refreshing and highly contagious.

Your mission today is to recognize that wonderful quality and spread it around some more. Your kind of enthusiasm is perfect for sharing with those you know and love.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You're somewhat restless and probably quite eager to jump out of your rut, for the moment, at least.

You should have absolutely no problem finding someone to head out with you, and with some encouragement, they should have no problem taking some time off.

Don't hesitate to ask them along for the ride. You hate to do anything alone, especially when you're off on an adventure.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

You've got a lot going on at home now, but someone close seems to be intent on getting you to take a trip. They want you on their arm in some exotic location, and they may present their case persuasively.

Of course, it's all up to you, so make the call. If you can take the time now, you need to go for it, but if you've got pressing responsibilities, it's time for negotiation.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You've never been a fan of going to bed angry or even just uncertain about feelings, for that matter. If you and someone close have unresolved issues, don't let them continue any longer. Lure them over to your place, maybe with the promise of one of your amazing home-cooked meals, and don't let them even think about leaving until you've cleared the air. There's just no substitute for honesty, and you know it.

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

This is one of those days that's impossible to arrange for and difficult to forget. Your job is to spend each and every minute with someone who can appreciate how special it is. Of course, that shouldn't be a problem for someone like you.

It may be tough to decide which deserving soul to give this time to, but if that's your worst problem, nobody is likely to be sympathetic to your plight.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

You and someone close, maybe your current partner, maybe a crush or someone in between, are taking bigger steps together. You're sure of your feelings and expect they feel the same.

What's the next step? You need to talk to them about it and let them know what you're feeling.

An invitation to dinner is a great place to start. If all goes well, order one dessert and two forks!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Who wrote the music for the musical "A Chorus Line"?

A. Lionel Bart

B. Stephen Sondheim

C. Leonard Bernstein

D. Marvin Hamlisch

02. Indycar sportsman Scott Dixon, who won his first Indy championship in 2000 and whose ratio of wins to career starts is the best of all-time regular drivers in the IRL, comes from where?

A. Japan

B. New Zealand

C. Alaska

D. New Guinea

03. What word describes an open artificial water channel, in the form of a gravity chute, that leads water from a diversion dam or weir?

A. Flood

B. Flume

C. Fluke

D. Fleet

Answers: 1.D 2.B 3.B

KIDS COLOURING

BOGGLER

S	C	X	A
L	I	D	E
D	E	M	E
E	P	A	H

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

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

WORD BUILDER

McKENZIE

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

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

Biden to visit Mideast, meet Saudi leader

Biden will travel to Israel, the Palestinian West Bank and Saudi Arabia from July 13-16

Washington, US - US President Joe Biden will make history next month with a direct flight between Israel and Saudi Arabia where he will meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, abandoning efforts to ostracize the oil kingdom's de facto leader over the murder of a dissident.

The White House ended weeks of speculation on Tuesday, announcing that Biden will travel to Israel, the Palestinian West Bank and Saudi Arabia from July 13-16. This will be Biden's first trip to the Middle East as president and in addition to meetings with individual leaders in all three places, he will attend a regional Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Saudi Arabia.

There is widespread expectation that Biden hopes to secure a boost in Saudi oil production, in an attempt to tame spiralling fuel costs and inflation at home ahead of midterm congressional elections in which his Democratic party risks a drubbing.

Whatever the outcome, his meeting with the crown prince, often referred to as MBS, will mark a controversial policy shift.

As a presidential candidate, Biden said the 2018 murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi - a Saudi-born US resident known for writing critical articles about Saudi rulers in The Washington Post - had made the country a 'pariah'.

US intelligence findings released by the Biden administration identified MBS as the



US President Joe Biden makes his way to board Air Force One before departing from Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland on Tuesday (AFP)

This will be Biden's first trip to the Middle East as president and in addition to meetings with individual leaders in all three places, he will attend a regional Gulf Cooperation Council summit

mastermind of the operation.

While the White House confirmed that 'energy security' will be a topic in Saudi Arabia, officials stressed that the whole trip

has broader diplomatic aims.

Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre emphasised that 'this visit to the Middle East region culminates months of diplomacy', as

opposed to being driven by recent domestic political concerns.

Biden will engage with nearly a dozen leaders during the brief yet intense journey, demonstrating 'the return of American leadership', a senior US official told reporters.

Re-establishing Palestinian links

The tour starts with meeting Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Israel, a country Biden first visited

nearly 50 years ago as a young senator. There will be emphasis on the lavish US support for Israel's armed forces, including the Iron Dome anti-missile defense system, at a time of tension over the ongoing failure to resurrect an international pact curtailing Iran's nuclear development.

"While in Israel, the president will likely visit an area where these defensive systems are utilised, as well as discuss new innovations between our countries that use laser technologies to defeat missiles and other airborne threats," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "The president will reaffirm the ironclad commitment to Israel's security."

Biden will meet Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas, likely in Bethlehem, the US official said.

Biden will stress 'his lifelong commitment to a two state solution' for Palestinians and Israelis and restore US ties with Palestinians that were 'nearly severed' under his predecessor Donald Trump.

History and controversy

The part of the trip that will make history - and generate the most chatter - comes at the end.

Biden's flight from Israel to Jeddah will be the first by a US president from Israel to an Arab state that does not recognise the country. In 2017, Trump made the journey in reverse.

Once there, Biden will attend

the Gulf Cooperation Council with leaders from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as being joined by the leaders of Egypt, Iraq and Jordan, the US official said.

A priority for Biden will be maintaining the recently extended truce in Yemen, as well as deterring Iran, 'advancing human rights, and ensuring global energy and food security', the official said. Biden will also join a virtual summit of the so-called I2-U2 diplomatic group of India, Israel, the UAE and the United States, with focus on 'the food security crisis' sparked by Russia's invasion of major agricultural exporter Ukraine.

However, the most closely watched meeting will be between Biden and MBS.

"We can expect the president to see the crown prince," the US official said, while rejecting the notion that Biden was retreating from his principles.

'US policy demanded recalibration of relations' after the Khashoggi murder, 'not a rupture', the official said.

The official pointed out that Saudi Arabia has been a strategic US partner for eight decades and is home to some 70,000 Americans. The visit, according to the official, is 'the smart thing to do at the right time and offers opportunity for significant gains for the United States, for Saudi Arabia, for the Middle East region'.

AFP

UN seeks \$426mn for 'starving' S Sudan

Geneva, Switzerland - The UN's World Food Programme on Tuesday appealed for US\$426mn to stave off famine in South Sudan, where conflict and floods have placed millions at risk.

"We are already in a crisis, but we need to restore food assistance... to prevent people from falling into starvation and famine. To do so, we urgently require US\$426mn for the next six months," WFP's programme officer for South Sudan, Adeyinka Badejo, told reporters.

"South Sudan is facing its hungriest year since independence," Badejo warned from the capital Juba. The reasons, she said, were accumulative - 'continuing subnational conflict, climate crisis of three consecutive years of floods, and severe economic shocks exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, and now the war in Ukraine'.

The youngest country in the world, South Sudan has experienced chronic instability since becoming independent from Sudan in 2011.

A civil war between 2013-2018 left nearly 400,000 dead and millions displaced.

A peace accord provided for a power-sharing arrangement in a unity government gathering the two rivals, President Salva Kiir and Vice President Riek Machar.

AFP



A protester holds a placard as she stands outside the Home Office in central London on Monday (AFP)

UK govt defends Rwanda migrant deportation policy

London, UK - The UK government on Tuesday defended its controversial policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, even as the entire senior leadership of the Church of England branded it shameful and immoral.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss insisted the first flight to Kigali would take off no matter how many people were on board, after 23 of the 31 migrants had their tickets cancelled.

"We're expecting to send the flight later today," she told Sky News, as fresh protests were held at a detention centre near London Gatwick airport.

Truss said she was unable to confirm how many people would be on the charter flight to Kigali, which was due to leave from an undisclosed airport on Tuesday night. But she said the policy, which the UN refugee agency has also criticised as 'all wrong', was vital to smash the business model of human-trafficking gangs exploiting vulnerable migrants.

Record numbers of migrants have made the perilous Channel crossing from northern France, heaping pressure on the government in London to act after it promised to tighten borders after Brexit.

Campaigners supporting mi-

grants and a union representing Border Force workers who will have to carry out the policy failed in a legal challenge to stop the deportations.

After the latest attempt was thrown out on Monday, the two senior-most clerics in the Church of England and 23 bishops called the policy 'immoral' and said it 'shames Britain'.

"They (migrants) are the vulnerable that the Old Testament calls us to value," Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby and Archbishop of York Stephen Cottrell wrote in a letter to *The Times*.

"We cannot offer asylum to everyone, but we must not outsource our ethical responsibilities, or discard international law - which protects the right to claim asylum." At the weekend, it was reported that Queen Elizabeth II's heir, Prince Charles, had privately described the government's plan as 'appalling'.

Truss, though, hit back. "The people who are immoral in this case are the people traffickers trading on human misery," she said.

"Our policy is completely legal. It's completely moral," she added, accusing critics of having no alternative plan.

AFP

Revered Israeli writer A B Yehoshua dies aged 85

Jerusalem - Avraham B Yehoshua, one of Israel's most revered and prolific novelists and a vocal supporter of Palestinian rights, has died aged 85, Tel Aviv's Ichilov hospital said on Tuesday.

Yehoshua, who was born in Jerusalem in 1936 to parents with roots in Greece and Morocco, published his first collection of short stories in 1963.

Decades of critically-acclaimed writing saw him win a string of international awards and his works translated into more than 30 languages.

In 2012, he won France's Medici literature prize -



This file photo shows Avraham B Yehoshua posing with his book 'Retrospective' in Paris on November 6, 2012 (AFP)

awarded to a writer whose fame has not yet matched their talent - for a translated version of his novel *The Retrospective*.

Nitza Ben-Dov, a literature

professor who taught at Haifa University with Yehoshua described him as 'our greatest author', whose writing encompassed every literary

genre and evolved over the years.

"He moved from dreamy surreal stories, disconnected from time and place, to works anchored in the Israeli culture and existence," she said, characterising his later works as 'very psychological' at the influence of his wife, who was a psychoanalyst.

Yehoshua was a 'warm and open' man hungry for recognition, Ben-Dov said, noting he could also be painfully direct in conversation. "He was a complex man whose attitude to the world was ambivalent," she said.

"His awareness of the human complexity, which he drew from his own experience, made his

work multi-faceted."

An advocate for Palestinians and who supported leftwing Israeli parties, Yehoshua was also a member of the public council of prominent Israeli rights group B'tselem, which is fiercely critical of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. The group said Yehoshua had 'dedicated his time and energy to equality, peace and human rights to all people'.

Ben-Dov called Yehoshua 'a great patriot' who believed Jews could not be complete as people living outside of Israel, and whose writing reflected a deep connection to the Israeli experience.

AFP

Missing in Amazon: Human remains found



Indigenous members of the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley look for clues that lead to the whereabouts of Dom Phillips and Bruno Pereira, in Vale do Javari, state of Amazonas, Brazil, on Monday (AFP)

two, including Pereira's health card, pants and boots, as well as Phillips's backpack and clothing.

Bolsonaro, whose government has faced accusations of failing to act urgently enough in the case, said hope was fading.

"Because of the time that's passed - eight days now, approaching the ninth - it's going to be very difficult to find them alive," the president told CBN Recife radio.

"I pray to God for that to hap-

pen, but the information and evidence we're getting suggest the opposite."

'Upset and distressed'

Phillips's niece Dominique Davies told AFP via text message that authorities had informed the family two bodies had been found. "We are waiting on confirmation from the federal police (in Brazil) as to whether they are Dom and Bruno. We all remain upset and distressed at this

time," she said.

Britain's Guardian newspaper, where Phillips was a regular contributor, said the bodies were found tied to a tree, according to information given to Phillips's family by an aide to Brazil's ambassador in London.

Federal police said in a statement that reports that Phillips and Pereira's bodies had been found were incorrect. And the Union of Indigenous Peoples of the Javari Valley (UNIVAJA),

which is taking part in the search, denied two bodies had been found.

The police have confirmed they are analysing a blood sample and suspected human remains found during the search to determine whether they are from the missing men.

They said the results of these analyses are expected 'during this week'.

Pereira's wife Beatriz Matos said on Monday on Twitter that the police had confirmed 'no body was found'.

She added that 'the confusion caused by the Brazilian embassy in London cannot demobilise the searches', which she said must be 'intensified'.

"We the family members need answers and certainty, and only with real evidence will we have that," Matos said.

Brazilian police have arrested a suspect in the case, 41-year-old Amarildo Costa de Oliveira, nicknamed 'Pelado'.

Witnesses say they saw him threaten Phillips and Pereira prior to their disappearance, then pursue them in his boat just before they disappeared.

AFP

US, S Korea warn of swift reply if N Korea conducts nuclear test

Washington, US - The United States and South Korea warned on Monday of a swift response if North Korea conducts a nuclear test, including US military 'adjustments', but again offered talks as a way out.

The two allies say that North Korea could at any time test its first nuclear weapon since 2017, after months of escalating tensions including missile tests and Pyongyang's rebuffing of overtures from President Joe Biden's administration. Meeting his South Korean counterpart, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that the United States was working with allies in Tokyo and Seoul 'to be able to respond quickly should the North Koreans proceed with such a test'.

"And we are prepared to make both short- and longer-term adjustments to our military posture as appropriate," he said. "Until the regime in Pyongyang changes course, we will continue to keep the pressure on."

But Blinken reiterated the United States has 'no hostile intent' toward the North, formally known as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

"We'll continue to reach out to the DPRK. We're committed to pursuing a diplomatic approach," Blinken said.

Both Blinken and South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin



Antony Blinken, the US Secretary of State shakes the hand of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea Park Jin after a press conference at the US State Department in Washington, DC on Monday (AFP)

said their government was ready to negotiate with Pyongyang 'without preconditions'.

But Blinken acknowledged there had been no response from North Korea, whose leader Kim Jong Un held three headline-grabbing summits with Biden's predecessor Donald Trump.

The Trump-Kim pageantry reduced tensions but produced no lasting agreement on the North's nuclear programme and Biden

has indicated that any talks with his administration would be at a lower level.

Some North Korea watchers have seen a potential diplomatic opening in Pyongyang's admission last month that it has an outbreak of COVID-19.

Blinken again said the United States was ready to send vaccines to North Korea, after a previous offer from Biden went ignored.

'Only political decision' left

Park said that Kim was at a 'crossroads' on whether to carry out another test and invite further international isolation and sanctions.

"I think that North Korea has now finished the preparation for another nuclear test and I think only political decision has to be made," Park said.

The United States attempted

to tighten sanctions on North Korea after it tested an intercontinental ballistic in defiance of UN resolutions but China and Russia vetoed the bid at the Security Council.

Park said that China, the North's primary ally, 'should play a very positive role to persuade North Korea' against a nuclear test. South Korea's new president, Yoon Suk-yeol, is a conservative who campaigned on a tougher approach than his dovish predecessor Moon Jae-in but has also offered talks.

"We are prepared to take a more flexible and open-minded approach to diplomacy vis-a-vis North Korea," he said.

Park also promised to improve cooperation with Japan, a fellow US ally whose relations with Seoul have long been tense over the legacies of Tokyo's brutal 1910-1945 colonial occupation of the Korean peninsula.

The Moon administration in 2019 said it would terminate a key intelligence-sharing pact with Japan, known as the GSOMIA, although it agreed at the last minute to extend it 'conditionally' after alarm in Washington. "We want GSOMIA to be normalised as soon as possible, together with the improvement of the Korea-Japan relationship, in order to deal with the threat from North Korea," Park said.

AFP



Theary Seng, dressed as Lady Liberty, shouts slogans in front of the Phnom Penh municipal court on Tuesday (AFP)

Cambodia convicts opposition figures in a mass trial

Phnom Penh, Cambodia - A Phnom Penh court convicted around 60 opposition figures including an outspoken US-Cambodian activist in a mass trial on Tuesday as long-serving leader Hun Sen cracks down on dissent ahead of national elections next year.

Opposition leader Sam Rainsy, who has lived in France since 2016 to avoid jail for convictions which he says were politically motivated, had another eight years added to his existing sentence.

Outside court, US-Cambodian lawyer and campaigner Theary Seng - dressed as the Statue of Liberty - was abruptly dragged into a car by police after receiving a six-year jail term for treason.

"I am ready for a guilty verdict because this regime will not let me go free," Theary Seng said before her conviction.

"It will be an unfair and unjust verdict because I am innocent, the others charged with me are innocent," the 51-year-old added.

Patrick Murphy, the US Ambassador to Cambodia, tweeted he was 'deeply troubled' by the verdict against Seng Theary.

"Freedom of expression and association, and tolerance of dissenting views, are vital components of democracy," the ambassador said, calling for her release.

'Living in a dictatorship'

Theary Seng is among scores caught up in a push to detain and arrest former members of the now-dissolved opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), human rights defenders, and any dissenting voices to the administration.

The case is linked to Sam

Rainsy's failed attempt to return to Cambodia in 2019 - moves characterised by the government as an aborted bid to overthrow Hun Sen.

The charges faced by those convicted on Tuesday ranged from treason to incitement and conspiracy.

Several defendants have already been jailed, while many remain at large or have fled Cambodia.

"The mass trials against political opposition members are really about preventing any electoral challenge to Prime Minister Hun Sen's rule, but they have also come to symbolise the death of Cambodia's democracy," Human Rights Watch spokesman Phil Robertson said.

"By creating a political dynamic that relies on intimidation and persecution of government critics, Hun Sen demonstrates his total disregard for democratic rights." The prime minister is one of the world's longest-serving leaders, having been in power for 37 years, and is reportedly grooming his eldest son to take the reins.

Theary Seng was charged by the Phnom Penh Municipal Court with conspiracy to commit treason and incitement to commit a felony.

"We are living in a dictatorship," she said, claiming Hun Sen's government 'uses the law as a weapon against its own people'. She added that 'this regime is imprisoning liberty and freedom'. Ahead of a recent local poll, the United Nations Human Rights Office said it was disturbed by reports of opposition obstruction in a 'paralysing political environment'.

Hun Sen's political party later announced a landslide win.

AFP

US approves first pill for treatment of alopecia

Washington, US - The Food and Drug Administration on Monday approved a drug called baricitinib as the first oral tablet for treating severe alopecia areata, an autoimmune disorder affecting more than 300,000 people in the United States every year.

Alopecia causes either temporary or permanent patchy hair loss that can affect any hair-bearing site of the body, leading to emotional distress.

The condition has come to the fore recently through high-profile cases including Hollywood actress Jada Pinkett Smith and congresswoman Ayanna Pressley.

"Access to safe and effective treatment options is crucial for



This file photo shows US actor Will Smith and his wife actress Jada Pinkett Smith attending the 94th Oscars in Hollywood on March 27, this year (AFP)

the significant number of Americans affected by severe alope-

cia," said FDA official Kendall Marcus in a statement.

"Today's approval will help fulfill a significant unmet need for patients with severe alopecia areata."

Baricitinib, which is made by US pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and known by the trade name Olumiant, belongs to a class of drugs called Janus kinase inhibitors. It works by interfering with the cellular pathway that leads to inflammation.

Its approval for use against alopecia was based on the results of two randomised, controlled clinical trials involving a total 1,200 adults with severe alopecia.

Each trial split participants into three groups: a placebo group, a group that received a

two-milligram dose every day, and a group that received a four-milligram dose every day.

After 36 weeks, almost 40 per cent of those on the higher dose grew back 80 per cent of their scalp hair, compared to around 23 per cent of the lower dose group, and five percent of the placebo group.

Around 45 per cent of people in the higher dose group also saw significant eyebrow and eyelash regrowth.

The most common side effects included upper respiratory tract infections, headaches, acne, high cholesterol, and increase of an enzyme called creatine phosphokinase.

AFP

Germany, Switzerland arrest 'IS sympathisers'

Berlin, Germany - Four suspected members or sympathisers of the Islamic State group have been detained in Germany and Switzerland in a cross-border operation, prosecutors from the two countries said on Tuesday.

In Switzerland, three people were picked up in the cantons of Zurich, Sankt Gallen and Lucerne, national authorities said, adding that seven further searches were also carried out.

The suspects, whose identities were not released, are accused of 'participation in or support for the outlawed organisation Islamic State'.

In Germany, a man was detained in the western town of Roemerberg, federal prosecutors said.

Identified only as Aleem N., he is 'strongly suspected of preparing a serious violent attack threatening the security of the state and of belonging to a foreign terrorist organisation'.

He is believed to have attempted to travel from Germany via Turkey to Syria in September 2020.

"In Syria, the suspect wanted to join the foreign terrorist organisation Islamic State, attain military training and then take part in combat or terrorist attacks," the federal prosecutor's office said in a statement.

However, Aleem N. was unable to reach Syria for reasons that were not immediately clear and returned to Germany.

"At the latest in April 2021 he joined IS in Germany and carried out vast propaganda activities for the group," prosecutors said.

His duties included 'mainly translating official texts, videos and audio messages by IS from Arabic into German and distributing them on various Telegram channels in German-speaking areas'.

"IS considered such activities to be equivalent to taking part directly in violent jihad," it added.

The suspect is also believed to have taken part in a telephone conversation with IS leaders in late 2021 to 'verify his reliability' before travelling to 'IS zones of operation'.

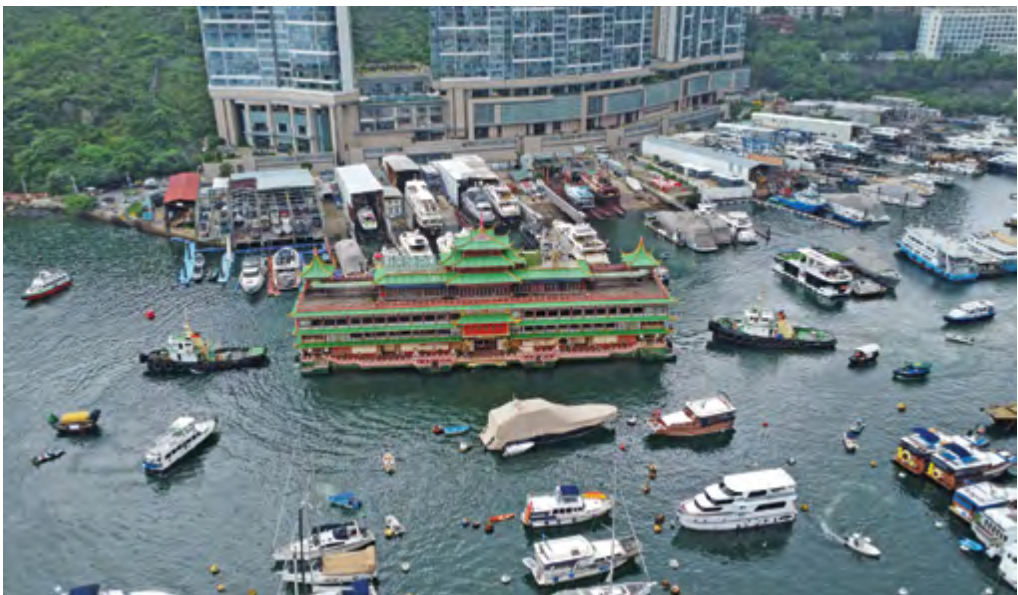
AFP

Famed Hong Kong floating restaurant towed away

Hong Kong, China - Hong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant, a famed but ageing tourist attraction that featured in multiple Cantonese and Hollywood films, was towed out of the city on Tuesday after the COVID pandemic finally sank the struggling business. The buoyant behemoth, which at 76 metres long could house 2,300 diners, set out shortly before noon from the southern Hong Kong Island typhoon shelter where it has sat for nearly half a century.

Designed like a Chinese imperial palace and once considered a must-see landmark, the restaurant drew visitors from Queen Elizabeth II to Tom Cruise, and featured in several films - including Steven Soderbergh's *Contagion*, about a deadly global pandemic. The lavish restaurant's operators cited the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason for finally closing its doors in March 2020, after around a decade of financial woes.

Restaurant owner Melco International Development announced last month that ahead of its licence expiration in June, Jumbo would leave Hong Kong



An aerial view shows a tugboat pulling Hong Kong's Jumbo Floating Restaurant, an iconic but aging tourist attraction designed like a Chinese imperial palace, out of Aberdeen Harbour on Tuesday (AFP)

and await a new operator at an undisclosed location.

Under overcast skies, a scattered group of onlookers gathered on the Aberdeen waterfront to see it be dragged away.

Watching the restaurant's ponderous progress across the shelter waters was Mr Wong, a 60-year-old man who told AFP he had come specially to see its departure.

"The exterior was for many years a symbol of Hong Kong," he said, adding he had eaten there once 20 years ago. "I believe it will come back and I look forward to it," he added wistfully.

Another spectator, who gave her name as Mrs Chan, said she had heard the news and came to take one last picture by the restaurant before it left.

"I think it is such a pity to see

it go," she said. "Jumbo has a long history and it has attracted many locals and tourists... It's a restaurant that's known to the world."

'Bidding farewell'

Opened in 1976 by the late casino tycoon Stanley Ho, the Jumbo Floating Restaurant embodied the height of luxury, reportedly costing more than

HK\$30mn (US\$3.8mn) to build.

It featured a 'dragon throne' in the style of the Ming dynasty as well as an opulent mural.

The throne was fondly remembered by one of those watching the restaurant's departure on Tuesday, a 24-year-old man surnamed Leung who said he had always begged his mother to let him sit on it when they visited for dim sum.

"There are quite some childhood memories for me," he said. "I feel a bit sad. (Coming here) to see it is like bidding my farewell."

Aberdeen harbour was traditionally a hotspot for seafood eateries - and fierce competition for customers only cooled when Jumbo's operators acquired its biggest competitor, Tai Pak Floating Restaurant, in the 1980s.

The restaurant was kept afloat by Hong Kong's booming tourism industry but its popularity had dimmed in recent years even before the coronavirus hit.

Restaurant operator Melco said last month the business had not been profitable and cumulative losses had exceeded HK\$100mn (US\$12.7mn).

AFP

Ukraine urges to speed up arms deliveries

Russian forces stepped up efforts to cut off Ukrainian troops in the key industrial city of Severodonetsk

Kramatorsk, Ukraine - Russian forces on Tuesday stepped up efforts to cut off Ukrainian troops in the key industrial city of Severodonetsk in the east of the country despite Ukrainians insisting they were holding on.

Moscow has laid siege for weeks to the cities of Severodonetsk and Lysychansk, which are separated by a river, as the last areas in the eastern Donbas region of Lugansk still under Ukrainian control.

The head of Severodonetsk's administration said 'massive shelling' had destroyed a third bridge linking the twin cities, but insisted his city was 'not isolated'.

"There are communication channels even if they are quite complicated," Oleksandr Stryuk told Ukrainian television. Ukraine's 'continue to defend the city' but that the situation on the ground 'changes every hour', he added.

On Monday, Sergiy Gaiday, governor of Lugansk, told Radio Free Europe that Russian forces



An aerial view shows destroyed houses after strike in the town of Pryvillya at the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas on Tuesday (AFP)

had 'destroyed all the bridges and getting into the city is no longer possible. Evacuation is also not possible'.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has branded the human cost of the battle for east 'simply terrifying',

urging Western allies to speed arms deliveries to shore up Ukraine's ability to reclaim territory.

"We just need enough weapons to ensure all of this. Our partners have them."

His presidential advisor,

Mikhailo Podolyak, has listed hundreds of howitzers, tanks and armoured vehicles as among items needed by the Ukrainian army.

'Tear off their arms'

"To end the war we need heavy

weapons," he tweeted.

Last week, Ukraine's defence minister said up to 100 Ukrainian troops were being killed and 500 sustaining injuries every day.

The capture of Severodonetsk would open the road to Sloviansk and another major city, Krama-

torsk, in Moscow's push to conquer Donbas, a mainly Russian-speaking region partly held by pro-Kremlin separatists since 2014. AFP team in Lysychansk saw massive damage after months of shelling, with no water, electricity or phone signal.

The Ukrainian military is using high ground in the city to exchange fire with Russian forces fighting for control of Severodonetsk, just across the water.

Lysychansk resident Maksym Katerin buried his mother and stepfather in his garden on Monday after a shell ripped through his yard, killing them instantly.

"I don't know who did this, but if I knew, I would tear off their arms," he said.

'Surrender or die'

Katerin's mother was lying on the ground, 'her stomach was ripped and her guts were falling out. She was a very good, kind and helpful woman. Why did they do this to her?' Panicheva said.

"They bomb and they bomb, and we don't know what to do."

The Lugansk governor said Ukraine's forces had been pushed back from Severodonetsk's centre with the Russians controlling 70 to 80 per cent of the city in their attempt to 'encircle it'.

With Russia turning the screw on Severodonetsk, Ukrainian forces have two choices: 'to surrender or die', said Eduard Basurin, a representative for pro-Russian separatists.

On Monday, Amnesty International accused Russia of war crimes in Ukraine, saying that attacks on the north-eastern city of Kharkiv - including banned cluster bombs - had killed hundreds of civilians.

AFP

Bahrain changes 17 in 'biggest ever' cabinet reshuffle

Manama, Bahrain - Bahrain's king has made 17 cabinet changes by royal decree, including appointing a new oil minister in the Gulf nation's biggest-ever reshuffle and first for two decades, officials said.

King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa's revamp comes ahead of lower-house elections in November and as Bahrain, a financial centre with oil resources and heavy debt, attempts to reposition itself for a post pandemic era.

Oil Minister Mohammed bin Mubarak was among 13 new faces in the cabinet under Crown Prince and Prime Minister Salman bin Hamad al-Khalifa, who was appointed as premier in November 2020.

The 22-strong cabinet also includes four women holding the health, housing and urban planning, sustainable development and tourism portfolios. Its youngest member is 38.

"The reshuffle comes at a pivotal time in the post-COVID economic recovery era," a government source said on Tuesday, adding that 'the country is focused on moving into a new phase'.

Bahrain's last cabinet reshuffle was in 2002, when 10 new ministers were appointed. The only other cabinet reshuffle was in 1973.

Three of the four deputy prime minister positions were axed in the current reshuffle, leaving Sheikh Khalid bin Abdullah al-Khalifa as the sole deputy PM.

AFP

Still believe nuclear deal talks can yield result: Iran

Tehran, Iran - Iran on Tuesday said it still believes that negotiations can succeed to revive the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, despite a recent rebuke from the UN nuclear watchdog.

Tehran last week condemned as 'unconstructive' a move by the International Atomic Energy Agency to censure the country for failure to cooperate over its nuclear programme.

It also disconnected some of its cameras at nuclear sites, a move the IAEA warned could deal a 'fatal blow' to negotiations to revive the nuclear deal.

"We believe negotiations and diplomacy are the best ways to reach the final point of the agreement," Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian said during a joint press conference with his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in Tehran.

Talks began in April last year to bring the United States back into that landmark agreement, after then president Donald Trump withdrew in 2018 and left it hanging by a thread.

The negotiations also aim to lift sanctions on Iran and bring it back into compliance with nuclear commitments it made to



Iran's FM Hossein Amir-Abdollahian (right) shows a document to his Pakistani counterpart Bilawal Bhutto Zardari following a joint press statement in Iran's capital Tehran on Tuesday (AFP)

We believe negotiations and diplomacy are the best ways to reach the final point of the agreement

HOSSEIN AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN

world powers as part of the deal.

But the ever-delicate dialogue has been stalled since March.

The IAEA's Board of Governors on Wednesday adopted a resolution censuring Iran for failing to adequately explain the previous discovery of traces of enriched uranium at three sites which Tehran had not declared as having hosted nuclear activi-

ties. Amir-Abdollahian said that prior to the IAEA's move, Tehran had put forward a new initiative that the US had accepted, adding that Washington nonetheless moved to submit the resolution censuring Iran.

But the Islamic republic would not abandon negotiations, he said.

AFP

'How to murder your husband' writer gets life for killing spouse

Los Angeles, US - A US writer who penned a tract entitled *How to Murder Your Husband* was sentenced to life in prison on Monday for fatally shooting her spouse.

Nancy Crampton Brophy, 71, will be eligible to apply for parole in 25 years, a judge in the north-western state of Oregon told her.

Crampton Brophy's month-long murder trial heard how the author had used a gun barrel bought on eBay to kill her husband in the hope of collecting hundreds of thousands of dollars in life insurance.

The weapon, which she claimed had been acquired as research for a new novel, has never been found.

Chef Daniel Brophy was found on the floor of a classroom in a now-defunct culinary institute where he worked, in June 2018. He had been shot twice.

CCTV footage showed his wife driving in the area at the time. The author, whose *Wrong Never Felt So Right* series of novels include *The Wrong Husband* and *The Wrong Lover*, claimed she had no memory of being there, but surmised that she would have



Nancy Crampton Brophy (AFP)

been in the neighbourhood trying to get inspiration for a new work of fiction.

Crampton Brophy, whose lawyers said last month they would appeal the verdict, denied the murder, insisting that years of financial struggle were behind the couple and that she had no reason to kill her husband.

"Where is the motivation? I would ask you," Crampton Brophy said as she sparred with the prosecutor during her trial.

"An editor would laugh and say, 'I think you need to work harder on this story, you have a big hole in it'."

AFP

Macron urges solid parliament majority amid 'troubled times'

Paris, France - French President Emmanuel Macron appealed to voters on Tuesday to give him a 'solid majority' in Sunday's parliamentary polls, warning against adding 'French disorder to global disorder'.

Speaking as he departed from Paris to visit French troops dispatched to Romania in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Macron said 'the months ahead will be difficult' but called for people to back him in the name of 'the higher national interest' and 'common sense'.

Macron's visit this week to Romania and neighbouring

Moldova has come under fire at home, landing ahead of the second round of crucial parliamentary elections in which his centrist majority is at risk.

"Emmanuel Macron has planned a trip abroad for three days... after anaesthetising the campaign by refusing any debate, he saw the second round as a done deal," Jean-Luc Melenchon, leader of the left-wing NUPES alliance, told *Le Parisien* daily.

The incumbent had already been charged by opponents with sitting out April's presidential vote, bringing home a solid but



French President Emmanuel Macron delivers a statement on the tarmac, in front of the presidential plane at Paris-Orly Airport in Orly, on Tuesday (AFP)

unspectacular win against far-right chief Marine Le Pen.

Appearing to bet on a similar strategy in this month's parliamentary poll, his Ensemble (Together) alliance suffered in Sunday's first round while NUPES and the far right made gains.

Projections suggest voters could hand Ensemble 255-295 seats in the second round - uncomfortably low compared with the threshold for an absolute majority of 289.

Commitment to NATO allies

Macron's Elysee Palace office

said that in Romania the president would send 'a clear message of our commitment to our NATO allies and European partners' following Russia's invasion of neighbouring Ukraine - highlighted by France's 500-strong deployment in the country.

There have even been press reports, unconfirmed so far, that Macron could make his first visit to the Ukrainian capital Kyiv since the assault began in February, alongside German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi.

AFP



COFFEE PLANTATIONS

This aerial view shows coffee plantations at the Gorongosa mountain range in Gorongosa

Gorongosa's rebirth

The forest at Mount Gorongosa, in Mozambique, enjoys a fresh lease of life with the introduction of a foreign crop – coffee, which is now exported around the world

From a distance, Mount Gorongosa looks pock-marked. The slopes of this Mozambican landmark were once covered with verdant rain forest. Now, they are scarred by deep holes - the result of clearcutting that exposed the soil and parched it, leaving only shrubs and grasses. In recent years, however, the forest has been growing back, thanks to a previously foreign crop - coffee. As Juliasse Samuel Sabao walks through the plantation, at an altitude of some 1,000m, he points out the obvious progress. One side of the track resembles a desert. On the other, a dense forest shelters carefully placed coffee plants.

"Before, this was completely empty. Today, you see the result. Coffee needs shade to grow. So, for every coffee plant, we plant a tree as well," he said.

Sabao, who works for Gorongosa National Park, fled to Zimbabwe to escape Mozambique's civil war. There, he discovered coffee culture. He brought that knowledge back with him to help restore the

mountain, which was largely cut off from the world for decades.

Legacy of war

Mozambique fought a bloody war for freedom from Portugal, but after independence in 1975, a civil war ravaged the country until 1992. A smaller conflict later erupted in 2013, ending with a peace treaty in 2019.

During the conflicts, Renamo rebels who used the mountain range as a war-time base and stronghold, exploited the park's natural resources to the brink of environmental collapse.

Pedro Muagara, a trained agronomist and the park's director, had planted a few seedlings, until the conflict shattered his coffee dreams.

As the war dragged into its final years, besieged rebels camped on the mountain slopes with their families. They cleared the forest to grow crops to survive.

Now he's back, teaching communities new ways of farming.

"These people depended on subsistence farming, because they can't afford machinery like tractors. That turned them into agricultural nomads," he said. "So, they'd clear a few areas, and then deforestation stripped nutrients from the soil. The land got depleted, and when that happened, they'd go clear another patch."

The peace treaty didn't solve the problems of communities on the mountain.

"They didn't have the training or the means to transition from being itinerant farming to conservation farming," Muagara said. "We had to explain to them that when they lose a tree, they lose their livelihood with it."

Saving trees

Coffee plants take several years to become productive, so the programme also includes food crops so the communities can still support themselves.



The World Bank says Gorongosa now has some 300,000 coffee plants as well as 400,000 cashew trees, 400 beehives and 300 new jobs.

Gorongosa coffee is exported around the world, with profits ploughed back into the plantation.

The forest's revival reflects Gorongosa's larger rebirth, since a 20-year partnership was formed in 2008 between Mozambique and the foundation of American philanthropist Greg Carr.

The World Bank has praised the partnership as a model, which has benefited some 200,000 people in the area.

The programme also aligns with the government's goal of improving agriculture and moving beyond exports of raw commodities, said Celso Correia, Agriculture and Rural Development minister.

"One of the biggest challenges in the agriculture sector is the lack of mechanisation, and the need for technology transfers," he said. "The priority is to mobilise resources, but also to improve mobility, developing infrastructure and transportation, so that we can improve the value chain."

With the war in Ukraine, "commodity price inflation is also affecting Mozambique. We need to alleviate this pressure... increase production, and be self-sufficient," he said, adding, "We can't depend on international projects."

AFP



A group of coffee tasters explain their work at the Gorongosa Coffee industrial processing center in Gorongosa

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SUMMER COOLERS

Soothing sips

Make your summer meals a little more interesting by adding cool accompaniments that bring in a wave of refreshment to your dinner table. Here are a few popular refreshing drinks that go well with Indian dinners:



Sol Kadhi

- Ingredients
- 10 pods of dried kokum (black Malabar tamarind)

2 cups thick coconut milk

1 green chilli

2 cloves garlic

2tbsp coriander leaves

½tsp cumin seeds – slightly roasted

Salt, to taste

Mint leaves - for garnish

Method
Soak kokum pods in 1 cup warm water for 30 minutes. Squeeze the pods to extract the juices and strain out the clear red juice. Set aside. In a mortar and pestle, smash together the green chilli, cumin seeds, garlic cloves, corian-

der leaves and salt.
In a large bowl, add the coconut milk, kokum concentrate, crushed garlic and chilli spice paste, and stir well to combine. Taste and adjust seasoning as required. Add two cups water and mix well. Chill in refrigerator for 30 minutes and serve garnished with mint leaves or chopped coriander.



Dahi Kadhi

- Ingredients
- 2 cups yoghurt

½ cup gram flour

5-6 curry leaves

1 pinch asafoetida

1tsp mustard seeds

2 dried red chillies - broken to bits

2tsp refined oil

½tsp turmeric powder

1tsp cumin seeds

½tsp red chilli powder

1tsp julienned ginger

2 green chillies - slit

1tsp sugar

Method
First, blend together curds, gram flour, turmeric and red chilli powder in a bowl. Then add 2 cups of water, little by little, and mix well to form a thin flowing mixture. Heat a curry pot, add the curd mixture along with turmeric and red chilli powder, and cook on medium-low flame, stirring continuously till the mixture boils – 5 minutes. Add the green chillies, reduce heat, and simmer on low flame – 10 minutes.
Now, prepare the tempering. Heat oil in a non-stick pan and add cumin seeds, curry leaves, green chilli, asafoetida, ginger, dry red chilli, mustard seeds and saute till they splutter. Pour the tempering over the simmering Kadhi. Switch off heat. Transfer it to a serving bowl and garnish with coriander leaves. Serve warm.



Thandai

- Ingredients
- 10-12 whole almonds

10-12 whole cashew nuts

25-30 black peppercorns

10-12 whole raisins

10-12 whole green cardamoms

1tsp fennel seeds

1tsp melon seeds

Few strands of saffron

4 cups whole milk

¼ cup granulated sugar

1tsp rose water

1tsp dried rose petals – for garnish

2tsp slivered almonds/pistachios – for garnish

Method
Add almonds, cashew nuts, black peppercorns, raisins, green cardamoms, fennel seeds, melon seeds, and saffron to a medium mixing bowl. Add ½ cup water to the bowl and keep it over the counter for 5-6 hours or overnight.
Add the soaked ingredients to a blender along with the water and blend to make a fine paste. Add 2-3tbsp of milk if required while blending. Scrape the sides of the blender a few times while blending to get a smooth consistency without any crumbs. Set the paste aside.
Heat milk in a heavy bottom pan over medium heat. Stir frequently. When the milk comes to a boil, stir in the paste along with sugar and rose water.
Cook for 2-3 minutes. Stir frequently. Remove the pan from heat and let the mixture cool down for 10 minutes. Refrigerate the milk mixture for 3-4 hours for the flavours to meld. Now pass the mixture through a fine-mesh strainer and discard any leftover pulp.
Pour the Thandai into serving glasses. Garnish with rose petals and slivered dried nuts. Serve chilled. You can also add ice cubes, if required.



Neer Mor

- Ingredients
- 2 cups curds, 3 cups water

½tsp mustard seeds

A pinch of asafoetida

1 green chilli - chopped

1tsp grated ginger

A sprig of curry leaves

1tbsp finely chopped coriander leaves

Salt, to taste

1tsp oil

Method
Take the curd in a big bowl and whisk it well till there are no lumps. Add water and again whisk it for around 2-3 minutes to get a thin, frothy consistency. You could use a blender to blend the curd and water at low speed. For tempering, heat oil in a pan and add mustard seeds and asafoetida.
When mustard seeds splutter, add chopped green chilli, curry leaves and grated ginger. Saute for a few seconds, remove from heat, and add this tempering to the prepared buttermilk. Stir well, add salt to taste and garnish with chopped coriander leaves.

Brilliant Bairstow fires England to series win



England's Jonny Bairstow celebrates after reaching his century on the fifth day of the second Test against New Zealand at Trent Bridge on Tuesday (AFP)

Nottingham, United Kingdom - Jonny Bairstow blasted England to a five-wicket win over New Zealand on the final day of the second Test at Trent Bridge on Tuesday as the home side won a series for the first time since January 2021.

England chased down 299 thanks to an all-time great display of raw power from Bairstow, who took just 77 balls to reach the ninth Test century of his career.

Bairstow narrowly missed hitting England's fastest Test hundred, taking one more delivery than Gilbert Jessop, who scored a 76-ball ton against Australia in 1902.

While Bairstow could not earn

a place in the history books, that will be a footnote for the 32-year-old, whose display will be remembered forever by all those who witnessed it.

A capacity crowd at Trent Bridge was treated to a remarkable array of brutal boundaries from Bairstow, who hit 14 fours and seven sixes to leave New Zealand bewildered in his 92-ball masterclass.

After chasing down 277 to win the first Test at Lord's by five wickets thanks to Joe Root's 115 not out, Bairstow ensured England enjoyed another successful final-day chase.

At tea, all four results were possible, with England needing

another 160 runs with six wickets left.

But the sensational Bairstow, supported by skipper Ben Stokes, with an unbeaten 75, demolished of the Test world champions.

It was the highest final-innings run chase in a Test at Trent Bridge, surpassing the previous record of 284 set by England against New Zealand in 2004.

England, who had won just one match in 17 before this series, are gathering momentum under new skipper Stokes and new coach Brendon McCullum.

Their desire for relentlessly positive and aggressive cricket has been embraced by England and they will seek to sweep the

series in the final Test at Headingley from June 23.

This victory was even more eye-catching because New Zealand, inspired by Daryl Mitchell's 190, scored 553 in the first innings after Stokes opted to bowl first.

Bairstow onslaught

That could have been a series-defining decision by Stokes, but England bailed out their captain by scoring 539 in their first innings, with Root making 176 and Ollie Pope 145.

A New Zealand second-innings collapse late on the fourth day gave England renewed incentive to chase the win.

They seized the chance in stunning style after bowling out the Kiwis for 284 in the first session of the final day.

With the match seemingly on a knife-edge heading into the final session, Bairstow took matters into his own hands. The Yorkshire batsman reached 50 from 51 balls in fitting style, unleashing a boundary off Matt Henry.

England had amassed 59 from five overs to put themselves on the brink of victory as the crowd roared their approval.

Shell-shocked New Zealand had no answer to Bairstow as he marched towards an astonishing century.

AFP

Harshal, Chahal help India thrash South Africa

Visakhapatnam, India - Bowlers Harshal Patel and Yuzvendra Chahal helped India stay alive in the Twenty20 international series against South Africa with a crushing 48-run win in the third match on Tuesday.

After the hosts were invited to bat first in Visakhapatnam, openers Ruturaj Gaikwad (57) and the Ishan Kishan (54) put on 97 for the first wicket to guide them to 179 for five.

Then, Harshal, who returned his T20 best figures of 4-25, and Chahal shared seven wickets to bowl out South Africa for 131, as India bounced back from their opening two losses.

Gaikwad started cautiously before exploding as he hit four boundaries off fast bowler Anrich Nortje in a 20-run fifth over to give the team a blazing

start. He reached his maiden fifty off 30 balls in his sixth T20 for India before left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj finally broke the stand and sent back the batsman with a caught-and-bowled effort.

Kishan changed gears and took on Maharaj with two fours and a six to bring up his fifty in 31 balls.

The bowlers hit back with two wickets including Kishan falling to fast bowler Pretorius.

David Miller and Rassie van der Dussen dropped outfield catches to allow Hardik Pandya and skipper Rishabh Pant a life each. But Pant was soon caught by skipper Temba Bavuma for six.

Pandya hit an unbeaten 21-ball 31 to boost the Indian total after Proteas bowlers had attempted to check the scoring at the back end.

AFP



India's Harshal Patel celebrates after dismissing South Africa's Reeza Hendricks on Tuesday (AFP)

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Warriors on brink of NBA title as Wiggins punishes Celtics



Andrew Wiggins of Golden State Warriors dunks the ball in the fifth game of NBA finals against Boston Celtics

San Francisco, United States - Andrew Wiggins scored 26 points as the Golden State Warriors battled past the Boston Celtics 104-94 to move within one win of a seventh NBA championship crown on Monday.

With Stephen Curry having a rare off-night after his 43-point game four heroics, Wiggins seized control to lead a balanced Golden State offensive effort which leaves the Warriors 3-2 up in the best-of-seven series.

Wiggins delivered a huge performance at both ends of the

Warriors' Chase Center court, shooting 12-of-23 while hauling in 13 rebounds with two steals and a block.

The Warriors can clinch the championship when the series heads back to Boston for game six on Thursday.

"We have two cracks at getting one win, but we also know how difficult it's going to be," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

"Nobody's celebrating but we are excited to be in this spot and we want to take advantage of it," Kerr led the tributes for Wiggins, the Canadian former No.1 draft pick who has steadily be-

come an integral part of the Warriors set-up since joining the franchise two years ago.

"He loves the challenge. He loves the competition. And he's found such a crucial role on our team, and I think that empowers him," Kerr said. "He knows how much we need him, so he's been fantastic."

Wiggins led the Warriors scorers while Klay Thompson provided support with 21 points including five three-pointers. Gary Payton II (15 points) and Jordan Poole (14) both made double-digits from the bench.

AFP



Serena Williams

Serena gets wildcard for Wimbledon

London, United Kingdom - Serena Williams will return to Grand Slam tennis for the first time in a year at Wimbledon later this month after being handed a singles wildcard entry by the All England Club on Tuesday.

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion, who has not played since suffering an injury during her first-round match at Wimbledon 12 months ago, has plummeted to 1,208 in the world rankings.

Earlier Tuesday, Williams had indicated she would be at Wimbledon, which begins on June 27, when she posted an image of her white trainers on grass on Instagram along with the caption: "SW and SW19. It's a date. 2022, see you there."

The 40-year-old will make her return to competitive tennis next week at the Eastbourne International, where she has been given a wildcard into the doubles with Tunisia's Ons Jabeur.

AFP

DANCING AWAY TO GLORY

Goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne’s penalty save in shootout sends Australia to World Cup in Qatar

Doha, Qatar - Australia on Tuesday celebrated the antics of dancing goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne whose penalty shootout save against Peru saw them to a fifth straight World Cup finals.

The 33-year-old clowning his way along the goal line as Peru’s players prepared to take their penalty kicks and his block of Alex Valera’s shot gave Australia a 5-4 win after the two sides had been deadlocked without a goal for 120 minutes.

Australia coach Graham Arnold brought Redmayne on for team captain Mathew Ryan for the final minutes of extra time as a ploy for the shootout.

Martin Boyle missed Australia’s first penalty but the next five were all on target.

Redmayne danced and jiggled along the line to unnerve the Peru players and Luis Advincula’s shot cannoned off a post. Redmayne’s save of Valera’s shot set off wild celebrations among the Socceroos and their band of a few hundred supporters.

Arnold said that Ryan is a “fantastic goalkeeper” but Sydney FC’s Redmayne “is a good penalty saver and at that stage of the game I was just trying to do something that could affect them (Peru) mentally.”

“Maybe that’s why they hit the post,” Arnold said. “They thought they had to put it closer to the post to score. It’s a risk but it worked.”

Redmayne denied he was the hero of the night, saying his routine was “a little thing I do” for Sydney that has “proved quite successful”.

“If I can gain one percent by making a fool of myself then I will,” he said.

“I love this team, I love this



Australia players celebrate with goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne (L) after beating Peru in the play-offs to reach the World Cup 2022 (AFP)

If I can gain one percent by making a fool of myself then I will. I love this team, I love this country and I love this sport. I am under no illusions that all I did was to save one penalty

ANDREW REDMAYNE

country and I love this sport. I am under no illusions that all I did was to save one penalty.”

France start

Victory gave Australia the penultimate place available for the

tournament that starts on November 21. They will play defending champions France in Group D one day later to start their sixth appearance at the World Cup in all.

Peru, 22nd in FIFA’s list and

who beat Australia 2-0 at the 2018 World Cup group stage, were roared on by 10,000 fans, most of whom had flown halfway round the globe for the playoff only to see a frustrating encounter between the rivals with few clearcut chances.

Arnold insisted that his whole team were heroes for getting through.

“What we have been through in the last year and a half with the pandemic, not being able to get back into Australia, players getting Covid, not being able to get the best squad together a lot of

the time.

“I am so proud and happy for the players,” said Arnold.

“The sacrifices they have made. No-one thought they could do it but they kept on believing.”

Peru’s Argentine coach Ricardo Gareca said the whole side felt “enormous disappointment” at the way in which they were beaten but would not criticise Redmayne.

“It hurts not to make it as we were doing well in the game,” added Gareca.

AFP

'That refugee kid' Mabil says crucial penalty a thank you to Australia

Doha, Qatar - Awer Mabil said his crucial sudden-death penalty for Australia against Peru was a thank you to the country that took his family in as he reflected on his journey from refugee camp to the World Cup.

The 26-year-old calmly scored the Socceroos’ sixth spot kick in Doha before watching goalkeeper Andrew Redmayne heroically save Peru’s final penalty.

Mabil sank to the ground in disbelief and later told Australian reporters it was his destiny to score.

“I knew I was going to score. It was the only way to say thank you to Australia on behalf of my family,” the winger said.

Mabil was born in a refugee camp in Kenya after his parents fled conflict in Sudan, surviving on one meal a day as a child and kicking a ball around to pass the time.

After being resettled in Australia in 2006, he developed his football enough to join Adelaide United as a teenager and then moved to Denmark’s FC Midtjylland.

AFP



Awer Mabil celebrates after Australia’s victory (AFP)



South Korea’s Son Heung-min (L) fights for the ball with Egypt’s Omar Gaber during a friendly match against Egypt in Seoul on Tuesday (AFP)

Korea beat Salah-less Egypt 4-1 in Seoul friendly

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea enjoyed a resounding 4-1 victory over Egypt playing without Mohamed Salah on Tuesday, capping off a run of four World Cup tune-up matches with a convincing performance.

South Korean captain Son Heung-min, who shared the Premier League Golden Boot with Salah last season, made his fourth consecutive start but saw his goal-scoring streak snapped after two games.

The Son versus Salah show-

down never materialised at Seoul World Cup Stadium, as the Liverpool star did not make the trip due to an unspecified injury.

South Korea took the lead over the undermanned visitors on 16 minutes, when Hwang Ui-joo headed home a Kim Jin-su cross for his second goal in his past three matches.

Hwang then set up Kim Young-gwon’s diving header six minutes later to give South Korea a 2-0 advantage.

AFP

Tunisia eye World Cup knock-out round after beating Japan

Osaka, Japan - Tunisia head coach Jalel Kadri believes his side can reach the World Cup knock-out round for the first time in six attempts after pulling off an impressive 3-0 win over Japan on Tuesday.

The North Africans have never made it past the group stage of a World Cup but Kadri thinks this could be their year after second-half goals from Mohamed Ali Ben Romdhane, Ferjani Sassi and Issam Jebali saw off Japan at Panasonic Stadium Suita in Osaka.

Tunisia also beat Chile 2-0 in Kobe last Friday and Kadri thinks they are building momentum before taking on holders France, Denmark and Australia in Qatar later this year.

“Our aim was to get to the World Cup, but now that we have achieved that we want to get to the knock-out round for the first time - that’s our goal,” said the 50-year-old.

“We have France, Denmark and Australia in our group and that will be very difficult, but we



Tunisia players and officials celebrate with the trophy after their victory in the Kirin Cup final against Japan in Suita, Osaka, on Tuesday (AFP)

want to make our dream come true and get through to the knock-out round at the sixth time of asking.”

Tunisia made Japan pay for a profligate first half when Romdhane opened the scoring from the penalty spot in the 55th minute.

A defensive slip-up from Japan let in Sassi for the second goal in the 76th minute, before substitute Jebali rounded off a

productive night for the visitors with a break-away goal in injury time.

Tunisia arrived in Japan after playing two African Nations Cup qualifiers this month and Kadri was pleased with how his players dealt with the tight schedule.

“We’ve played four games in 12 days and that has been very tough, but it’s great that we were able to win,” he said.

AFP



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Croatia midfielder Luka Modric is in his element in the UEFA Nations League match against France at the Stade de France in Saint-Denis, on the outskirts of Paris on Monday (AFP)

IN CRUISE ‘MOD’

Majestic Modric gives Croatia victory against France in Nations League

Paris, France - Luka Modric's early penalty gave Croatia a 1-0 win over off-form France in Paris on Monday as the World Cup holders finished their June run of UEFA Nations League matches without a victory in four outings.

Veteran Croatia captain Modric stroked in his spot-kick after just five minutes at the Stade de France, and the home side could not find an equaliser despite Kylian Mbappe returning to join Karim Benzema in the starting line-up.

"We had an inferiority complex against France after their win in the World Cup and so to win at the Stade de France in front of almost 80,000 people against the world champions is extraordinary," said Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic.

France won the previous edition of the Nations League last year but they have managed just two points from their four outings this month, with home defeats against Denmark and now

Croatia sandwiching draws away to the Croats and in Austria.

As a result, Les Bleus are bottom of League A, Group 1, seven points behind leaders Denmark who beat Austria 2-0 in Copenhagen on Monday with first-half goals by Jonas Wind and Andreas Skov Olsen.

We had an inferiority complex against France after their win in the World Cup and so to win at the Stade de France against the world champions is extraordinary

ZLATKO DALIC

Didier Deschamps' team may now need to win their last two group games in September to avoid being relegated to the less glamorous League B.

Those matches are also the only games they have left before they begin their defence of the

World Cup against Australia in Qatar in November.

"It is not an excuse but in this get-together we have lacked strength, energy and character too," said Deschamps, who missed the defeat against Denmark earlier this month following the death of his father.

"It hurts because we have not

meeting between the sides who contested the 2018 World Cup final in Moscow, although Mbappe, Modric and Marcelo Brozovic were the only players who started that day to line up at kick-off here.

The home fans in the crowd of over 77,000 were left stunned as the Israeli referee awarded the visitors an early penalty when Liverpool defender Ibrahima Konate was adjudged to have fouled Josip Brekalo.

The evergreen Modric, back at the ground where he won the Champions League with Real Madrid at the end of last month, made no mistake with the resulting penalty even though France goalkeeper Mike Maignan got a touch.

From then on it took the occasional burst of pace by Mbappe to bring the crowd to life, although the closest France came to scoring in the first half was when Christopher Nkunku blasted just wide from range.

Mbappe had come off injured against Denmark and so missed the draw in Croatia before emerging from the bench to score a late equaliser in Austria.

The Paris Saint-Germain forward did his best to conjure a leveller here as he came close twice early in the second half, and the hosts also had an appeal for a penalty dismissed when Lucas Digne went down in the area.

Meanwhile Maignan parried away a fine strike by substitute Lovro Majer at the other end, but Croatia -- with Modric as majestic as ever -- saw the game out as goalkeeper Ivica Ivusic stopped Josip Sutalo scoring an own-goal.

The final whistle was greeted by jeers and Deschamps will hope France's summer slump is simply down to the fatigue among his players after a long campaign, rather than a sign of what might be to come later in the year.

AFP



Vincent Kompany

Former Man City star Kompany appointed as Burnley boss

London, United Kingdom - Former Manchester City captain Vincent Kompany has been appointed as the new manager of Burnley, the Championship club announced on Tuesday.

The retired Belgium international, 36, who was in charge at Anderlecht until last month, said he was "excited by the challenge ahead".

"Burnley Football Club is a truly historic English side and it is an honour to be appointed first-team manager," said Kompany, who takes over from caretaker Mike Jackson.

Jackson replaced long-serving boss Sean Dyche in April but could not save the club from relegation.

"I'm looking forward to getting to work with the players and creating a positive, winning team for our fans when we return to Turf Moor," said former defender

Kompany.

"I've been impressed by the board's vision for the club, which aligns with my own, and I look forward to playing my part as we enter an important season."

Kompany spent 11 years at City, where he won 10 major trophies, including four Premier League titles.

He returned in 2019 to Anderlecht, the club where he launched his career, as player-manager but relinquished matchday duties after a disastrous start to the season. Kompany retired as a player in 2020 and took over as coach.

Burnley chairman Alan Pace said the Claretts had signed up a "proven leader".

"I've been very impressed with his ideas for Burnley Football Club, his appetite to succeed and his focus on leading the club back to the Premier League," he said.

AFP



Aurelien Tchouameni

Mbappe wanted to know if I would join PSG, says Tchouameni

Madrid, Spain - Real Madrid's new signing Aurelien Tchouameni said Kylian Mbappe asked if he would sign for Paris Saint-Germain, as the 22-year-old was unveiled at Madrid's training ground on Tuesday.

Madrid won the race to sign Tchouameni, one of the world's most highly-rated midfielders, from Monaco in a deal worth around 100 million euros.

His arrival comes after Mbappe rejected Real Madrid to sign a three-year contract at PSG. Madrid have also signed Antonio Rudiger this summer, the defender joining from Chelsea on a free transfer.

"Kylian decided to stay at PSG and he already knew I was going to leave Monaco at the end of the season," Tchouameni said in a press conference, after being introduced by Real Madrid presi-

dent Florentino Perez.

"He wanted to know if I would go to PSG but I told him Real Madrid was my first choice and he understood that completely, he was very happy for me."

Tchouameni has signed a six-year contract at Real Madrid after being linked with several of Europe's biggest clubs, including Liverpool and Chelsea in the Premier League. "As soon as Madrid arrived, I didn't hesitate," he said. "I want to leave my mark on football and the best club for this is Real Madrid. It's the best decision for me."

He said Real Madrid's sensational comebacks in the Champions League against PSG, Chelsea and Manchester City helped him make up his mind. Madrid beat Liverpool in the final to win the club's 14th European Cup.

AFP

Osimhen hits four as Nigeria create AFCON record by winning 10-0

Johannesburg, South Africa - Napoli forward Victor Osimhen scored four goals as Nigeria crushed Sao Tome e Principe 10-0 in Morocco on Monday to record the biggest victory in Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying history.

Qualifying for the biennial competition has been staged since 1961 and Ghana, Kenya and Libya shared the record with eight-goal victories until Nigeria went on a rampage in the Atlantic resort of Agadir.

Nigeria led 3-0 at half-time in the Group A matchday two encounter and the other scorers



Victor Osimhen (C) put on a stellar show for Nigeria

were Terem Moffi (two), captain Moses Simon, Oghenekaro Etebo, Ademola Lookman and

Emmanuel Dennis. With Nigeria 153 places higher in the world rankings

than Sao Tome, a one-sided encounter was expected, but after a fairly competitive first half, the game turned into shooting practice for the Super Eagles.

Nigeria eclipsed their previous highest score in a Cup of Nations qualifier of seven against Burkina Faso in 1991 when now deceased Rashidi Yekini notched four.

It was a home fixture for Sao Tome, but had to be moved to southern Morocco because the tiny island nation does not have an international-standard stadium.

AFP

El Salvador condemns killing of referee

San Salvador, El Salvador - The Salvadoran Football Federation on Monday condemned the death of a referee who was violently attacked while officiating a match last weekend in the capital.

In a press release, the federation said it "condemns and rejects the physical aggression" directed at 63-year-old referee Jose Arnoldo Amaya by "so-called supporters and players during a match that he refereed at the Toluca stadium in San Salvador."

Amaya was violently attacked before being taken to hospital where he died of his injuries.

AFP