



Brazil dedicate win to ailing Pele

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 07, 2022

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Moroccan players celebrate with coach Walid Regragui following their victory over Spain on Tuesday

Morocco creates World Cup history

Oman erupts in celebrations after Morocco's shock win over Spain

Shaddad al Musalmey
Muscat

Morocco shocked Spain in one of the biggest upsets in World Cup history in Qatar on Tuesday beating the Spaniards 3-0 in penalties following a brilliant performance. Morocco became the only Arab country to reach the quarters of the first World Cup held in an Arab country.

Following the match, there was a flood of congratulatory messages in the Arab world

with many hailing the heroics of the Moroccan team. The win has offered the Arab world hope of a country from outside Europe and South America reaching the semifinals and further on, the finals.

"Victory over Spain, one of the major teams to win the World Cup, is a historical achievement and has never happened before for an Arab team. As an Omani fan, I am so happy for Morocco in particular and the Arab world in general. We hope the Moroccan team continues playing well and reaches the semifinals," said Amerat-resident Abdullah al Khaldi. Spain won the FIFA World Cup in 2010 in South Africa.

According to sports analysts, team coordination and the spirited performance of the Moroccans were hallmarks for their qualification for the semifinals. "Morocco exceeded expectations, despite playing a stronger

team, and I think playing in an Arab country contributed to this brilliant performance, thanks to audience support to the Arab teams," said Salim al Habsi, Oman sports analyst.

Taher Hamad, a Moroccan based in Muscat, said, "Morocco performed amazingly well in both the first and second rounds. The payers have good experience in European tournaments over years and this has contributed to this high level of performance."

Celebrations were witnessed not only in Qatar but all over the Arab world in a show of Arab unity that has been a feature of this tournament. "We are in the Arab region and Morocco is in Africa. But we speak one language and this is the time for us to be proud. Well done Morocco," Omani fan Sabri Abdullah said.

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Bilarab Award for Architectural Design receives 149 entries

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Office of Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design has received 149 entries in the first stage of the second edition of the award which involves designing the Maritime History Museum.

The second stage will adopt a project to design the Maritime History Museum to be built in the wilayat of Sur in the Governorate of South Sharqiyah.

A statement issued by the Office of Bilarab bin Haitham Award for Architectural Design said, "The total number of individual entries reached 84, while the number of team entries reached 65.

The receipt of entries is the first stage of the award, wherein participants submit their illustrative files and description of their projects, following which the entries will be subjected to sorting and the arbitration committee of the award choosing the 30 best projects and providing the selected teams with observations for improvement of their projects.

This will be followed by the ten best projects being selected to compete for the first place of the award.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism has provided land for the Maritime History Museum project in a coastal area measuring 14,154sqm to make necessary preparations for the project, in terms of facilities and other technical requirements.

Entries for the award were accepted from October 10 to December 1.

Oman considers incentives to make electric cars affordable

Our Correspondent
Muscat

To support the large-scale adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) in Oman, the sultanate's government is considering provision of incentives for electric vehicles with an objective to make them affordable for ordinary people while also decarbonising transport in the country.

Higher cost of buying electric vehicles and setting up widespread EV charging infrastructure are the major challenges faced by most countries in the large-scale adoption of electric vehicles.

Delivering a keynote address at the Green Hydrogen Summit 2022 at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday, H E Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, said, "On the mobility side, we have ambitious targets and have



Once charging stations and affordable EVs are available for public, then we can start working on other more technical work such as maintenance, battery replacement and so on

H E SALIM AL AUFİ

agreed on some aggressive incentives that will probably get EVs and zero-emission mobility

on the right path in terms of number of charging stations that we will be installing throughout the country."

On efforts to make EVs accessible and affordable for ordinary people, H E Aufi said, "Of course, the price of electric cars today is a little bit challenging, so the challenge for us is to go and find affordable cars that the general public can buy. There is no point putting incentives if the vehicles are extremely expensive and out of reach for ordinary people, so let us go out and create incentives for those affordable cars to come to Oman and be available and affordable for everyone."

According to the International Energy Agency, convenient and affordable publicly accessible charging stations will be increasingly important to make EVs equitably accessible and affordable.

"We are challenged with the task that we should have EV charging stations in every governorate of Oman so that you can drive anywhere you want without the concern that you will not find a charging station," H E Aufi said.

"Our ambition is that we should drive electric vehicles from Muscat to Salalah and back without the concern that you would not find a charging station to fuel your car," he added.

H E Aufi further said that once charging stations and affordable EVs are available for the general public, "then we can start working on other more technical work such as maintenance, battery replacement and so on".

See also [Page 03](#)



Municipal Elections
Third term - 2022

NEWS BRIEF

ROYAL DECREE
PROMULGATING
MILITARY JUSTICE
LAW ISSUED

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 87/2022 on Tuesday promulgating the Military Justice Law.

Article (1) states provisions of the Military Justice Law attached to this decree will be enforced. Article (2) annuls Royal Decree No 110/2011 and all that contradicts this decree or contravenes its provisions. Article (3) states that this decree will be enforced following its publication in Official Gazette.



Piya Pawani at Riyadh Modest Fashion Week

Qatar eases entry restrictions for GCC citizens, residents



Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Qatari Ministry of Interior has announced that citizens and residents of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries will be allowed to enter Qatar without obtaining a Hayya Card, via the entry points to the country as of December 6, 2022. The Hayya Card is a personalised fan ID required to attend any FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022 match.

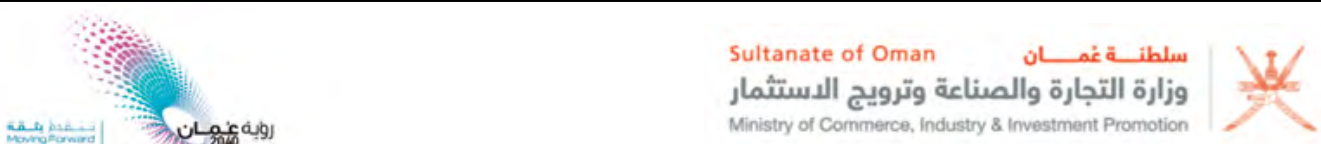
"Football fans, who are citizens and residents of GCC coming to Qatar, will be able to enter without requiring registration through the Hayya platform. They can enter Qatar through land ports using buses. Transportation by buses will be available to all travellers through land ports, as is the case under normal

circumstances, and parking spaces will be allocated for visitors without fees.

"Citizens and residents of GCC countries coming through land ports with their private cars will be able to enter Qatar as of December 8, 2022. They should apply for a permit on the website of the Ministry of Interior at least 12 hours prior to arrival. There is no vehicle entry permit fee," a statement said.

The Ministry of Interior confirmed that this step has been taken to provide an opportunity to football fans of GCC countries to enjoy the atmosphere accompanying the matches of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022.

The ministry also informed that those who wish to witness matches live in a stadium should register via the Hayya online platform.



Announcement No.5 / 2022

As the end of the financial year 2022 is approaching, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Investment Promotion announces that the last date for receiving any financial claims related to the year 2022 is Monday, 12/12/2022.

Therefore, all companies, establishments and individuals dealing with the Ministry are requested to submit their financial claims to the Department of Financial Affairs before the end of receipt period.

The Ministry is not responsible for any delay in payment of any claims received after the date stated above.

Oman launches effort to include Shabab Oman in UNESCO cultural heritage list

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Following the recent success in adding the khanjar and alheda'a to UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage, efforts have been launched in earnest to include *Shabab Oman* in it, according to Dr Hamid bin Saif al Nawafli, Assistant Director of Department of Culture at Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science.

The khanjar and alheda'a, considered essential elements of Omani culture, were given UNESCO heritage status on December 1. The decision was reached during the 17th session of the Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, hosted by Morocco from November 28 to December 3.

Alheda'a is an oral polyphonic



Oman has succeeded in registering 13 elements of intangible heritage on the UNESCO list so far

DR HAMID AL NAWAFLI

expression accompanied by gestures or musical instruments played by herders to communicate with their camels. The rhyth-



(Supplied photos)

mic expression is inspired by poetry; the herder uses a unique repository of sounds that the camels have become accus-

tomed to in order to direct herds through the desert or pasture to an area for drinking, feeding and milking. Alheda'a can also be

used for swift assembly of animals in case of immediate danger such as sandstorm

In an interview with Oman TV,



Nawafli said, "Oman has succeeded in registering 13 elements of intangible heritage on the UNESCO list so far. The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, in co-operation with Oman National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and the concerned authorities, succeeded in registering the khanjar and alheda'a recently in UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. We are proud of this new achievement."

He informed that Oman sub-

mitted a joint file with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to register alheda'a.

A national team prepared a file for the registration of the two elements, equipped with all the information and short films that explain their heritage importance.

According to Nawafli, the khanjar is a part of the national emblem and plays a key role in many Omani customs and traditions. Historical sources and archaeological discoveries indicate that Omanis have worn the khanjar for centuries. The inclusion of the traditional dagger in the UNESCO list will support owners of Omani crafts and also the national economy.

Shabab Oman has a major role in spreading the sultanate's message of love and peace and in forging friendship and brotherhood between Oman and various countries of the world.

Tender Announcement

Muscat Electricity Distribution Company S.A.O.C invites interested companies to participate in the following tenders

Tender No.	Description	Last Date of Buying	Date of Submission	Grade	Tender Price (OMR)
MEDC /2022/100	Expansion of Infoblox DDI Solution	15/12/2022	22/12/2022	Specialized	26.25

The table below shows the instructions for participation: -

Participation	- Companies registered with Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion and in I Supplier with Nama Groupe may obtain Tender documents. - The amount specified above is including 5% VAT. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from Tender fees - The amount specified above is Non-Refundable payment (Terms and Condition apply) - To obtain the tender document and payment procedure , please visit MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com or call 24588600 – Ext: 8577 – 8726
Enquiries	- Any inquiry can be sent to MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com , one week before bid submission date. - Any request for clarification received after the above-mentioned period will not be considered.
Tender Submission	Please follow SUBMISSION OF TENDER mentioned in clause 20.0 in Prime Document and to the supplier guideline available MEDC Website/Vendor/E-Tendering, www.medcoman.com
Guarantee	- The Tender should enclose a bank guarantee or a certified cheque issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman Unconditional and irrevocable and shall be disbursement as soon as it is submitted for the value of (1%) of the tender value valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission and addressed to the CHAIRMAN OF MINOR TENDER COMMITTEE, MUSCAT ELECTRICITY DISTRIBUTION COMPANY S.A.O.C. - The bid bond should be included in the commercial proposal only as sof copy. - Riyada card holders from Small and Medium Enterprises, SME, are exempted from bid bond requirements. - After the commercial opening , the qualified bidders will be notified to submit the original (hard copy) of bid bond to MEDC office. - Any tender not accompanied by a Tender Bond shall be rejected.
Terms and Conditions	- The Tender shall be valid for a period of at least ninety (90) days from the last date of tender submission including any extension thereof. - If the submission date extended, the bank guarantee or a certified cheque shall be extended in accordance with the bid extension date. - MEDC is not bound to accept the lowest (or highest) Tenderer. - Preference of awarding the tender will be given to those bidders who achieved a high percentage of purchasing from Local Products and have a High-level percentage of Omanization - Muscat Electricity Distribution Company gives priority to award the projects to SMEs companies. - For projects whose value is less than OMR 10K, the priority to award will be given to registered companies that hold a valid certificate Of Reyadah. - Failure to comply with the instructions in tender document may lead to disqualification.



80070008
www.medcoman.com

MHT invites bids to open tourism representative office for GCC countries

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has invited international companies to open a tourism representation office for the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to promote Omani tourism.

The initiative comes within the context of a comprehensive system to develop and renew marketing plans and programmes being conducted by the ministry to promote the sultanate's tourism attractions through its offices abroad.

According to MHT, the last date for submission of bids is December 19, 2022. A year-long contract for 2023 will be signed to promote Omani tourism in the GCC countries through the office.

The ministry deemed it necessary to expand its activities in the GCC market after the number of tourists from these countries increased in 2022.

The tourism representation office will play a role in raising the awareness of GCC visitors through campaigns aimed at promoting the sultanate as a key tourism destination.



The office will also cement ties between private sector partners and their counterparts in the GCC countries. The initiative seeks to generate maximum benefits from the tourism sector.

The number of visitors to the sultanate jumped an astounding 959 per cent year on year, with 1.8mn arrivals registered till August 2022, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) data.

According to the latest NCSI figures, GCC citizens were among the top nationalities that visited the sultanate till August, followed by Indian, Yemeni, Pakistani and British citizens.

While 1mn people from the GCC visited Oman till August, there were 200,000 Indian, 74,000 Yemeni, 47,000 Pakistani and 33,000 British visitors.

A comparison of figures of August 2021 and August 2022 shows a remarkable growth of visitors - 14 times or 1,288 per cent. A total of 25,321 visitors came to Oman in August 2021, compared to 351,555 in 2022.

Among the nationalities that visited in August 2022, GCC guests topped the list with 245,068, followed by Asians (56,695), Europeans (12,097), Africans (4,180), Americans (3,536) and Oceanians (562).

ROP arrests two Asians wanted by Interpol

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Directorate General of Criminal Investigation, in cooperation with the International Criminal Police Organization

(Interpol), has arrested two Asians wanted by a country for committing several crimes of theft and fraud.

'Large sums of money were seized from their possession. Legal procedures are being

completed against them,' Royal Oman Police (ROP) stated.

Interpol ensures coordination among national police forces to maintain global security and enables police forces to work with their counterparts.

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MOH No: 558/2022

Five main sectors identified to achieve net zero emissions

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate's government has identified five main sectors - which presently account for nearly 95 per cent of Oman's total CO₂ emissions - to focus on reducing carbon emissions and achieving the country's net zero target by 2050.

In October, Oman committed to reaching net zero emissions in 2050, in line with the Paris Climate Agreement's objectives of limiting global warming to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

"The announcement of the 2050 net zero target gave us a huge boost because it helps the decarbonisation momentum on a very big scale. It is not something we have to only talk about; it is something we have to deliver on," Salim Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, said in a keynote speech at the Green Hydrogen Summit 2022 on Monday at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre.

"The five main sectors identified are industry, electricity generation, transport, oil and gas and urban development. For each one of these sectors, we set targets for every five years or ten years. The bottom line is that by 2050 all of these sectors have to meet the net zero targets," he added. Ambitious targets have been



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SALIM NASSER AL AFI

set for the five sectors with the final goal to achieve net zero by 2050. "Some of these will be

challenging to achieve but we are committed to follow through and achieve these."

To lead the sultanate's transition towards a green economy and meet net zero target by 2050, His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik mandated the creation of Oman Sustainability Centre, which will ensure the implementation of the National Net Zero Plan. The centre will be the leading body undertaking the supervision and follow-up plans and programmes of carbon neutrality.

Oman hosts AWO's executive council meeting in Muscat

Muscat - The Sultanate of Oman, represented by the Ministry of Social Development, hosted the 20th regular meeting of the Executive Council of the Arab Women Organisation (AWO).

The meeting was chaired by Sayyida Maani Abdullah al Busaidi, Director General of the Family Development Department at the Ministry of Social Development and Chairperson of the Executive Council of the AWO during its current session.

Sayyida Maani said that the meeting touched on developments in the status of Arab women in terms of laws, policies, mechanisms and initiatives serving women.

The meeting explored programmes targeting women's welfare during the past period, she said, adding that such programmes included economic, political and legal empowerment and academic cooperation.

The activities also cover the AWO's cooperation with institutions of common interest, the organisation's publications and its participation in Arab and international events, Sayyida Maani explained.

She pointed out that the meeting would address the recommendations of the Executive Council's committees and the endorsement of the new configuration of the AWO's advisory committees, including the panel



The meeting touched on developments in the status of Arab women in terms of laws, policies, mechanisms and initiatives serving women

SAYYIDA MAANI AL BUSAIDI

for policies and technical affairs, the advisory committee for administrative, financial and legal affairs and the advisory committee for Arab youth.

The meeting also celebrated the 20th anniversary of the es-

tablishment of the AWO. The 21st meeting of AWO's Executive Council will be transferred to the State of Palestine and it will be held in March next year, said Sayyida Maani. ONA

EA to launch national campaign to combat mynah, invasive birds

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Environment Authority (EA) will launch a national campaign to combat invasive birds next week, the details of which will be divulged on Wednesday at the EA's headquarters.

An EA official said that invasive birds, such as mynah is increasing in numbers in Oman. These birds cause widespread damage by destroying crops, eating bees and transmitting diseases, parasites and fleas to humans as well as animals. Oman reported the first mynah bird in 1982 in Muscat governorate.

In April this year, the authority formed a team to conduct a study on checking the spread of these birds and develop a na-



tional strategy to reduce their numbers. EA has taken on board 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'.

Registration for Chinese scholarship to end on Feb 28

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) has announced scholarships for Omani students offered by the Chinese government for the academic year 2023-24.

"The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innova-



tion, represented by the Higher Education Admission Centre,

is pleased to announce the availability of 12 scholarships provided by the Chinese government to Omani students for the year 2023-24," stated the admission centre.

Details of scholarships, conditions and registration mechanism can be found via <http://www.campuschina.org>

The deadline for submission is February 28 next year.



SULTANATE OF OMAN
MINISTRY OF HEALTH



رؤية عمان 2040
Oman Vision 2040

ANNOUNCEMENT

The Ministry of Health- Directorate General of Health Service Al Dhahirah Governorate (DGHS) of Health- invites specialized companies to participate in the following Tender: -

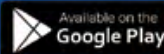
Tender Ref.	Description	Last Date For Collection Of Tender Document	Closing Time/ Day/Date	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
3203/2022	Replacement of waterproofing system and general maintenance of roof for AL-Wogba health center	Thursday 22/ Dec /2022	Before 9 am on Sunday 15/ Jan/2023	Specialized Companies registered with Tender Board	R.O 25/000

- All Specialized and interested Companies registered with Tender Board may obtain Tender documents from the E. Tendering website: <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.
- Tenders should be submitted on line on the given website signed and sealed. The Tenderer should enclose scan copy of Bank Guarantee or a certified Cheque issued by a Local bank for not less than One percent (1%) for the Tender value validity for (90) days from the Tender Submission date, addressed to The Chairman of the Tender Committee before one day of date submission.
- Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accepts or reject any tender.

(<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>)
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MoHERI funds 349 research proposals worth RO2mn

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) has so far funded 349 research works worth RO1,953,272 through a funding programme this year.

The Block Funding Programme 2022 supported research for the following categories: Research Grants (RG) for supporting research of PhD holders or its equivalent, Graduate Research Grants (GRG) to support research of master's or bachelor's degree holders, Undergraduate Research Grants (URG) for supporting research of students from higher education institutions, and Graduate Research Grants Abroad (GRG-Abroad) for supporting research of students studying abroad at their own expense.

In the RG category, the total number of funded projects is 120, with maximum up to RO20,000 approved for any project requiring up to two years of research.

Hundred-and-three research projects were funded in the GRG category with maximum up to RO3,000 sanctioned for a bigger project. One-twenty-six student research projects were funded with a maximum amount of RO1,500 per project sanctioned in the URG category.

As for the GRG-Abroad category, 16 research proposals have been funded with a maximum



The Block Funding Programme seeks to activate the role of academic and research institutions that can raise the standard of Oman in the fields of research and innovation

amount of up to RO3,000 per project approved by the ministry.

A total of 31 governmental and private academic and non-academic institutions benefited from

this year's programme, which comes with the aim of building local research capacity, providing a stimulating research environment for research and re-

searchers, and building their capacities at various academic levels.

The Block Funding Programme seeks to activate the role of academic and research institutions and support research that can contribute to implementation of national projects; and achieve practical and applicable results that can raise the standard of Oman in the fields of research and innovation.



Teachers, specialists at workshops honoured

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation (MoHERI) on Monday concluded a series of specialised workshops for teachers and innovation specialists as part of the Skills Development Programme for Researchers and Innovators in cooperation with the Innovation Cell Centre.

A ceremony to honour the participants was held under the chairmanship of H E Dr Saif bin Abdullah al Haddabi, Undersecretary of the MoHERI for Research and Innovation, at the Social Centre at Innovation Park Muscat on Monday.

Under the programme, two workshops were organised over the course of four days with the participation of 30 teachers and innovation specialists drawn from different schools in Muscat.

The first one was '3D design workshop using Fusion360 soft-

ware and 3D printing', while the second one was 'Android mobile application design and programming workshop'.

The 3D design workshop using Fusion360 software and 3D printing took place on November 27 and 28. The participants were presented with an overview of 3D printing technologies and its functioning, basics of using Fusion360, basics of designing two-dimensional and three-dimensional objects, and training on using the 3D printer software and printing the designed shapes.

A workshop on Android mobile application design and programming took place on November 29 and December 4. The participants were presented with an overview of mobile applications and how to apply them in the school environment, fundamentals of the Java programming language, fundamentals of designing user interfaces for Android applications, and the

basics of using the Android application 'kodular' as well as the use of the Blocks programming language.

The five-day event included a number of individual and team challenges, from which the best team and best participant were picked up and honoured with prizes from the Innovation Cell Centre. Certificates were also given to all the participants of the workshops.

The Skills Development Programme for Researchers and Innovators is one of the programmes of the Department of Research and Innovation Capacity Building in the Research and Innovation Sector of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, which aims to promote a culture of research and innovation among members of the society, maximise the skills and capabilities of researchers, innovators and those interested, and enhance youth capabilities in future skills.

Omantel to provide Tourist SIM Card through Otaxi as well

Muscat - Tourists in an Otaxi ride can now have one less stop on their route. It would no longer be needed for them to stop at an outlet or an authorised reseller to get Omantel's SIM card as they can conveniently get their Tourist SIM Cards from Otaxi cabdrivers during their rides.

Omantel and Otaxi have recently signed an agreement to distribute Tourist SIM Card through 2,500 cabdrivers.

The partnership stems from a mutual interest between the two companies to attract more customers and enrich their experience.

Commenting on the agreement, Aladdin Bait Fadhil, Chief Commercial Officer at Omantel, said, "We strive to enhance the experience through every touchpoint in a customer's journey, and bringing services to customers' fingertips has been of an utmost interest to Omantel. As Tourist SIM Card has been designed for short stays, we felt



that it would be necessary that these SIM cards are delivered fast and conveniently to the tourists and visitors to save them time and effort while they are in the Sultanate of Oman."

In turn, Otaxi CEO Harith Khamis al Maqbali said, "This cooperation with Omantel is the second of its kind as we have previously collaborated with the company to provide us with Virtual PBX for Otaxi, which had significant impact on facilitating our

operations. We trust that this agreement will be a success too, and it will add more convenience to our passengers who take Otaxi to tour the Sultanate of Oman."

Tourist SIM Card from Omantel has been created to offer visitors to the Sultanate of Oman a convenient experience.

It aims to make the most necessary service available to tourists and visitors during their short stays at their fingertips.

Muscat Municipality implements 2km rainwater drainage system in Bausher

Our Correspondent
Muscat

As part of its effort to mitigate flood risks, Muscat Municipality is working on a rainwater drainage system in the wilayat of Bausher in Muscat governorate.

"Construction is going on for a 2000m open drainage canals in Ghubra in Bousher," said a statement issued by Muscat Municipality.

"The project intends to mitigate the risks of flash floods by enhancing the drainage of surface water in that vital area", Muscat Municipality added.

In August, construction of a 4km long and 5m to 9m wide rainwater drainage canal in the Mahaj area of Amerat got completed. Muscat Municipality said that the project has been completed as per the municipality's plans to protect the residential areas in Amerat from huge volume of water flowing from the mountains during rains.



Japanese couple begins calligraphy exhibition at Omani Society for Arts



Our Correspondent
Muscat

A Japanese calligrapher couple is holding an exhibition in cooperation with the Embassy of Japan and the Omani Society for Arts to celebrate 50 years of relationship between the two countries.

Two visiting calligraphers, Kawaguchi Yuho and his wife Kawaguchi Seiren, are displaying contemporary calligraphy works at an exhibition titled 'En', which started at the Omani Society for Arts on Monday.

People unexpectedly meet and say goodbyes. Nature has always been made up of deep



connections between everything that exists. The Japanese people generally express gratitude for these connections with a word 'En', or karma. Joys, sorrows and sufferings are all

based on 'En'.

The Japanese calligraphy, one of the oldest traditional art forms uses brush and ink to bring out the beauty of the Japanese alphabets. Students

learn calligraphy at school as it is incorporated in school curriculum, said a press statement from the embassy.

"Many adults also enjoy it in their pastime. It is said the peace of mind and spiritual concentration are required to finish up the calligraphy art," it added.

The exhibition also displays works by Belgian visual artist, Ingrid Van Heyden. The collaboration of the Japanese and western arts explore new artistic possibilities by combining calligraphic imagery and techniques with modern form of conceptual and performance art.

The exhibition will continue till December 10.

MARKET WATCH

MSX30 4,658.29
Sensex 62,626.36

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian	214.17
Pakistan	583.32
Bangladesh	268.23
Philippines	145.29
Sri Lanka	954.71

*Rates as on December 06
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Libya tells energy firms it's safe to return

Libya's state energy firm urged its foreign oil and gas partners to resume exploration and production Tuesday assuring them security had begun to improve dramatically after clashes earlier this year.

Rival administrations in east and west have vied for power since March, in a standoff that has hampered Libya's efforts to sharply ramp up output in response to a surge in European demand for non-Russian oil and gas.

"The National Oil Corporation calls (on) the international oil and gas companies with whom it has signed oil and gas exploration and production agreements to lift the force majeure declared by them," the firm said in a statement.

Force majeure is a legal measure allowing companies to free themselves from contractual obligations in light of circumstances beyond their control.

NOC said its appeal followed a "realistic and logical analysis of the security situation, which has begun to improve dramatically."

Ukraine slams India for buying Russian oil

Ukraine's foreign minister condemned India's ramping up of Russian oil purchases following Moscow's invasion as "morally inappropriate" in an interview broadcast Tuesday.

A day earlier India's top diplomat had defended the purchases of discounted Russian crude, saying Europe's imports still dwarfed those of his country despite the continent's efforts to reduce its dependence.

But Ukraine's Dmytro Kuleba told Indian broadcaster NDTV it was "completely wrong" to justify buying oil from Russia "by arguing that Europeans were doing the same".

It was "morally inappropriate", he said.

"Because you are buying cheap oil not because of Europeans but because of us, of our suffering, of our tragedy, and because of the war that Russia launched against Ukraine."

India has increased its purchases of cheap Russian oil six-fold since the invasion in February, to the extent that Moscow is now its top crude supplier, according to local media reports.

Russia vows to ban oil trade with countries capping prices

Moscow, Russia - Russia on Tuesday said it will set up a mechanism by the year-end to prevent Russian companies from selling oil to countries imposing price caps, according to the country's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak.

"We are currently discussing, fine-tuning the decision, and discussing it with companies," Novak told reporters in Moscow.

Russian spokesman Dmitry Peskov confirmed on Monday that Russia would not recognize any price ceilings in reference to the EU and G7 price cap imposed on Russian oil exports, adding that an official response to the issue is being prepared.

The EU and the G7 agreed to impose a US\$60 per barrel price cap on Russian seaborne oil, which went into effect on December 5 and will be reviewed every two months.

The parties involved will ensure that the Russian price cap is set at least 5 per cent below the market price of crude oil.

An EU embargo on imports of



Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak

Russian crude oil by sea, which was adopted by the EU Commission on June 3 as part of a sixth package of restrictive measures against Moscow, also came into effect on Monday.

Under the sanctions package,

the bloc introduced a complete import ban on all Russian crude oil and petroleum products carried on maritime routes, which the EU says covers 90 per cent of the block's current oil imports from Russia.

The price ceiling that came into force on Monday seeks to restrict Russia's revenue as punishment for its assault on Ukraine, while making sure Moscow keeps supplying the global market.

"I have no doubt that there will be buyers for our product," Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told reporters, adding that the Russian authorities had prepared for the introduction of the price cap.

"We will see how the market will react, but in any case, our interests in this area will be secured in one way or another," Ryabkov was quoted as saying by Russian news agencies.

Novak reiterated that the cap would inevitably lead to price hikes.

He admitted that logistics will be affected.

"Russian oil has always been in demand and will continue to be in demand," Novak said. "We do not see any tragedy here."

The price cap means only oil sold at a price equal to or less than US\$60 per barrel can continue to be delivered.

The Kremlin said on Monday the measure would not affect Russia's military operation in Ukraine.

Agencies



CBO issues RO15mn treasury bills

Our Correspondent
Muscat

A tender of the government treasury bills, issue number 571, was issued this week by the Central Bank of Oman.

Total value of the allotted treasury bills amounted to RO15.4mn, for a maturity period of 91 days, from December 7, 2022 until March 8, 2023. The average accepted price reached RO98.928 and the minimum accepted price arrived at RO98.900 for every RO100 bill.

The average discount rate and the average yield reached 4.300 per cent and 4.346 per cent, respectively. The interest rate on the repo operations with CBO is 4.50 per cent while the discount rate on the treasury bills discounting facility with CBO is 5.00 per cent.

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

US trade deficit rose in October on exports dip

Washington, US - A drop in exports helped widen the US trade gap in October, government figures showed Tuesday, with decreases seen in shipments of industrial supplies and consumer goods.

The overall trade deficit rose US\$4bn to US\$78.2bn in October, Commerce Department data showed, slightly more than expected. Exports have weakened in recent months as global economies grapple with inflation and higher interest rates, while a stronger US dollar has made American goods more pricey for foreign consumers.

Although the US central bank has also embarked on an all-out campaign to raise interest rates and cool the world's biggest economy, imports continued rising, the latest figures showed.

Imports picked up in October to US\$334.8bn on goods including automobiles and parts.

AFP

Airlines to return to profit in 2023: IATA

Geneva, Switzerland - Airlines are expected to return to profit next year for the first time since 2019 despite slowing global growth as they recover from a Covid-induced crisis, an industry group said Tuesday.

After cutting losses this year, global airlines are forecast to make US\$4.7bn in net profits in 2023, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

This is still far off the US\$26.4bn profit the industry reported in 2019, before Covid prompted countries to enact travel restrictions that have since been eased in most nations.

"Resilience has been the hallmark for airlines in the Covid-19 crisis," IATA director general Willie Walsh said in a statement.

"As we look to 2023, the financial recovery will take shape with a first industry profit since 2019. That is a great achievement considering the scale of the financial and economic damage caused by government imposed pandemic restrictions," he said.

Governments in numerous countries had to bail out airlines as travel was brought to a halt to slow the spread of the virus, and the industry suffered US\$137.7bn in losses in 2020 at the height of the restrictions.

Airlines are expected to post US\$779bn in revenues in 2023, meaning the US\$4.7bn profit constitutes a razor-thin net profit margin of just 0.6 per cent.

Walsh said many airlines are "sufficiently profitable" to attract capital as the industry seeks to



decarbonise its operations.

But many others are struggling due to "onerous regulation, high costs, inconsistent government policies, inefficient infrastructure and a value chain where the rewards of connecting the world are not equitably distributed," he said.

Passenger traffic was slightly lower than forecast in 2022 due to slowing economies and China's zero-Covid restrictions.

'Optimistic about 2023'

But the IATA expects passenger traffic to return to 85.5 per cent

of its pre-crisis level in 2023.

And that expected improvement comes as global GDP growth slows, according to IATA's forecast, to 1.3 per cent from 2.9 per cent in 2022.

"Despite the economic uncertainties, there are plenty of reasons to be optimistic about 2023," said Walsh.

Airlines should not be affected by rising jet fuel prices as they were in 2022, while continuing to benefit from pent-up travel demand.

A recent IATA poll found that more than two-thirds of travellers surveyed in 11 global mar-

kets are travelling as much or more than before the pandemic.

And while 85 per cent said they are concerned about the economic situation, 57 per cent said have no intention to curb their travel habits.

But Walsh also warned that with such thin margins, "even an insignificant shift in any one of these variables has the potential to shift the balance into negative territory."

IATA sees airlines squeaking out a profit thanks to revenues growing faster than costs next year. While rising interest rates may crimp demand for travel,

Global markets drop as Fed worries offset China's Covid easing

London, UK - Global stock markets fell on Tuesday as investors were split between fears that the US Federal Reserve will maintain its aggressive anti-inflation measures and growing optimism over China's economic reopening.

London, Frankfurt and Paris stock markets were down in afternoon trades after Asia mostly fell. Wall Street extended losses as it opened lower following a sell-off the previous day.

Data showing a forecast-busting jump in activity in the US services sector last month raised



Pedestrians pass an electronic board showing the numbers for the Hang Seng Index in Hong Kong on Monday (AFP)

the prospect that the Fed will not back down from sharp rate in-

creases when it meets next week. Monday's data followed robust

jobs figures last week and a jump in wages that give the central bank more room to cool the US economy, fuelling investor concerns that the Fed's actions could cause a deep recession.

"Worries that the Fed could unwrap an unwelcome present of another super-sized rate hike when policymakers meet next week are sprinkling Christmas fear on indices," said Susannah Streeter, senior investment and markets analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown.

"Speculation is swirling that central banks will have to be

more Scrooge-like and make borrowing even more expensive to rein in inflation," she said.

Markets had been running higher ahead of the jobs figures after a surprise drop in inflation and comments from Fed boss Jerome Powell that the bank was likely to raise rates at a slower pace.

Bets have increased on borrowing costs rising higher than five per cent next year - from the current range of 3.75-4.0 per cent - before the bank pauses, with no cuts seen until 2024.

AFP

WANTED

For a Telecom/IT/Security/Electronic
System Integrator Company

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Engineer in the above fields is required with
4-5 years of sales/marketing/business
development experience. Must be Muscat
based with Omani Driving License &
transferable visa.

Please send your CV to
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Bank Muscat launches Visa virtual card

Bank Muscat, a leading financial service provider in Oman, has announced the launch of its new Visa Virtual Corporate Credit Card Solution facilitated through a state-of-the-art platform, Visa Commercial Pay. This is the first Visa virtual credit card to be launched in Oman and is meant to empower its corporate customers with real-time transaction security and control.

"Through this solution, corporates can issue single or multiple use virtual card numbers and specify spend parameters for better security, control and easy reconciliation", Bank Muscat stated. "The addition of the Virtual corporate credit card adds further options to business (B2B) electronic payments and helps reduce the reliance on more traditional and labor-intensive payment modes", it added.

"As the leading bank in the sultanate, Bank Muscat is committed to building ever stronger partnerships with its customers as it continuously improves customer experience by offering corporate banking solutions built on top of state-of-the-art technology and in tune with the latest customer needs," said Abdullah Tamman al Mashani, bank's General Manager - Products.

"Today, we are pleased to



launch the Bank Muscat Visa Virtual Corporate Card, which combines the power of the widely-accepted Visa platform and the highest levels of transaction security with flexibility in implementation depending on a corporate's unique needs. This will further empower our corporate customers in an ever-changing

and dynamic digital environment," he added.

Manish Gautam, Visa's Country Manager for Oman, said, "As the shift to digital gathers more pace, Visa strives to provide innovative solutions that address the evolving payment needs of businesses everywhere. We are delighted to launch the first Visa

virtual credit card in Oman in partnership with Bank Muscat to support the ongoing digital transformation of businesses in the sultanate."

The Bank Muscat Visa virtual corporate credit card, which is facilitated by Visa Commercial Pay combined with Visa Spend Clarity for Enterprise offers end

to end visibility and control to corporates through enhanced reporting and ERP integration. As a B2B solution, the card will especially benefit large corporates and businesses making local and international payments/fund transfers on a regular basis.

Corporates have a choice of implementing this solution as a

web-based application, accounts-payable batch file or fully integrate it into their ERP, e-procurement or financial system. These three options can address corporate needs, whether the card is meant for 'ad hoc' accounting needs, high volume accounts payable operations, high volume regular payments or payments to a fragmented payee-base in industries such as insurance claims processors or travel intermediaries.

The virtual card is an extension of the Bank's Corporate Standard Credit Card. It provides payment support for 'card-not-present' transactions while featuring increased security against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions through customised controls including being restricted to a single use or multiple use as required by the corporate. Being virtual cards, they can be generated for a supplier category or a specific supplier as and when needed through a well-defined maker-checker approval system.

Credit lines can be assigned to individual transactions and payments will be automatically blocked if it does not meet the Corporate's control criteria. Since the virtual cards feature traditional 16-digit card numbers and come with valid expiry and CVV

details, there is no learning curve for the end user, who can easily input the details as required to complete transactions. Corporate banking customers may contact their relationship manager or go to the following link for more details on how to apply for a card: https://www.bankmuscat.com/en/Business/Everydaybanking/Pages/Visa_Corporate_Card.s.aspx

Bank Muscat's Visa virtual corporate credit cards continue to build on the bank's customer-centric vision of keeping pace with global trends and customer feedback by launching the latest products, services, and solutions.

Earlier in August, the bank launched its Visa Pre-Load Payment Card aimed at Government and Semi-government institutions, SMEs and corporate customers to give a boost to electronic payments and help reduce reliance on cash in line with the government's overall strategy of moving towards a digital economy.

The bank has announced plans to keep introducing innovative digital services and features that further enhance banking convenience and security even as it seeks to support stronger economic development and financial inclusion in line with the goals of Oman Vision 2040.

Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort brings 'holistic healing'

An expert in Asia's leading healing traditions, Dr Buathon Thienarrom will be in residence at Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort this festive season, offering personalised treatments for body and mind.

The elevated mountain setting of Anantara Al Jabal Al Akhdar Resort is the perfect setting for a wellness retreat, where guests have a chance to clear the mind and reset the body in a deeply peaceful environment.

The resort's award-winning spa regularly plays host to wellness practitioners from around the world. This festive season, from December 24 to January 7, Dr Buathon Thienarrom will arrive from Thailand to offer one-on-one healing to visitors and guests, the resort management said.

Dr Buathon's path to healing was an unorthodox one, first gaining a bachelor's degree in nursing, then a master's in psychology, and completing her doctorate in health. Throughout her studies, she sought out knowledge in both the medical and holistic fields, seeing one as



Dr Buathon Thienarrom

complementary to the other, and training in the traditions of Chinese, Tibetan and Japanese healing, as well as Ayurveda and energy work.

The result is Dr Buathon's very unique form of healing, bringing clinical rigour to the sciences of therapeutic touch, and drawing on the traditions of the world's great civilisations to synergistically treat body and mind.

Her signature treatment is ZenNaTai, a form of hands-on therapy she devised to release physical tension and detox the body. Qi is generated and lymphatic flow increased, aiding digestion, sleep, concentration and

peacefulness.

For guests in search of energy enhancing, she awakens the chakras with precious oils that activate the body's energy flow. Tibetan singing bowl vibrations resonate with the body's fluid, cleansing and rejuvenating. Brain wave frequencies are lulled into a meditative state for deep relaxation.

Guests who suffer stress and the resulting physical tension in the body are recommended to try Mind Transformation. The mind is the master of the body, and while a healthy mind can enhance physical wellness, an unhealthy mind that is tainted by the 'three poisons' of attachment, hatred and closed-mindedness can be liable to disease. Dr Buathon helps transform negative emotions into vitality through conscious breathing, unleashing a sense of empowerment and clarity.

And finally, for guests looking for full immersion in tranquility and wellness, Dr Buathon leads multi-day personalised retreats that promote mindfulness in daily life.

Madayn organises building and construction business meet

The Public Establishment for Industrial Estates 'Madayn' on Tuesday organised a business meet at Crowne Plaza Muscat focused on the latest developments and technologies in the building and construction industry.

The 'Building and Construction Business Meet' also to highlighted the key role played by the building and construction industry in the manufacturing sector, as well as the dynamic role of related businesses in supplying high-quality products for infrastructure projects.

Speaking at the event, Mundhir bin Ali al Nasser, acting director general of Marketing and Commercial Affairs at Madayn, stated that statistics released by the National Centre for Statistics and Information indicate that the total contribution of the manufacturing industries in the sultanate has touched RO2.3bn by end of the first half of this year compared to RO1.4bn during the same period last year.

Nasser added that Oman Vision 2040 has placed the manufacturing industries as one of the



key drivers that lead the industrial sector supported by the availability of natural resources and the strategic location of the Sultanate that facilitates the export of these industries.

Jalal al Hadhrami, Director of Local Content and Business Opportunities at the Industrial Innovation Academy, said that the academy is developing innovative programmes aimed at empowering the industrial sector and the SMEs through focusing on the local content and capacity building, and adoption of automation and Industry 4.0 technologies through the associated supply chain.

Hadhrami then elaborated on 'Rabt Programme', which is being implemented by the academy to link the existing industries with the government tenders. He also informed that a platform is being developed for 'Rabt Programme' to serve the industrial sector in the sultanate through encouraging investments, facilitating purchases at the sector level, and enhancing the local value.

Bader al Haddabi, founder of Keystone Architectural Consultancy, gave a presentation on 'Adobe Construction', which utilises affordable, fireproof, recyclable and environmentally friendly materials as adobe

bricks can be easily cut for fitting and can be provided with holes for reinforcing and services. Haddabi added that intensive R&D has to be conducted on Adobe to improve its properties and recommended that national awareness campaign to be implemented in this regard.

On his part, Dr Hilal al Dhamri, general manager of Manufacturing at Oman Cement Company, elaborated on stages of cement manufacturing, cement types and specifications, and the challenges and future of cement industry in the sultanate.

The event also included a panel discussion.

Indian School Muscat celebrates annual sports day

Indian School Muscat celebrated annual sports day for the primary section in the school grounds on November 29, the school stated in a press release.

Jayapal Dethe, Second Secretary (Political & Education) at the Indian Embassy, was the chief guest on the occasion, which was also graced by other dignitaries.

The grand March Past done by 600 students of Class IV set the tone for the day. The effervescent function began with the welcoming of the chief guest and the other dignitaries.

The Torch Run marked the beginning of the sports day, and lit up the sporting arena with spectacular events.

While declaring the sports day open, chief guest Dethe said, "Will power and determination to win is the power to success. If you lose, you will learn to over-



come failures."

An oath taking ceremony was followed by various athletic

events and a prize distribution ceremony to end the day. The winners were felicitated with

their well-deserved medals.

The races for the boys and girls evoked a lot of passion and

fervour among the students and the audience continuous applause reverberated the grounds.

The colourful and lively Pom-Pom drill was displayed by the students of Class I to the foot tapping music. Class II students sang and danced to the beats of the scintillating music - Hokey Pokey. They meticulously moved to the rhythmic movements. The Beach Ball drill displayed by the Class III students showcased various shades of colours which depicted eye and foot coordination which lifted the hearts of the enthralled audience.

Five Indian schools from the Muscat region participated enthusiastically in the much awaited Inter School Relay. The most enthralling and highlighted event of the day was the staff race. The audience was spell bound by their performance and enthusiastic participation.

Malabar Gold & Diamonds announces free gold coins

With an extensive retail network of over 295 outlets across ten countries, Malabar Gold & Diamonds, the sixth largest jewellery retailer globally, has unveiled their offers for this year's Malabar Gold & Diamonds festival.

Customers can get assured gold coins on purchase of diamond and precious gem jewellery at any Malabar Gold & Diamonds showroom in Oman. To mark the holiday season, the brand has also enriched their collection of designs across gold, diamond, precious gem and platinum jewellery. The limited period offer will be valid until December 24.

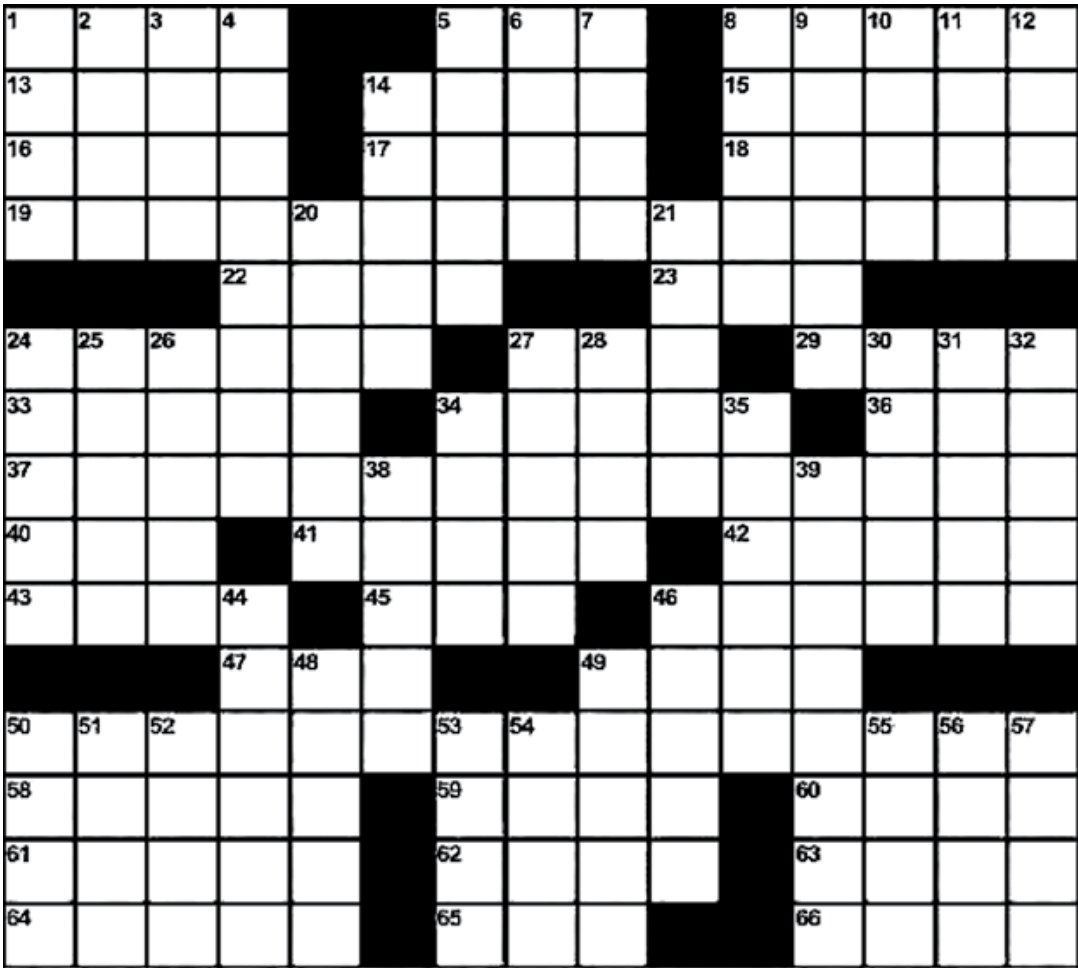
On purchase of every diamond or precious gem jewellery worth RO500, customers are eligible for a free 1gm gold coin and a 1/2 gm gold coin for purchase of jewellery worth RO300.

"The Malabar Gold & Diamonds Festival is one of our brand's most awaited offer seasons of the year," said Shamlal Ahamed, managing director-International Operations, Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

"With the approaching holiday season, we have made every effort to improve the shopping experience of our customers with our exquisite array of gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery with an added incentive of free gold coins on diamond and precious gem jewellery purchase. We are certain that our loyal customers in Oman will welcome the festival with open arms and flock to our showrooms," Ahamed added.

The brand has enhanced its collection of gold, diamond and precious gem jewellery across its numerous sub-brands.

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1) Dull
5) "... boom bah!"
8) Symbol of authority
13) Glorified gofer
14) A lot of lot
15) Overthrow, e.g.
16) Brand, in a way
17) Fall precursor
18) Fertile soil
19) Chuckle elicitor, sometimes
22) Kind of poetic foot
23) Part of BYOB
24) Beloved of Aphrodite
27) Taxing time, briefly
29) Mend by stitching
33) Shoestrings
34) Dispatch boat
36) The zodiac's only car-nivore
37) Party ice-breaker
40) Newspaper div.
41) Like Erik the Red
42) Advertising gimmick
43) Make a sweater
45) Informer, slangily
46) Deep-sixed
4 7) Backboard attach-ment

- 49) Set aside
50) Robin Williams and Richard Pryor, many say
58) Cremona artisan
59) It has its ups and downs
60) Use a wrecking ball
61) Hybrid cat
62) Appraiser
63) Ethiopian currency
64) Con game, essentially
65) Bummed
66) Concrete section-
DOWN
1) Big blowout
2) In_ of (rather than)
3) Man in a garden
4) Female protagonists
5) Clean, as dishes
6) Camera diaphragm
7) Aug. follower
8) Not on deck
9) In the vicinity
10) Remnant
11) "Gee whillikers!"
12) Formerly, formerly
14) Itsy-bitsy bits
20) Cereal fruit
21) Buggy puller
24) Shakespearean

- "shucks"
25) Matt of Hollywood
26) Caesar's peepers
27) "Halt!" at sea
28) Durable wood
30) Plants with healing properties
31) Fix a loose bundle
32) "There's_ in sight"
34) City on the Yamuna River
35) Aquarium creatures
38)_ Jean (Marilyn Mon-roe)
39) Shakes up
44) Moon of Neptune
46) Jose Carreras, for one
48) Cake topper
49) Atwitter (with "up")
50) Garfield and Heath-cliff
51) Bypass
52) O. Henry's "The Gift of the_"
53) Cleaning cabinet sup-plies
54) "The Disasters of War" painter

- 55) Go on the briny
56) University founder
Cornell
57) Balkan native

NOTE PAD



YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

Arguments can be volatile. They often veer off on tangents that have nothing whatsoever to do with the real problem. Obviously, when an argument goes off topic, it's hard to find a solution and foster peace. If you end up in a verbal confrontation today, put a bit of extra effort into staying on topic. This might require that you set aside your emotions and not react when your buttons are pushed.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

There is a time and a place for mixing finances with friendships, but that time is most certainly not today! The stars say that you should keep your money and your friends far apart today. This includes generous gestures, so don't even offer to buy someone a cup of coffee, and graciously let friends know that you prefer to split that restaurant check (even if they offer to treat). Otherwise, it's likely that someone will end up feeling taken advantage of.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Feeling tired? It's no wonder. The pace (and hours) you keep isn't conducive to staying alert and awake throughout the day. If you can't seem to get revved up to start your day, then sleep in a little bit longer. If you can't sleep in a bit longer, then promise yourself that you'll make time for a nice nap on weekends. They say you can't really catch up on sleep, but you need to get some more sleep in order to get back to feeling normal.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Yes, it's true that you've been the recipient of many generous acts from your friends, but you know you can help them out too! Sharing is definitely a two-way street, so make your way toward one of your friends today and share some of what you have, whether it's money, time, jokes, clothing, or good advice. Your pal might not need any of these things, but that doesn't matter. The value is in the gesture, and you'll be sending someone a message that they need to hear right now.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

They say that familiarity breeds contempt, so do yourself a favor and pretend you don't know your friends as well as you do. What do you really think about the choices they make, and are you even capable of seeing them as you would see strangers? This isn't about judging your friends. After all, you shouldn't be too critical of them. It's just a way to remind yourself that the people you choose to have in your life are multifaceted and complicated.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Whether you use a pen, pencil, or keyboard, today is a great day for writing. Use every last bit of your creativity to make your messages more interesting and meaningful. Don't settle for trite catchphrases or metaphorical cliches right now. Instead, use vivid, precise language to accurately communicate what's going on in your mind. Perhaps employing something like a simple rhyme or a bit of ingenious alliteration will help get your messages noticed.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Your charm is going to be extremely effective today. Doors won't just open a little bit so you can elbow your way in; they'll fly open, revealing a great big welcome sign! And getting comfortable in a new situation will take you nanoseconds, so this is a perfect day for a big date or a trip to an unfamiliar place. An important relationship could take a giant leap forward if you just relax and let your inner brilliance shine.



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

While you might have scheduled a busy day full of errands, chores, or extra work, your mind will have a difficult time staying focused. Whether it's distracted by an unexpectedly beautiful day, irrepressible romantic daydreams, or fun online research for a new interest, you won't mind the disruption in your routine. Look forward to a day full of exciting revelations, brilliant ideas, and a good chuckle or two.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

A seemingly innocuous exchange early this morning will resonate with you throughout the day, echoing endlessly whenever you have a quiet moment to think. It won't take long for you to understand why these words are especially meaningful to you right now. They're a call to action, and they're full of challenging ideas that are forcing you to reevaluate your beliefs. Have the courage to do so, and understand that reevaluation isn't the same thing as revision.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

You are like the bubbles in a glass of champagne today: full of effervescent energy that lifts the moods of the people around you. And just like champagne, you'll have quite an intoxicating effect on the people who come into extended contact with you. This is your chance to build on the promising spirit of a new relationship and get a lot closer to someone you find very interesting. Unleash all your charm, no holds barred, and you'll get amazing results.



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

The world isn't aware of all the skills you posses, so why not give people a sneak preview of a few of them today? You can use your hidden talents to entertain, persuade, and educate people, whatever you need to accomplish. Playing strictly by the rules could be a bit shortsighted today. Think big and have confidence in what you can do. Just because you aren't an expert at something doesn't mean that you aren't good at it.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

When you look in the mirror, do you see what others see? There is a lack of accuracy in your self-image. And the only way to attack this problem you have with yourself is to look outside yourself and consult others. Talk to the people who know you best. Ask them what they think about your recent actions and choices. They have some wisdom to share, and they can help you start getting a more accurate idea of who you are.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. Which brothers founded the studio which developed the dance rhythm game, Just Dance 2021?

- A. Smith
B. Guillemot
C. Kwok
D. Gou

02. Who was Prime Minister of the UK on 28 March 1979, when the House of Commons passed a Motion of No Confidence, forcing a general election that was won by Margaret Thatcher?

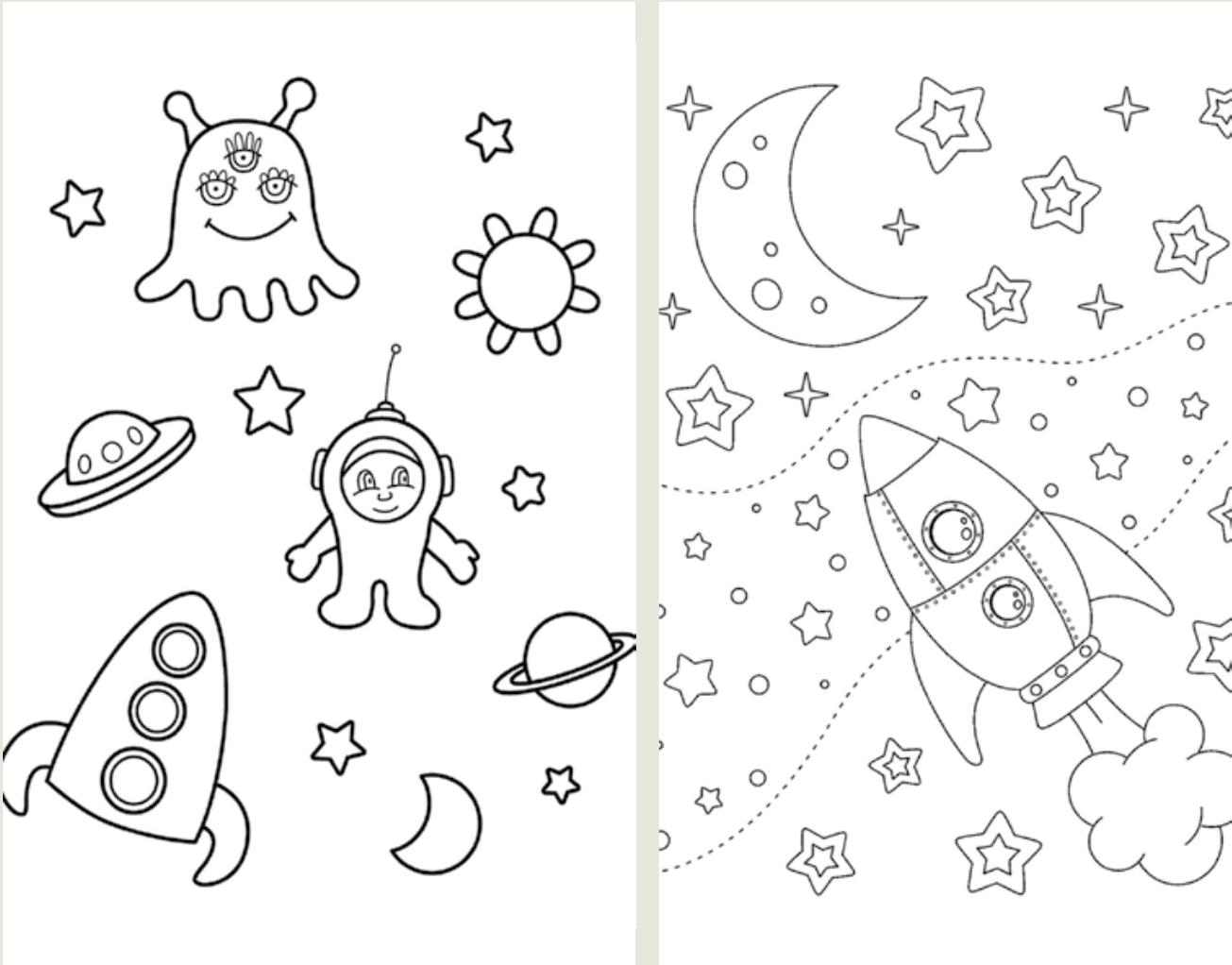
- A. Edward Heath
B. Harold Wilson
C. Alec Douglas-Home
D. James Callaghan

03. Who used to observe the Sarum Rite?

- A. Followers of the religion now known as Wicca
B. Druids
C. Prehistoric peoples living in Salisbury
D. Mediaeval Christians in parts of Europe

Answers: 1.B 2.D 3.D

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

Y	I	I	R
B	E	D	S
U	I	R	S
A	G	A	A

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

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

WORD BUILDER



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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

Ukraine races to restore power grid after Russia's latest missile strikes

Kyiv, Ukraine - Ukraine worked to restore power on Tuesday after Russia's latest wave of missile strikes caused power disruptions across the country, right as winter frost builds and temperatures plunge.

Out of the 70 missiles launched by Moscow, 'most' were shot down, President Volodymyr Zelensky said, but the barrage still hit Ukraine's already battered infrastructure.

Fresh power cuts were announced in all regions 'due to the consequences of shelling', national electricity provider Ukrenergo said on Telegram.

The head of Ukrenergo said he had 'no doubt that Russian military consulted with Russian power engineers during this attack', judging by where the missiles landed.

"The time that Russians chose for this attack was connected with their desire to inflict as much damage as possible," Volodymyr Kudrytskyi told a Ukrainian news programme, explaining the attacks were launched as the country enters a 'peak frost' period.

"Our repairmen will be working on the energy system restoration."

Nearly half of Ukraine's energy system has already been damaged after months of strikes on power infrastructure, leaving people in the cold and dark for hours at a time as outdoor tem-



Passengers ride in a city bus down a street during a power cut in downtown Odessa, on Monday, amid the Russian invasion of Ukraine (AFP)

The time that Russians chose for this attack was connected with their desire to inflict as much damage as possible

VOLODYMYR KUDRYTSKYI

peratures drop below zero degrees Celsius (32 degrees Fahrenheit).

As missiles rained down on Kyiv, UN rights chief Volker Turk

- who arrived over the weekend on a four-day visit - had to move his meetings with activists into an underground shelter.

Zelensky announced in his nightly address that four were killed in Russia's strikes.

But 'our people never give up', the president said in a video statement.

Across the border in Russia's Kursk region on Tuesday, an airfield saw a 'drone attack', said local governor Roman Starovoyt, without specifying where the drone originated.

"As a result of a drone attack in the area of the Kursk airfield,

an oil storage tank caught fire," he said on social media, adding that there were no casualties.

Tuesday's incident comes a day after Moscow accused its neighbour of carrying out deadly drone strikes on two other airfields. Russia also confirmed a 'massive attack on Ukrainian military command systems and related defence, communications, energy and military facilities'.

Moscow vows to keep fighting

The latest violence comes just after Russia shrugged off a Western-imposed price cap on

its oil exports, warning the move would not impact its military campaign in Ukraine.

The US\$60-per-barrel cap agreed by the European Union, G7 and Australia aims to restrict Russia's revenue while making sure Moscow keeps supplying the global market.

"Russia's economy has all the necessary potential to fully meet the needs and requirements of the special military operation," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters, using Moscow's term for its Ukraine offensive.

"These measures will not af-

fect this," he said. Russia 'will not recognise' the measures, which amounted to 'a step towards destabilising the global energy markets', he added.

The market price of a barrel of Russian Urals crude is currently around US\$65, just slightly higher than the US\$60 cap - suggesting the measure may have only a limited impact in the short term. The cap is the latest in a number of measures spearheaded by Western countries and introduced against Russia - the world's second-largest crude oil exporter - after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine over nine months ago.

It comes on top of an EU embargo on seaborne deliveries of Russian crude oil that came into force on Monday.

The embargo will prevent maritime shipments of Russian crude to the European Union, which account for two-thirds of the bloc's oil imports from Russia, potentially depriving Moscow of billions of euros.

Kyiv had initially welcomed the price ceiling, but later said it would not do enough damage to Russia's economy.

Meanwhile, Russian state media released footage of President Vladimir Putin driving a Mercedes car across the Crimea bridge - the closest the 70-year-old leader has come to the front-line in Ukraine.

AFP

Colombia landslide kills 34

Bogotá, Colombia - Heavy rains in northwest Colombia sent a wall of earth crashing onto a winding road, swallowing up a bus and other vehicles and killing 34 people, emergency services said on Monday.

The landslide on Sunday evening prompted a large rescue effort, with dozens of people in hard hats using backhoes and excavators to dig through the earth looking for victims.

The National Unit for Disaster Risk Management said the fatalities included eight minors and that nine other people were injured in the disaster in the remote town of Pueblo Rico.

The bus had set out from the city of Cali with 25 passengers, and traveled 270km before being hit by the landslide as it passed through the Andes mountain region, civil defense officials said.

Colombian media reported that a child had survived and was pulled from the arms of its mother, who did not make it.

One survivor said the bus driver had at first managed to dodge the worst of the landslide.

"Part of it was coming down and the bus was a little bit back from that. The bus driver was backing up when it all came crashing down," Andres Ibarguen told radio station Lloro Stereo.

The rainy season that began in August is Colombia's worst in 40 years, according to the government, causing accidents.

AFP

China blasts US military report as 'groundless speculation'

Beijing, China - China on Tuesday criticised a US defence report estimating Beijing's nuclear arsenal would triple by 2035 as 'groundless speculation' and accused Washington of 'hyping up' the military threat posed by the world's most populous country.

The US Department of Defense released its annual China Military Power Report last week, which said China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) would likely acquire around 1,500 nuclear warheads by 2035 at its current pace of expansion.

That figure would still lag far behind the arsenals of the United States and Russia, which each include several thousand nuclear warheads.

Chinese defence ministry spokesman Tan Kefei said the report 'distorts China's defence policy and military strategy, is groundless speculation on China's military development... and is (the United States') customary trick to hype up and exaggerate China's so-called military threat'.

"The United States is making accusations and speculations about the modernisation of China's nuclear forces, when in fact it is the one that should deeply review and reflect on its own nuclear policy," Tan added.

The Pentagon report also said Beijing had 'adopted more dangerous, coercive and aggressive actions in the Indo-Pacific region'.

The PLA would 'likely continue to increase military

pressure - in concert with diplomatic, information and economic pressure - in an attempt to compel Taiwan toward unification," it said.

Tan on Tuesday said this 'grossly interfered' in China's internal affairs regarding its attitude towards Taiwan, which is a flashpoint in deteriorating US-China relations.

After US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited the self-ruled island in early August,

Beijing accused Washington of 'hyping up the military threat posed by the most populous country

China staged unprecedented military exercises in the surrounding waters and fired multiple missiles, some of which Japan said landed in its exclusive economic zone.

"The PLA increased provocative and destabilising actions in and around the Taiwan Strait, to include ... conducting exercises focused on the potential seizure of one of Taiwan's outlying islands," the US report said, in reference to this incident.

Chinese President Xi Jinping and top military officials have repeatedly stated that China's eventual 'unification' with Taiwan is inevitable, and have hardened their rhetoric to include the possibility of a takeover using military force.

AFP

Orion slingshots around Moon, heads for home

Washington, US - NASA's Orion spaceship made a close pass of the Moon and used a gravity assist to whip itself back towards Earth on Monday, marking the start of the return journey for the Artemis-1 mission.

At its nearest point, the uncrewed capsule flew less than 80 miles (130km) from the surface, testing manoeuvres that will be used during later Artemis missions that return humans to the rocky celestial body.

Communication with the capsule was interrupted for 30 minutes when it was behind the far side of the Moon - an area more cratered than the near side and first seen by humans during the Apollo era, although they didn't land there. The European Service



Earth is visible as a crescent in the minutes after Orion finished its engine burn around the moon on Monday (AFP)

Module, which powers the capsule, fired its main engine for over three minutes to put the gumdrop-shaped Orion on course for home.

"We couldn't be more pleased

about how the spacecraft is performing," Debbie Korth, Orion Programme deputy manager, said later.

As spectacular footage flashed on their screens once

communication was restored, she told a news conference, "everybody in the room, we just kind of had to stop and pause, and just really look - Wow, we're saying goodbye to the moon."

Monday's was the last major manoeuvre of the mission, which began when NASA's mega Moon rocket SLS blasted off from Florida on November 16. From start to finish, the journey should last 25 and a half days.

Orion will now make only slight course corrections until it splashes down in the Pacific Ocean off San Diego on Sunday, December 11 at 9:40am local time (1740 GMT). It will then be recovered and hoisted aboard a US Navy ship. Earlier in the mission, Orion spent about six days

in 'distant retrograde orbit' around the Moon, meaning at high altitude and traveling opposite the direction the Moon revolves around Earth.

A week ago, Orion broke the distance record for a habitable capsule, venturing 280,000 miles from our planet. Once it returns to Earth, Orion will have traveled more than 1.4mn miles, said Mike Sarafin, the Artemis mission manager.

Re-entry into Earth's atmosphere will present a harsh test for the spacecraft's heat shield, which will need to withstand temperatures of around 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit (2,800degrees Celsius) - or about half the surface of the Sun.

AFP

Thousands protest corruption, inflation in Mongolia

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia - Thousands have braved freezing temperatures in Mongolia's capital to protest alleged corruption in the country's coal industry and soaring inflation.

Protesters, many of them young people, rallied in Ulaanbaatar's Sukhbaatar Square - home to the Government Palace - in minus 21 degrees Celsius (minus six degrees Fahrenheit) on Monday, demanding 'justice' against corrupt officials and for the country's parliament to be dismissed.

"Help our country is collapsing," read one protester's sign.

Two herders told AFP they had travelled to the capital to join the protests.

"Basically doing nothing is not right. I think it is right that young people are angry," Enkh Amiral, a father of three, told AFP, saying he wanted the government to 'punish the thieves'.

"They seem to forget what they promised us - they promised us a better life. They are supposed to make things better,"



People gather to protest alleged corruption in coal industry and soaring inflation at Sukhbaatar Square in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia on Monday (AFP)

a female student who gave her name as Bayarmaa said.

"But they aren't doing anything, taking our money, filling their own bellies," she added.

Police urged the crowds to disperse by 9pm local time (1300 GMT) as the mood turned tense and scuffles broke out with demonstrators.

Protesters are frustrated with the country's ailing economy,

with inflation soaring to 15.2 per cent in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

But public outrage has also been stoked by whistleblower claims that a so-called 'coal faction' of lawmakers with ties to the industry has stolen billions of dollars worth of the sedimentary rock.

In mid-November, Mongolia's anti-corruption authority an-

nounced that over 30 officials - including the CEO of the state-owned coal mining company Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi - were under investigation for embezzlement.

The firm controls the Erdenes Tavan Tolgoi deposits, which contain 7.5bn tons of coking coal - an essential ingredient in the steel-making process - and represent a key component of Mongolia's state budget revenue. It is

yet to comment on the allegations. The implicated lawmakers are alleged to have leveraged their ownership of coal mines and transportation companies that move the fossil fuel across the border into China to make illegal profits.

"6.4mn tons coal is not registered by Mongolian customs officials but recorded by Chinese customs, since 2013," Dorjhand Togmid, an MP, told a press conference at the parliament in November.

Whistleblowers have also alleged that corrupt customs officials did not register coal-loaded trucks as importing goods, but instead as regular passenger vehicles, when they crossed the border to China.

Mongolia sends 86 per cent of its exports to China, with coal accounting for more than half the total, and is upgrading its infrastructure in the hopes of selling even more to its southern neighbour. Mining makes up a quarter of Mongolia's gross domestic product.

AFP

Iran judiciary sentences 5 more people to death

Death penalty was awarded over killing of a paramilitary force member during nationwide protests

Tehran, Iran - Iran has sentenced to death five people over the killing of a Basij paramilitary force member during nationwide protests sparked by Mahsa Amini's death, the judiciary said on Tuesday.

Another 11 people, including three children, were handed lengthy jail terms over the murder, judiciary spokesman Mas-soud Setayeshi told a news conference, adding the sentences could be appealed.

Prosecutors said Ajamian, 27, was stripped naked and killed by a group of mourners who had been paying tribute to a slain protester, Hadis Najafi.

Najafi had been killed on September 21, five days into the wave of protests that erupted across Iran after the death of Amini, following her arrest by the morality police for an alleged breach of the country's hijab dress code for women.

Iran has struggled to quell the protests and street violence.

In a surprise move, Iran's prosecutor general, Mohammad Jafar Montazeri, was on Sunday quoted as saying that the morality police units - known formally as Gasht-e Ershad ('Guidance



Shops remain closed in the Kurdish-populated city of Sanandaj in western Iran on Monday as protesters call for a three-day nationwide strike (AFP)

Patrol') - had been closed down. But his comments have yet to be followed up by an official announcement and have drawn widespread scepticism.

Ajamian had died on November 3 in Karaj, a city west of Tehran, after being attacked with 'knives, stones, fists, kicks' and being dragged on the street, said the judiciary spokesman.

He belonged to the Basij, a state-sanctioned volunteer force that is linked to Iran's powerful

Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

'War against God'

The five sentenced to death were convicted of 'corruption on earth' - one of the most serious offences under Islamic sharia law in Iran. The other 11, including a woman, were convicted for 'their role in the riots' and received long jail terms, said Setayeshi.

The latest court rulings bring to 11 the number of people sen-

tenced to death in Iran over the protests, described as 'riots' by the authorities.

On November 20, the revolutionary court of Tehran handed down the death penalty for a person found guilty of 'moharebeh', which means waging 'war against God'.

On November 16, the same court had sentenced three others to death in connection with the protests.

One was convicted of attack-

ing police officers with his car, killing one of them, the second had stabbed a security officer and the third tried to block traffic and spread 'terror', Mizan said.

An Iranian general said on Monday that more than 300 people have been killed in the unrest, including dozens of members of the security forces.

Oslo-based non-government group Iran Human Rights said at least 448 people had been 'killed by security forces in the ongoing

The five sentenced to death were convicted of 'corruption on earth'. Another 11 people, including three children, were handed lengthy jail terms over the murder, judiciary spokesman Massoud Setayeshi told a news conference

nationwide protests'.

Campaign of arrests

Iran accuses the United States and its allies, including Britain, Israel, and Kurdish groups based outside the country of fomenting the unrest.

Amnesty International said on November 16 that, based on official reports, at least 21 people were charged with crimes that could see them hanged in what it called 'sham trials'.

Iran currently executes more people annually than any nation other than China, according to the London-based human rights group. Hundreds of people have been killed and thousands have been arrested, including 40 foreigners and prominent actors, journalists and lawyers.

Among them are 12 alleged members of an unnamed European-linked group accused of planning acts of sabotage.

In a statement quoted by Tasnim news agency, the Revolutionary Guards in Markazi province, southwest of Tehran, said they had arrested 'a network with 12 members with links abroad'.

The statement alleged they had been 'under the guidance of counter-revolutionary agents living in Germany and the Netherlands' and carried out 'activities against national security'.

They had 'attempted to procure weapons and intended to carry out subversive acts' but had been captured before being able to do so, it added.

The Guards statement said, about the nationwide protests, that the 'riots project has failed'. AFP

Al Jazeera takes slain journalist's case to ICC

The Hague, Netherlands - TV network Al Jazeera submitted the case of slain journalist Shireen Abu Akleh to the International Criminal Court on Tuesday, saying she was killed by Israeli forces.

The Qatar-based channel said it had 'unearthed new evidence' on the death of the Palestinian-American, shot while covering an Israel army raid in Jenin in the occupied West Bank on May 11.

Any person or group can file a complaint to the ICC prosecutor for investigation, but the Hague-based court is under no obligation to take on such cases.

Al Jazeera said its submission highlighted 'new witness evidence and video footage (that) clearly show that Shireen and her colleagues were directly fired at by the Israeli Occupation Forces.'

"The claim by the Israeli authorities that Shireen was killed by mistake in an exchange of fire is completely unfounded," the channel said. An AFP journalist saw a lawyer representing Al Jazeera's case entering the ICC's headquarters to hand over their submission.



This file photo shows journalists mourning over the body of Shireen Abu Akleh, who was shot dead while covering a raid on the West Bank's Jenin refugee camp, at the hospital in Jenin on May 11, this year (AFP)

The ICC last year launched a probe into war crimes in the Palestinian territories, but Israel is not an ICC member and disputes the court's jurisdiction.

The Israeli army conceded on September 5 that one of its soldiers had likely shot Abu Akleh after mistaking her for a militant.

Israel said it would not cooperate with any external probe into Abu Akleh's death.

"No one will investigate IDF (Israeli military) soldiers and no one will preach to us about morals in warfare, certainly not Al Jazeera," Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid said in a statement.

'Complete cover-up'

The veteran reporter, who was a Christian, was wearing a bullet-proof vest marked 'Press' and a helmet when she was shot in the head in the Jenin refugee camp, a historic flashpoint in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Her niece, Lina Abu Akleh,

urged the ICC to investigate the journalist's death.

"The evidence is overwhelmingly clear, we expect the ICC to take action," she told a press conference in The Hague, adding that they had asked for a meeting with prosecutor Karim Khan.

"My family still doesn't know who fired that deadly bullet and who was in the chain of command that killed my aunt."

Lawyer Rodney Dixon said there had been a 'complete cover-up' by Israel over Abu Akleh's death.

He alleged that her killing was part of a 'systematic and widespread campaign' against Al Jazeera by Israel that also included the bombing of a Gaza building housing Al Jazeera's office last year.

"There's a clear attempt to shut Al Jazeera down and silence it," Dixon told the press conference. "We are hopeful that there will now be justice for Shireen."

Dixon said they had not yet had a formal meeting with the prosecutor's office but had handed over evidence.

AFP

Thai PM indicates 2023 election run

Bangkok, Thailand - Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-O-Cha said on Tuesday he wants to rule until 2025, indicating for the first time that he plans to stand in the kingdom's upcoming general election.

Thailand is due to go to the polls early next year and on Tuesday the main opposition Pheu Thai party launched some of its campaign themes.

Prayut came to power as army chief in a 2014 coup before cementing his position in a controversial 2019 election, but his popularity has been in the doldrums.

Pheu Thai is riding high in the polls but the current Thai constitution, drafted under military rule, stacks the system in favour of army-linked parties.

In September, the Constitutional Court ruled Prayut's eight-year term limit as PM would end in 2025, and as he left a weekly cabinet meeting on Tuesday he was asked about his plans.

"I will do my best in this two years and after that there will be



Thailand PM Prayut Chan-O-Cha

a suitable choice that the public accept to carry on my work," he told reporters.

Prayut is widely expected to leave his Palang Pracharath Party, which leads the current ruling coalition, and join a new party thought to be set up specifically for him, before the election.

But on Tuesday he refused to confirm the rumours, saying 'I will speak about it later'.

The date of the election has not been decided, but if it is not dissolved early, parliament will end its term in March, setting the stage for a vote in May.

AFP

Fire incident near office of Iran opposition group

London, UK - A fire broke out next to the London office of an Iranian opposition group, police said late on Monday, adding that there was no evidence so far that it was a deliberate attack.

The incident occurred in a bin shed next to the offices of the People's Mojahedin Organization of Iran (PMOI) in Cricklewood, northwest London, during the early hours of Monday morning, police said.

"We know this incident has caused concern among the local community," said Detective Superintendent Tony Bellis on Monday evening.

"There is no current information to suggest a targeted attack at this time, and it is not being treated as terror-related," he added.

"However, due to the location of the incident and the or-

ganisation based at the adjacent premises, the investigation is also being supported by specialist officers from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command."

The London Fire Brigade said it sent three engines after being called to a fire at 2:15am (0215 GMT), with firefighters finding the ground-floor bin room destroyed.

The service said no injuries were reported.

The National Council of Resistance of Iran, of which the PMOI is a member, earlier issued a statement accusing the Iranian regime of being behind the attack.

"The clerical regime's terrorists and operatives used Molotov cocktails and fire bombs to attack one of the offices of the supporters of the PMOI," it said.

AFP

China's Xi Jinping to visit Saudi Arabia from today

Riyadh, KSA - Chinese President Xi Jinping will make a three-day visit to Saudi Arabia this week, meeting the king and de facto ruler of the world's biggest oil exporter, Saudi state media reported on Tuesday.

Xi, head of the world's number-two economy, will also attend a summit with rulers from the six-member Gulf Cooperation Council and talks with leaders from elsewhere in the Middle East, strengthening China's growing ties with the region.

The Chinese leader will arrive on Wednesday, the official Saudi Press Agency said, for only his third trip abroad since the coronavirus pandemic began and his first to Saudi Arabia since 2016.

His bilateral summit, chaired by King Salman and attended by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the kingdom's de facto ruler, comes after Xi secured a historic third term in November.

Xi's visit reflects 'much deeper relations developed in recent years' between the two coun-



China's President Xi Jinping attending the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit in Bangkok on November 19, this year (AFP)

tries, said Ali Shihabi, a Saudi analyst close to the government.

"As the largest importer of Saudi oil, China is a critically important partner and military relations have been developing strongly," he said, adding that he expected 'a number of agreements to be signed'.

The visit also coincides with heightened tensions between Saudi Arabia and the United States over issues ranging from

energy policy to regional security and human rights. The latest blow to that decades-old partnership came in October when the OPEC+ oil bloc agreed to cut production by two million barrels a day, a move the White House said amounted to 'aligning with Russia' on the war in Ukraine.

On Sunday, OPEC+ opted to keep those cuts in place. Shihabi said the timing was 'a coincidence and not directed at US'.

In from the cold

Xi last visited Saudi Arabia in 2016, the year before Prince Mohammed became first in line to the throne, on a trip that also featured stops in Egypt and Saudi rival Iran.

Prince Mohammed visited China and met with Xi on an Asia tour in 2019, the year before the coronavirus pandemic took hold.

This week's meeting will cap a year in which Saudi Arabia, and specifically Prince Mohammed, have come in from the cold following the fierce international outcry that erupted over the 2018 killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi inside the kingdom's Istanbul consulate.

This year, Prince Mohammed has already welcomed Britain's then-prime minister Boris Johnson, French President Emmanuel Macron and US President Joe Biden, who greeted the crown prince with a fist bump in Jeddah, reversing a 2019 pledge to make Saudi Arabia 'a pariah'.

China purchases roughly a

quarter of Saudi oil exports.

The oil market was thrown into turmoil with Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February.

The G7 and EU on Friday agreed a US\$60-per-barrel price cap on Russian oil in an attempt to deny the Kremlin revenues to keep up the war, stoking further uncertainty.

"Oil will probably be higher up the agenda than it was when Biden visited," said Torbjorn Soltvedt of the risk intelligence firm Verisk Maplecroft.

"These are the two most important players in the oil market -- Saudi on the supply side and then China on the demand side."

Beyond energy, analysts say leaders from the two countries are expected to discuss potential deals that could see Chinese firms become more deeply involved in mega-projects that are central to Prince Mohammed's vision of diversifying the Saudi economy away from oil.

AFP

RIYADH
MODEST
FASHION
WEEK

Piya Prakash Pawani, a beauty pageant coach residing in Oman, will be among the key speakers at the first edition of the Riyadh Modest Fashion Week next week

VOICE
BY CHOICE,
FROM OMAN

Hubert Vaz

Modest Fashion Week (MFW) has finally arrived in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the first edition of Riyadh Modest Fashion Week slated to be held at the iconic Al Faisaliah Hotel between December 15 and 17. And while beauties from around the globe will showcase latest trends in 'modest fashion', a lone voice from Oman will make its presence felt at a talk show in the event.

Piya Prakash Pawani, a beauty pageant coach and social media influencer from Oman, was handpicked to be among the key speakers at this event which has a theme of 'Roots to the Future' inspired by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's 2030 vision. She will be speaking on 'The Importance of Women Empowerment in Fashion' among other speakers like Aya Abdelhakam Hussin (UK), Mariam Sheikh (UAE) and

Menna Farag (Kuwait) in a talk show moderated by Nouran el Khady (Egypt).

The special guests among 100+ invitees at the unprecedented event in Saudi Arabia include inspirational names like Beki Ksouri and Nasma Elgohari (KSA), Mai Mohamed and Alaa Nobel (Egypt), Kamile Assem (UAE), Audrey Martinez (France), Dalia El Naggarr (Kuwait), Aya Barqawi (Jordan), and Rasha Ibrahim (Morocco).

Known globally as the most prestigious event series that is dedicated to the modest fashion industry, the Modest Fashion Weeks in Riyadh is expected to set a new milestone for women in the kingdom. So far, eight successful editions of MFW have been held in cities like London, Dubai, Istanbul, Amsterdam, and Jakarta where it kicked off in 2015.

The MFW series is organised by Turkey-based Think Fashion - the creator and pioneer of the modest fashion week concept. MFWs are dedicated to the modest fashion industry with 2 billion media coverages across the five continents, generating interest in over 40 countries, 300+ designers/brands and 500+ influencers.

Piya, who is upbeat about her participation in Riyadh disclosed that the vision of Modest Fashion Weeks is to create sustainable and global business relations for the modest fashion industry stakeholders that are designers, brands, buyers, media, influencers and creative talents for the huge and growing modest fashion market.

Herself a runner up at the Mrs India beauty pageant, representing Oman in 2018, and the title

holder at the La Femme Worldwide in 2019, Piya is now a full-time beauty pageant coach, training finalists from India and Oman in communication and personality development for various beauty pageants.

The modest fashion concept is a popular global style wherein trendy clothes are fashioned to cover the body with minimal revelation of skin, she explained adding that it needn't be restricted to Islamic attire (like abayas) and could comprise non-revealing garments used by women all over the world and catering to all body types.

"I will be attending the MFW in Riyadh not only as an 'influencer' representing Oman but also as one of the key speakers. I will be talking about the importance of women in the fashion industry and I have immense local support to represent the culture there," Piya said adding that the event would touch upon a host of relevant topics including sustainability, and clothing that is supportive of the environment.

Piya has received able support from Travel Point for her trip to Riyadh as well as from designers like Faiza al Balushi (Chiffon Style), Hiba al Lawati (Coquette Oman), whose clothes she will be wearing, besides Riham al Samad (make-up artist), she said, however, pointing out that mustering support is a key requisite in the

industry and women need to learn relevant skills in this regard (which is part of her talk on empowerment).

Quashing popular thinking that the glamour industry revolves around 'skin show', Piya stressed that models and fashion buffs need to explore all types of fashion, not just revealing outfits, to present their own, individual style and potential. Married women, too, need to shed their inhibitions and go ahead and follow their dreams in the fashion world, she said, indicating that demarcations in participation by unmarried/married women in beauty pageants are soon getting thinner than what they had been decades ago.

Asked about the key requisites for an ideal model, Piya hinted that having the right mindset and determination was most important while securing a good fitness quotient as well as having a long-term career in mind are the secondary factors.

Indicating that all body type are welcome in the fashion industry which is getting more and more inclusive these days, Piya said, "Size doesn't matter any more, as long as you know how to carry yourself in style. Having done a dual MBA and taken up a successful job earlier, she currently believes in enjoying everything she does and being able to fit into whatever option that works well for herself.

Her mantra: Have a healthy mind, a healthy body, and a healthy lifestyle; never get distracted by anything or anyone, once you set your goals.



I will be talking about the importance of women in the fashion industry and I have immense local support to represent the culture there

PIYA PRAKASH PAWANI



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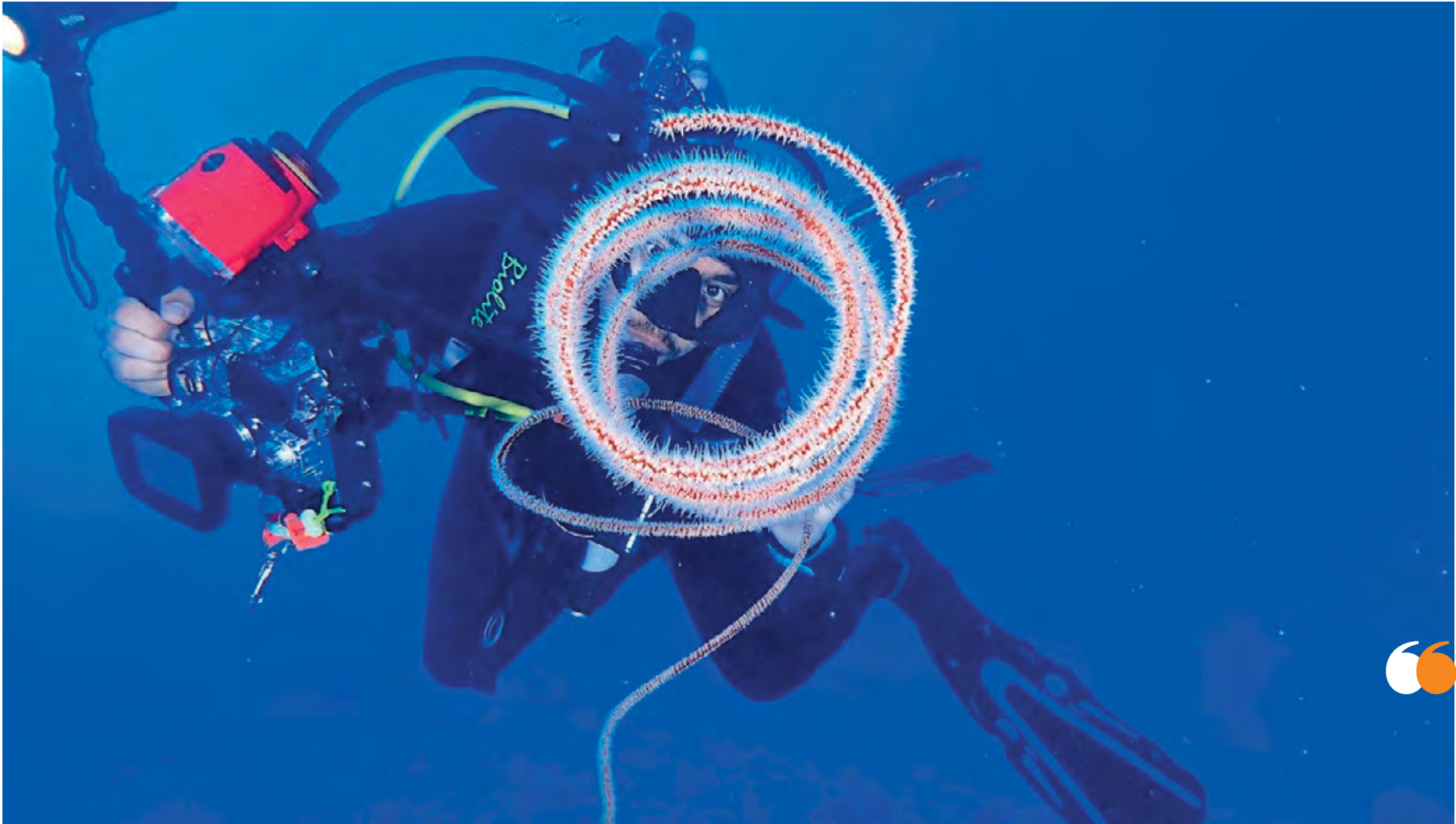
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Omani aerial and underwater videographer undertakes 1,000 dives to promote marine life in Oman

Marine maverick



All my videos are taken without disturbing the animals in any way. Thus, having patience and proper understanding of the subject's behaviour are essential and key to a successful video

AHMED NABIL AL LAWATI

By Mohammed Taha

An Omani adventurer and marine biologist, who has made over thousands of dives in Oman and outside, is calling for people to appreciate nature and encourage them to preserve it.

Ahmed Nabil al Lawati, who graduated in marine biology from Hawai'i and completed a Masters degree from Australia, has made many short films and videos, focusing on corals reefs and the marine life in Oman.

"Being surrounded by nature as well as being a scuba diver since the age of 12, I've always wanted others to see what is around us and motivate them into appreciating the things that are often ignored - specifically the corals reefs and marine life," said Lawati.

Lawati, who is currently working as a marine environmental consultant at Five Oceans Environmental Services in Oman, added that his filmmaking and short videos took off during his time in Hawaii.

"I started with underwater photography and videography filming pelagic species such as sharks and whales. I slowly started to incorporate other aspects of photography into my videos, such as land shots, and later I decided to add aerial photography to my videos."

Having nearly a thousand dives so far, Lawati had the chance to make numerous short films on marine life in various locations around the world, most notably the different Islands of Hawaii, the Great Barrier Reef, The



Mesoamerican barrier reef (Honduras, Utila), Red Sea, and most importantly in Oman.

"Being a marine environmental consultant, I am fortunate enough to be able to travel to remote areas where dive sites are not easily accessible and experience marine life first hand as well as be able to capture some unique shots on camera. Some aspects of my videos are also aimed toward environmental preservation and documenting field work that are

havior of marine life is a skill that took a while to master. All my videos are taken without disturbing the animals in any way. Thus, having patience and proper understanding of the subject's behaviour are essential and key to a successful video."

Lawati was awarded the second prize in 'Oman with your eyes' videography competition in the marine tourism section. The video showcased Oman's marine nature from Hasik in Dhofar all the way to Musandam, incorporating Oman's mountain ranges, wadis, and marine life.

"It shed light on some of the endangered marine species that we are fortunate to have in Oman, such as various species of sea turtles, pelagic species such as whale sharks, and marine mammals, such as dolphins," said Lawati.

Being an environmentalist and an avid ocean lover, Lawati is planning on making short videos and collaborating with other scientists to bring attention to some of the environmental issues in Oman, such as the plastic pandemic, as well as to provide solutions to those problems.

"Often the general public is unaware of these issues. Thus, short videos as such could be educational, entertaining, as well as encourage others to respect nature, and help preserve it."

"As a hobbyist aerial and underwater videographer, I would advise Omani youths interested in videography to never lose track of their passion even when it requires them to get out of their comfort zone. As well as, to take it easy, as good things come with time," Lawati asserted.



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FIFA WORLD CUP

Qatar 2022



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THE HISTORYMAKERS

Morocco dump Spain out on penalties to reach historic World Cup quarterfinals

Doha, Qatar - Achraf Hakimi struck the decisive penalty while goalkeeper Yassine Bounou made two saves in the tie-breaker to send Spain crashing out and Morocco into the World Cup quarter-finals for the first time, winning 3-0 in a shoot-out on Tuesday after a 0-0 draw.

Spain coach Luis Enrique had claimed his players prepared by taking 1,000 penalties as homework but Pablo Sarabia, Carlos Soler and Sergio Busquets all missed from the spot and Madrid-born Hakimi dinked his home to the delight of Morocco's raucous support.

Walid Regragui's side will face Portugal or Switzerland in what is uncharted territory for them, with their previous best a last-16 exit in 1986.

Spain had been hoping they could repeat their 2010 World Cup triumph after reaching the semi-finals of Euro 2020, where they were



Morocco players celebrate beating Spain in the penalty shoot-out in their round of 16 match at Education City Stadium on Tuesday (AFP)

also beaten on penalties by Italy.

The teams were closely matched through a nail-biting clash, with Spain having more of

the ball but Morocco creating the better openings, few though they were. Luis Enrique trialled his third right-back of the tournament in

Marcos Llorente, and benched the team's top scorer Alvaro Morata for Marco Asensio, after the shock defeat by Japan.

Spain monopolised the ball, with Morocco's fans furiously whistling with their side out of possession. Morocco, who are the last

ROUND OF 16		
	MOROCCO	3 (0)
	SPAIN	0 (0)
Morocco win on penalties		

African and Arab side left standing at the first World Cup held in an Arab country, were intensely backed and their fans greatly outnumbered Spain's.

With La Roja playing in a pale blue second strip, they resembled the away team on hostile territory.

Gavi, who at 18 years and 123 days old became the youngest player to start a World Cup knock-out game since Brazil great Pele in 1958, rose to the occasion.

The Barcelona midfielder terrier was at his most intense, smashing into challenges left, right and centre, even diving to make one with his head.

Morocco goalkeeper Yassine Bounou tipped a Gavi strike on to the crossbar, though it would have been ruled offside, while Asensio drilled into the side-netting, although Spain created little.

Regragui's side sat deep defensively and threatened on the counter, with Unai Simon beating away a long range effort from Noussair Mazraoui.

AFP

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Asian teams 'getting closer' despite knockout blows

Doha, Qatar - Asian teams came crashing back down to earth in the World Cup last 16 but the region still enjoyed its best-ever tournament to suggest it is closing the gap on the global elite.

The continent's finest will be back in Qatar for the 2023 Asian Cup and, if the World Cup is anything to go by, it could be the finest yet.

Australia, Japan and South Korea - three of the six Asian Football Confederation teams at the World Cup - reached the first knockout stage.

It was the first time three AFC sides had got to the last 16, even if South Korea in particular suffered a sobering defeat, going down 4-1 to highly fancied Brazil.

There would be no repeat of 2002, when South Korea reached the semi-finals as co-hosts, still the best World Cup showing by an Asian side. The Koreans did though defeat Portugal in the group phase in Qatar.

Saudi Arabia, also part of the AFC, pulled off the biggest shock of the tournament in coming from behind to defeat Lionel Messi's Argentina 2-1 in the group stage.

Japan also roared back to stun former champions Spain and Germany and top Group E, before suf-



Japan's Daizen Maeda (21) scores past Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic during their round-of-16 match at Al Janoub Stadium on Monday (AFP)

fering a heartbreaking defeat to 2018 finalists Croatia on penalties.

Speaking ahead of the game, defender Kou Itakura said: "I feel that Asia is getting closer to Europe."

Hajime Moriyasu's side boasts a growing number of players in top European leagues.

Eight of his 26-man World Cup squad play in Germany's Bundesliga and Moriyasu said Japan's success was good for all of Asia.

"In order for Japan to win the World Cup we have been nurturing our young players and trying to create an environment where we can produce good players," said Moriyasu.

He added that the standard of Asian football would have to improve further if teams were to have a chance of becoming world champions.

Expectations had been low in Australia before the tournament in Qatar, with concerns that the supply line that produced Harry Kewell, Tim Cahill and Mark Viduka is no longer producing such quality players. The Soccerroos proved the doubters wrong by beating Tunisia and Euro 2020 semi-finalists Denmark to reach the last 16, equalling their best World Cup performance.

AFP



Denzel Dumfries of the Netherlands celebrates after scoring against the US on Saturday (AFP)

Dutch flier Dumfries dazzles ahead of Argentina showdown

Doha, Qatar - Denzel Dumfries had a slow start at the World Cup but the Netherlands wing-back hit his stride in spectacular style in the last-16 match against the United States.

The Inter Milan defender - one of the breakout stars at last year's Euro 2020 - provided two assists and scored the third goal in a 3-1 win to help set up Friday's quarter-final clash with Argentina.

The Dutch will need to find a way of stopping Lionel Messi as

the seven-time Ballon d'Or winner continues his quest for a maiden World Cup title.

But coach Louis van Gaal will be hoping that his side can expose gaps behind the Argentina defence on the counter-attack, for which Dumfries and fellow wing-back Daley Blind will be crucial.

The pair assisted each other's goals in the victory over the Americans as Van Gaal's 3-4-1-2 formation paid dividends.

"He is (important). He got a lot

of criticism in the first games but we know what he can do and he showed it today," midfielder Davy Klaassen said after the last-16 tie.

"In this system the wing-backs are really important and if you see them assisting each other today, this is what you want."

Kylian Mbappe is the tournament's leading scorer with five goals, while other wingers to impress include England pair Marcus Rashford and Bukayo Saka and Brazil's Vinicius Junior.

BREATH TAKING!

Dancing, dazzling Brazil brush aside South Korea to cruise into quarterfinals

Doha, Qatar - Neymar returned from injury to help inspire Brazil to a 4-1 victory over South Korea on Monday as the favourites cruised through to the quarter-finals of the World Cup.

The world's most expensive player had sat out his team's last two matches with a sprained ankle suffered in their opening 2-0 win over Serbia. But he came back for this last-16 tie as Tite's team clicked into gear and delivered an ominous message to their rivals, at least before easing off in the second half.

Vinicius Junior opened the scoring inside seven minutes before Neymar added another from the penalty spot to move to 76 goals for his country, leaving him just one away from equalling Pele's all-time record tally.

Richarlison's brilliant goal made it 3-0 and Lucas Paqueta added another before half-time to leave South Korea shellshocked.

Paik Seung-ho pulled one back but by then Brazil were thinking about Friday's quarter-final clash with 2018 runners-up Croatia.

"The time has come to go further," Neymar told Brazilian broadcaster Globo, referring to their defeats in the semi-finals in 2014 and quarter-finals four years ago.

"We are dreaming of winning the title, that's obvious, but we have to go step by step.

"This was the fourth game. There are three to go but we are prepared. Our minds are focused on winning the title."

But he admitted there had been moments after he was injured in Brazil's opening match against Serbia

that he thought his tournament might be over.

"When I got injured I spent a very difficult night. I was thinking of a million different things," said Neymar, who added he had been "crying a lot".

"I was afraid of not being able to play in this World Cup again but I had the support of all my teammates and my family who gave me strength."

The five-time world champions had not scored four goals in a knockout game at the tournament since 1998.

Here they played at times with the joy associated with the Brazilian national team, the players coming together to celebrate each goal by

ROUND OF 16		
	BRAZIL	4
	SOUTH KOREA	1

showing off their dance moves and their coach even joining in.

If they finished playing within themselves, their first-half display was superb and a fitting tribute to the great Pele.

The Brazilian legend had said he would watch the game from the Sao Paulo hospital to where he was admitted last week for cancer treatment, and supporters in Doha's Stadium 974 unfurled a banner to get well soon message to him.

It was a chastening experience for Son Heung-min and South Korea, who have still never won a World Cup knockout match outside their own country.

Richarlison stars again

With Alisson Becker back in goal and Thiago Silva and Marquinhos playing too, this was Brazil's first-choice defence but their forwards quickly put the tie to bed.

The opener came from their first shot on target as Raphinha burst away from Kim Jin-su on the right and his ball across goal came to the feet of Vinicius who coolly picked his spot.

They then won a penalty as Richarlison was caught by Jung Woo-young and Neymar duly beat Kim Seung-gyu - his last six goals for Brazil have now all come from the spot.

Alisson was then called into action to tip over a vicious long-range effort from Hwang Hee-chan, but Brazil scored their third in style just before the half-hour mark.

Richarlison juggled the ball on his head three times just outside the area before laying it off to Marquinhos and then continuing into the box to get on the end of Silva's pass which he slotted home for his third goal at this World Cup. Paqueta got their fourth nine minutes before the break with a first-time finish as he connected with a Vinicius ball held up from the byline.

They took their foot off the pedal in the second half, although Raphinha was denied on several occasions by the goalkeeper.

Korea though deserve credit for keeping on going and were rewarded inside the final quarter-hour as substitute Paik brought down a clearance and sent in a ferocious shot from 25 metres that brushed off Silva to beat Alisson.

AFP



(From right) Brazil's Neymar celebrates with Lucas Paqueta, Raphinha, and Vinicius Junior after scoring against South Korea in the World Cup quarter-final.



Oliver Bierhoff

Germany's Bierhoff steps aside after World Cup exit

Berlin, Germany- Germany's team director Oliver Bierhoff has stepped aside two years early after his country crashed out in the group stage for the second consecutive World Cup, the national association said Monday.

The four-time World Cup winners had a poor campaign in Qatar, which included defeat against Japan in their opening game. Bierhoff and the German Football Association (DFB) have agreed "to terminate his contract, which runs until 2024, early," the association said in a statement.

Former striker Bierhoff, who scored two goals in the Euro 1996 final when Germany last won the tournament, had worked for the body since 2004.

Bierhoff was an influential and very public figure alongside coaches Juergen Klinsmann, then Joachim Loew before Hansi Flick took over in 2021.

DFB president Bernd Neuendorf said in a statement that Bierhoff had "rendered great services to the (association)". While the last few tournaments "fell short", he would still be remembered for "great moments", Neuendorf said.

'I'LL BE ROOTING FOR EACH ONE OF YOU'

Sao Paulo, Brazil - With fans worldwide on edge over his health, ailing 82-year-old football legend Pele said Monday he was cheering for the Brazilian national team from hospital as they stormed to a spot in the World Cup quarter-finals.

Considered by many the greatest footballer of all time, Pele was hospitalized in Sao Paulo last Tuesday amid treatment for colon cancer, just as Brazil wage their campaign to win a record-extending sixth World Cup in Qatar.

In a message on Instagram as the "Selecão" prepared for their 4-1 romp over South Korea in the round of 16, Pele said he was watching.

"I'll be rooting for each one of you," Pele, the only player to win three World Cups (1958, 1962 and 1970), told the team.

"The King" posted a faded color picture of himself as a baby-faced 17-year-old in Stockholm, Sweden, on his way to dazzling the planet with his extraordinary talent in Brazil's maiden World Cup championship run.

Eight years earlier, seeing his footballer father cry when Brazil lost the 1950 World Cup final at home to Uruguay, Pele had prom-

ised to win the trophy one day.

"In 1958, in Sweden, I was walking through the streets thinking about fulfilling the promise I made to my father," Pele wrote.

"I know that many of the na-



I want to inspire you, my friends... We are on this journey together. Good luck to our Brazil!

PELE

tional team made similar promises and are also looking for their first World Cup. I want to inspire you, my friends... We are on this journey together. Good luck to our Brazil!"

Neymar and team did him proud, scoring a cascade of goals that evoked the "beautiful game" Pele embodied.

After the match, the team returned to the field carrying a banner marked "Pele!", with a picture of him celebrating Brazil's 1970 World Cup win.

Fans in the stadium could also be seen holding up pictures and messages in Pele's honor.

Pele - whose real name is Edson Arantes do Nascimento -- has been in fragile health in recent years.

Operated for a colon tumor in September 2021, he has been in chemotherapy ever since. But doctors said he now needed a "reevaluation" of his treatments.

They said he also had a respiratory infection, which they were treating with antibiotics.

Pele's daughter Kely Arantes Nascimento said Sunday the new illness was the result of a Covid-19 infection Pele, who is fully vaccinated, contracted three weeks ago.



Croatia goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic celebrates with Mario Pasalic after their round-of-16 victory against Japan at Al Janoub Stadium on Monday (AFP)

Livakovic continuing Croatian tradition with shoot-out heroics

Doha, Qatar - Dominik Livakovic said that he was continuing a Croatian tradition after his penalty shoot-out heroics against Japan on Monday.

Goalkeeper Livakovic saved three of Japan's four penalties after a 1-1 draw to end the Blue Samurai's adventure in Qatar and set up a last-eight clash with either Brazil or South Korea. Croatia won twice on penalties during their run to the 2018 final and prevailed again at Al Janoub Stadium.

"I continued the tradition of my predecessor (Danijel Subasic). I think it is more instinct than any

analysis of the takers you have in front of you," he told reporters.

"I don't think they were difficult penalties to save, they weren't perfect penalties, and thank God for that."

He added: "It's a great feeling... Thank God all ended well... This is the most cherished moment in my career."

Japan coach Hajime Moriyasu praised Livakovic for his display, choosing to focus on the saves rather than the poor penalties taken by Takumi Minamino, Kaoru Mitoma and Maya Yoshida.

AFP



Neymar's outrageously cool penalty, which he slotted home in the 13th minute, was his 76th goal for Brazil, leaving him just one behind the legendary Pele's all-time record.



Look, I've never seen so much dancing, it's like watching Strictly. I just can't believe what I'm watching, I really can't. I don't like this, I think it's really disrespecting the opposition

ROY KEANE
former Manchester United captain



ea in their round-of-16 match at Stadium 974 in Doha on Monday (AFP)



Brazil players pose with a banner honouring football legend Pele after their victory against South Korea on Monday (AFP)

Brazil dedicate World Cup victory to Pele

Doha, Qatar - Brazil's players paid tribute to legend Pele, who is receiving hospital treatment in Sao Paulo due to his ailing health, after sauntering to a 4-1 World Cup victory over South Korea.

Following Monday's last-16 match at Stadium 974 in Doha, the players unfurled a huge banner to the 82-year-old, widely regarded as one of

the greatest players of all time.

"It's hard to talk about what Pele is going through right now but I wish him all the best," said Neymar, who made his return from an ankle injury to play most of the game.

"I hope he will be back in good health as soon as possible and that we could have at least comforted him with the victory," Neymar told Globo.

Pele's battle with colon cancer is providing motivation for the players to try to win a record-extending sixth world title - the first three of which Pele was part of.

"He needs a lot of strength from us and this victory is for him, so that he can come out of this situation and that we can be champions for him," said Vinicius.

Bento steps down as South Korea coach after exit

Doha, Qatar - Paulo Bento announced he would not be staying on as coach of South Korea after they were eliminated from the World Cup with a 4-1 defeat at the hands of Brazil.

"Now I need to think about the future, but I will not be with the Korea team. I am going to rest and then see," the 53-year-old former Portugal coach said after the loss in the last 16.

"I have just told the players and the president of the national federation. "This is a decision which I took in



Paulo Bento

September. It was set in stone and today I confirmed it. I have to thank them and am very proud to have been their manager."

Bento took over following the 2018 World Cup, succeeding Shin Tae-yong. In Qatar, he led South Korea to the knockout round for the first time since 2010 with a last-gasp win over Portugal in their final group game.

However, they were outclassed by Brazil as they found themselves four goals down before half-time.



I'm very happy about the return of Neymar. On the pitch he drags away two or three players creating space for the others

RICHARLISON, BRAZIL



MOMENT IN TIME



Brazil's Neymar opens his bag of tricks as he looks to go past South Korea's Kim Min-jae (L) and Kim Moon-hwan during their round-of-16 match at Stadium 974 in Doha on Monday (AFP)



Luka Modric celebrates Croatia's victory against Japan on Monday (AFP)

Croatia can't win 'without drama', says Modric

Doha, Qatar - Croatia captain Luka Modric said his team "can't do it without a drama" after they reached the World Cup quarter-finals following a penalty shootout win against Japan on Monday.

Mario Pasalic struck the winning spot-kick after Dominik Livakovic saved three penalties.

Earlier, Ivan Perisic had pulled Croatia level in the 55th minute of normal time following Daizen Maeda's opener for Japan just before the break.

But no side could find a winner either in 90 minutes or in extra-time as it finished 1-1.

"It seems that we can't do it without a drama," Modric, whose team were beaten finalists in 2018, said.

"We are more than happy to reach the quarter-finals. "It was a very difficult game against a very tough team."

The match in Qatar continues a pattern for Croatia.

Seven of their past eight knockout games at major tournaments have gone to extra time, the only exception being their final defeat by France in Russia four years ago.

Modric said Croatia had not played at their top level but had found a way to win.

"We showed character when we came back from the deficit... Livi (Livakovic) performed a miracle today. A very tough, exhausting match."

Coach Zlatko Dalic said reaching the last eight was a "major result".

AFP

INDIA-BANGLADESH ONE-DAY SERIES

'WE KNOW HOW TO BOUNCE BACK'

India's opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan confident of their chances in the second game against Bangladesh

Dhaka, Bangladesh - India's opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan believes his side will bounce back in the three-match one-day international series against Bangladesh despite a shock defeat in the opening match.

"We are very, very confident about tomorrow's game. This is not the first time we have lost the first game in a series. It's quite normal so we know how to bounce back from these situations," Dhawan said in Dhaka ahead of the second match on Wednesday.

Tail-ender Mehidy Hasan Miraz hit an unbeaten 38 and put on a record tenth-wicket stand as Bangladesh edged out India by one wicket to take a 1-0 lead in Sunday's thriller match in Dhaka.

Chasing 187 for victory, the hosts slumped to 136-9 before Mehidy and Mustafizur Rahman put together a 51-run partnership

- Bangladesh's best ever for the final wicket in a successful run chase - to achieve their target with 24 balls to spare.

"It was a low total and at the end they pulled the game back from us which doesn't happen very often. They played really

Dhawan said that bowling all-rounder Shardul Thakur, who was in discomfort in the first match, will be available for Wednesday's match at the same Dhaka venue.

"He had a cramp but it was nothing serious," he said.

cricket to be played, there are a few Test matches and also (we want to) have the opportunity to keep developing the other fast bowlers," Domingo said.

The South African added that they were aware of the backlash they might face against India in the second match.

"There's also a sense that India will come back strong. We have to play better cricket than the first game, particularly with the bat. We can't get away with it again," he said.

A win in Wednesday's game will give Bangladesh their second successive ODI series victory over India, having taken the honours 2-1 the last time India visited Dhaka in 2015.

The third and final match will be held in Chittagong on December 10, followed by two Tests in Chittagong and Dhaka respectively.

AFF

We are very, very confident about tomorrow's game. This is not the first time we have lost the first game in a series. It's quite normal so we know how to bounce back from these situations

SHIKHAR DHAWAN

well so give credit to them," Dhawan said.

"Where we need improvements were analysed and rectified in a meeting and surely will be creating much more impact in the coming game as well," he added.

Bangladesh coach Russell Domingo said they were unlikely to risk pacer Taskin Ahmed despite his returning to training after recovering from a back injury.

"I'm not sure we want to risk playing him yet. There is a lot of



India's Shikhar Dhawan bats during a practice session in Dhaka on Tuesday (AFP)



Ben Stokes (L) shakes hands with Pakistan captain Babar Azam after England's victory in the first Test (AFP)

England skipper Stokes hails 'special' win in Pakistan

Rawalpindi, Pakistan - Skipper Ben Stokes hailed England's nail-biting victory in the first Test against Pakistan Monday as "one of the best" of his career - particularly given the state of the lifeless Rawalpindi pitch.

With just minutes to spare in dying light after five days of enthralling cricket, England finally halted a heroic last stand by Pakistan's tailenders to win the first Test by 74 runs.

It was only the third time England have won a Test in Pakistan, although they haven't visited since 2005 because of security issues.

"To be able to get a result on this type of wicket is mind-blowing," Stokes said ahead of the second Test starting in Multan on Friday.

"I think it's probably one of the best. The effort that everyone has managed to put in this whole week is just incredible."

England have "Bazball" - the free-wheeling brand of cricket coined from the nickname of new head coach Brendon "Baz" McCullum, a New Zealander - to thank for their victory.

McCullum was an aggressive batter in his playing days - he holds the record for the fastest

individual Test century - and under him, and skipper Stokes, the English have brought one-day cricket to the five-day game.

Records tumbled in Rawalpindi with England becoming the only team in history to score 500 runs on the first day of a Test - courtesy of four individual centuries, another record.

Overall, some 1,768 runs were scored in the match - the third-highest aggregate since Test cricket began. Still, Pakistan did well to peg back England's daunting 657-run first-innings total to trail by just 78 runs.

AFF



Haris Rauf

Pakistan pacer Haris Rauf out of England series

Rawalpindi, Pakistan - Pakistan fast bowler Haris Rauf has been ruled out of the rest of the Test series against England with a thigh injury, the team's management said Tuesday.

The 29-year-old, who made his debut in the opening Test in Rawalpindi, stepped on the ball while fielding on the first day.

"A grade II strain in the right quad has ruled Rauf out of the Test series against England," the Pakistan Cricket Board said in a statement.

Scans and a subsequent assessment concluded Rauf needs time off for rehabilitation, it added. Rauf bowled 13 overs taking 1-78 in England's first innings, but was unable to bowl in the second. He batted with discomfort in both innings.

AFF

McLaughlin-Levrone, Duplantis win World Athlete of the year awards

Paris, France - World champion American hurdler Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone and Swedish pole vaulter Armand Duplantis won the World Athlete of the year awards on Monday.

McLaughlin-Levrone broke the world women's 400m hurdles record twice while Duplantis set three new world highs this year.

US-born Swede Duplantis claimed the award for the second time in three years with three world records in 2022 plus the men's world indoor title in March and the world outdoor gold in July.

"Going into the year, I had really high expectations of myself and I had some really big goals," 23-year-old Duplantis said.

"I wanted to win the world indoors, the world outdoors, the Europeans, the Diamond League final, and I wanted to break the world record a few times," he added. Both titles were claimed in world record heights of 6.20 and 6.21 metres respectively and he also sealed European gold in Munich.

He won 18 of his 19 competitions, and vaulted six metres or higher 23 times.



Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone



Armand Duplantis

Going into the year, I had really high expectations of myself and I had some really big goals

ARMAND DUPLANTIS

It was a first World Athlete of the year award for McLaughlin who clocked an astonishing 50.68 seconds in July obliterating her own world record by more than half a second.

"All of my goals were accomplished this year," McLaughlin-Levrone said.

"We were able to accomplish everything we set out to do.

"It couldn't have been any better," she added.

The 23-year-old is billed as a once-in-a-lifetime talent and has hinted she could change discipline to the 400m flat.

She will be one of the most closely watched performers at the world athletics championships in Budapest in August.

AFF

Tatum leads Celtics over Raptors, Pacers beat Warriors

Los Angeles, United States - Jayson Tatum scored 17 of his 31 points in the third quarter on Monday as the Boston Celtics earned an impressive 116-110 NBA victory over the Raptors in Toronto.

Trailing 62-56 at halftime, the Celtics out-scored the Raptors 35-18 in the third period to take a nine-point lead, pushing their advantage to as many as 13 in the fourth as they handed the Raptors just their third home defeat.

The NBA champion Golden State Warriors also suffered a rare home defeat, falling 112-104 to the Indiana Pacers -- the Warriors' second loss this season at the Chase Center in San Francisco.

Andrew Nembhard scored 31 points to lead six Pacers players in double figures.

Klay Thompson's 28 points led the Warriors as star Stephen Curry endured a tough shooting night, connecting on three of 17

attempts on the way to 12 points.

In Toronto, the Celtics improved their league-best record to 20-5. They lead the Eastern Conference by two games over the Milwaukee Bucks, who beat the Orlando Magic 109-102 on the back of 34 points and 13 rebounds from Giannis Antetokounmpo.

Tatum scored 17 of his 31 in the third quarter and Jaylen Brown added 22 points as Boston posted their seventh win

in eight games -- despite the absence of injured Al Horford and ailing Malcolm Brogdon.

Defensive Player of the Year Marcus Smart added 18 points and Blake Griffin's 13 included a tip-in off a Tatum miss that pushed Boston's lead to 115-108 with 26.8 seconds remaining.

In Orlando, the Bucks shook off a sluggish start on the way to a 54-45 halftime lead and never trailed after the interval, withstanding a late push that saw the

Magic cut the deficit to four points with 2:20 remaining.

Philadelphia's James Harden returned from injury against his old team in Houston, but the struggling Rockets spoiled his night with a 132-123 double-overtime victory over the 76ers.

The Sixers had hoped Harden's return after missing 14 games with a foot injury would help them reverse their fortunes after two road defeats.

AFF



Jayson Tatum of Boston Celtics drives to the basket during their game against Toronto Raptors on Monday (AFP)

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