



H M PROMULGATES LABOUR LAW

Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik issued Royal Decree No 53/2023 on Tuesday promulgating the Labour Law after presenting the same before the Council of Oman.

Article 1 stipulates that provisions of the Labour Law attached to this decree will be enforced.

Article 2 instructs the Minister of Labour to issue the Executive Regulation of the attached law, as well as the decisions necessary for the implementation of its provisions. Till such time, the existing regulations and decisions will continue to be applied

without prejudice to the provisions of this law.

Article 3 stipulates that those addressed by the provisions of the attached law will adjust their conditions in line with the law's provisions within six months of the date of its enforcement.

Article 4 cancels Royal Decree No 35/2003, as well as all that contradicts the attached law or contravenes its provisions.

Article 5 states that this Royal Decree will be published in the Official Gazette and enforced from the day following its date of publication.

ONA

Future-proof Labour Law to develop Omanis' capabilities

Businesses to disclose annual plan for Omanisation

Provision to terminate contracts if workers fail to meet productivity

Women to get an hour daily for childcare, 98-day maternity leave

Entities with over 25 female workers to provide a rest area

Muscat - The Royal Decree on the Labour Law issued by His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik seeks to align Oman's labour market with Oman Vision 2040. The legislation aims to foster a dynamic, resilient work environment capable of adapting to current and future challenges.

The new law prioritises the development of national capabilities, preparing citizens to spearhead institutional growth in the private sector. It asserts employment as an inherent right for Omanis, defining clear conditions under which non-Omanis may work within the sultanate.

The law stipulates that businesses must disclose their annual plan for localisation and workforce replacement, detailing the number of Omani workers, their salaries, gender and potential job vacancies. Additionally, it mandates businesses to create and implement plans for the appointment and training of Omanis for leadership roles, as well as strategies to retain them.

Formulated through a nationwide initiative involving various stakeholders and specialised entities, the Labour Law paves the way for a Joint Dialogue Com-



mittee. This body will assess proposals to regulate the labour market, promote relationships between stakeholders and ensure harmony between the interests of workers and employers.

The legislation, divided into ten sections, comprehensively covers employment regulations, contracts and mutual obligations between employers and workers. It outlines specifics relating to

working hours, leave allowance, remuneration, employment of young individuals, occupational health and safety, and labour unions. It also delves into the settlement of labour disputes and corresponding punitive measures.

The law extends several benefits to working women, including an hour each day for childcare, 98-day maternity leave, and the provision to take up to a year of

unpaid leave for childcare. Establishments with more than 25 female workers are required to provide a designated rest area.

For employers, the law allows sector-specific work regulations, temporary employment of workers for another employer with the Ministry of Labour's approval, and termination of contracts if workers fail to meet productivity standards.

Continued on Page 03

'Law adapts to changes in the market'

Muscat - Dr Mahad Said Ba'owain, Minister of Labour, has stated that the Labour Law will facilitate coping with changes and developments in the labour market.

Promulgation of the law confirms the Royal keenness of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik to elevate Oman to higher levels of organisational efficiency, he added.

The minister pointed out that the law is important for protection of rights and realising aspirations.

He affirmed that enactment of the law prioritises the interest of both the worker and the employer alike for the public interest represented in consolidating legislations that strike a balance within the labour market and cement firm grounds for a renewed Oman.

NEWS BRIEF

SAYYID BADR RECEIVES CALL FROM SWEDISH FM

Muscat - H E Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, received a phone call from Tobias Billstrom, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden, on Tuesday evening. During the phone call, H E Sayyid Badr denounced the desecration of the Holy Quran in Sweden.

He also stressed the importance of ending incitement, hatred, violence and discrimination against beliefs. The two ministers underlined the importance of promoting dialogue, tolerance and respect among nations and cultures.

"We exchanged views and shared concerns. Agreed to find a consensus to fight Islamophobia, incitement and violence," H E Sayyid Badr tweeted.



UN starts defusing 'ticking time bomb'



Summer fashion trends - Choose your adventure

ITB Berlin 2024 opening ceremony to showcase Oman to the world

Our Correspondent Muscat

As official host country of ITB Berlin 2024, the world's largest tourism trade fair, Oman will be organising the 'Opening Ceremony' for thousands of industry leaders at the venue - City Cube Berlin - and for millions of others online.

The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) is looking to appoint a company for the production of the 'Opening Ceremony Show of Oman as an Official Host Country of ITB 2024'.

A tender has been issued in this regard with bid submission closing on August 8. In its tender document, MHT stated that this offers Oman a unique opportunity to showcase itself 'as an exceptional tourist destination of the highest standards to an international audience'.

Spanning over a couple of hours, the ceremony on March 4 will feature time-limited speeches



Oman has had a strong representation at ITB Berlin for many years and we are very impressed by the tourism attractions and diversity this travel destination has to offer

DAVID RUETZ

and stage performances.

'It is expected to attract an audience of approximately 2,500 to 3,000 distinguished individuals, including tourism industry representatives, top experts, media professionals, journalists, politicians and influential opinion makers from around the globe,' MHT stated.

The appointed company will be tasked to deliver 'a definitive production' of the ceremony.

It will model a concept of the performances according to the detailed scope of work and pres-

ent it to MHT, and also conduct photo shoots in Oman for the show if required.

The company will have to co-operate with MB Capital Services GmbH to direct the show.

Earlier in April this year, H E Salim al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism, signed a declaration of intent during an informal ceremony at ITB Berlin 2023 to be host nation of the 2024 edition.

"We are pleased that in 2024, Oman will be the host nation and we are committed to offer an impressive and lasting experience at the event covering all possible senses and expectations," H E Mahrouqi said.

Following the agreement, David Ruetz, Senior Vice-President of Messe Berlin, said, "Oman has had a strong representation at ITB Berlin for many years and we are very impressed by the tourism attractions and diversity this travel destination has to offer."

Oman-Belarus pact to boost civil aviation ties

Our Correspondent Muscat

Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) of Oman has signed an air services agreement with Belarus, a strategic move to strengthen civil aviation ties between the two nations.

The agreement enables national carriers of both countries to establish direct link between Muscat and Minsk and other significant locations within Oman. It serves to organise and optimise operational and technical aspects in a way that benefits air transport services between Oman and Belarus.

Signed by Naif bin Ali al Abri, Chairman of CAA, and Igor Golub, Director of Aviation Department of the Belarussian Ministry of Transport and Communications, the agreement outlines provisions of economic, organisational and operational cooperation.

This allows airlines of both countries to operate passenger and air cargo flights between

their airports and establish cooperation agreements for code sharing operations.

Abri informed that this agreement represents CAA's ongoing efforts to globally connect Oman. The agreement includes numerous aspects, including opening airspace between Oman and Belarus, simplifying freight and goods movement, thereby facilitating exchange on various levels including tourism and economic, and social interaction.

Speaking to ONA, Abri expressed optimism that the agreement would provide a new window of opportunity for national carriers of both countries.

Dr Abdullah bin Masoud al Harthy, Honorary Consul of Belarus to Oman, echoed these sentiments and emphasised that the agreement will serve as a legal framework for managing flights between Oman and Belarus, which will contribute to strengthening cooperation across tourism, trade and economic sectors.

Sudan violence leaves 24mn people in need of aid: WHO

Muscat - The relentless fighting that has raged in Sudan since April has left the country facing a catastrophic humanitarian crisis, the World Health Organization has said.

The crisis has spilled into six countries across two WHO regions, with 24mn people in need of humanitarian aid, including 2.6mn people internally displaced, and an additional 757,000 forced to flee across borders for safety.

"These numbers are growing every day," said Dr Ahmed al Mandhari, WHO Regional Di-

rector for the Eastern Mediterranean, and Dr Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, in a joint statement on Tuesday.

The violence continues to claim lives, they said, forcing people from their homes and country, and leaving others trapped with limited access to essential services, including healthcare.

Inside Sudan, the situation has reached gravely serious levels, with more than 67% of the country's hospitals out of service and with increasing reports of attacks



on healthcare facilities.

Between April 15 and July 24, 51 attacks on healthcare facilities

have been verified by WHO, resulting in ten deaths and 24 injuries. "It is a tragedy and an

outrage that in the middle of this deepening crisis fighters continue to attack health facilities

and workers, denying life-saving services to innocent civilians when they are at their most vulnerable."

When war wages, women and children will always pay a big price, the two lamented. "We are appalled by reports of sexual and gender-based violence against women and girls; those who are displaced are especially vulnerable. Today, more than 4mn women and girls are at risk of sexual and gender-based violence, and they must be protected at all costs."

Dhofar Khareef Book Fair opens

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Dhofar Khareef Book Fair – a new facet of the Dhofar Khareef Festival in 2023 - was inaugurated on Tuesday morning at Sultan Qaboos Youth Complex for Culture and Entertainment in Salalah. Ahmed bin Mohsin al Ghassani, Chairman of Dhofar Municipality, presided over the opening ceremony.

The fair has drawn participation of close to 50 publishing houses and bookstores from Oman and abroad. A joint initiative of Dhofar Municipality and several private sector companies, it promises to bring a myriad of books to bibliophiles. For the next ten days, the fair will host a series of cultural events put together by the team of Ithra Cultural Initiative. Omani Women’s Association of Al Jazir

has been granted guest of honour status. The book fair will also include engaging interactive sessions and meetings. A special event titled ‘Culture is a Life Journey’ was organised alongside the book fair on Tuesday evening, presented by Dr Ahmed bin Abdul Rahman Balkhair, Associate Professor and Assistant Dean at Dhofar University’s College of Arts and Applied Sciences.

Over 220,000 visitors attend Ashkharah festival

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ajwaa al Ashkharah Festival in the wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali, South Sharqiyah, concluded on Monday. More than 220,000 visitors attended the cultural celebration. The 20-day festival, which started on July 5, saw participation of numerous government agencies and private institutions offering a broad spectrum of 40 activities, including entertainment, tourism and cultural. There were captivating performances praised by citizens, residents and visitors from all over Oman. Several pavilions were set up,



including a heritage corner reflecting the way of life in the area – such as folk arts, traditional clothing and ancient games – practised in the past in a tent. Other elements such as palm fronds, fishing gear, silverware craftsmanship, traditional jewellery and shipbuilding techniques were also featured. A

mini-exhibit educated visitors on the shipbuilding process. A variety of government and private agencies contributed to the festival's varied programming. The Department of Heritage and Tourism in South Sharqiyah organised an interactive tourist corner, providing visitors with information about the wilayat of Jaalan Bani Bu Ali and Oman in general. Parallel tourism events took place in the wilayat of Al Kamil Wal Wafi, as well as the niyabat of Ras al Hadd in the wilayat of Sur. These events presented an assortment of cultural, recreational and tourism activities, attracting a diverse range of visitors and tourists.

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Pioneering procedure done at Royal Hospital

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The National Heart Centre at The Royal Hospital has achieved a groundbreaking medical milestone. A specialised team of doctors at the hospital has successfully performed a first-of-its-kind operation in the Middle East, implanting an Aveir leadless pacemaker using a minimally invasive catheter procedure. Dr Najeeb bin Zahran al Rawahi, Senior Consultant of Interventional Electrophysiology at the National Heart Centre, headed the groundbreaking operation. The procedure was performed on a patient with a life-threatening

The operation took only 30 minutes, demonstrating its efficiency and ease

DR NAJEEB AL RAWAHI

condition of frequent fainting and cardiac arrest episodes lasting up to five seconds. The operation's success was confirmed after the patient remained under observation for a day post-procedure. Regular follow-ups are scheduled every four to six months to monitor her progress.

Highlighting the procedure's innovativeness, Dr Rawahi explained that it involved a small incision in the thigh, eliminating the need for general anaesthesia. “What makes this surgery remarkable is that it comes less than a month after the US Food and Drug Administration approved the device's use for simultaneously regulating the atrium and ventricle. The operation took only 30 minutes, demonstrating its efficiency and ease,” he informed. The catheterisation method used is less invasive than traditional surgery and requires a significantly shorter recovery period, he added.

The Aveir leadless pacemaker functions by emitting electrical signals to regulate heartbeat. This technology is a significant advancement in treating heart problems, as it improves overall heart function by regulating heartbeats in both ventricles and atria. With a battery life of up to 20 years, the Aveir device reduces the need for frequent battery replacements. Once the battery life ends, the device can be easily removed and replaced via a catheter. Dr Rawahi emphasised the Aveir pacemaker's innovation in treating heart electrical issues, offering extended battery life and easy removal when necessary.

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UBHAR GCC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

The Chairman's Report For the period ended June 30th, 2023

On behalf of the Fund Management Body Members, I am pleased to present the financial results of **Ubhar GCC Fund** for the period ended June 30, 2023.

A summary of financial results is as follows:

Figure 1:	For the period ended June 30, 2023 (OMR)	For the period ended June 30, 2022 (OMR)
Total Income	654,337	(8,303)
Total Expenses	(136,830)	(117,261)
Profit (Loss) for the Period	517,507	(125,564)
Profit (Loss) per Unit	0.104	(0.025)

Fund Performance:
For the period ended June 30, 2023 the performance of Ubhar GCC Fund is as follows:

Figure 2:	June 30, 2023	June 30, 2022
Net Asset Value (OMR)	5,662,427	5,546,071
Number of Outstanding Units	4,952,785	4,971,356
Net Asset Value per Unit***	1.143	1.116
UBGCC Fund Performance for the period	10.01%	-3.83%
Benchmark Performance for the period	2.87%	-0.08%

* NAV per unit for 2022 is after cash dividends

Market Performance:
Figure A: Index Returns

Index	YTD (June 30, 2023)
Dubai Financial Market	13.70%
Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul)	9.40%
Bahrain Bourse	3.30%
S&P GCC Index	2.80%
Muscat Securities Market	-1.80%
Boursa Kuwait	-3.80%
Qatar Exchange	-5.70%
Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange	-6.50%

Economy and Markets
Going forward, the world will watch the BRICS summit in South Africa, in August, with a lot of interest. A BRICS gold linked currency is likely to be previewed in this meet, one which is likely to compete with the US Dollar. In the near term, The Shanghai Co-operation Council (SCO) will likely merge into the BRICS group and other countries are likely to join in. Around 12 more countries have shown interest in joining this group, which is seen as counter to the US Dollar and giving rise to a multipolar global financial system. This has implications for the MENA region as Saudi Arabia, UAE and Egypt have expressed interest in joining the BRICS. The unveiling of a BRICS gold linked currency has already resulted in expectations of a weaker dollar in Q3. A weaker dollar, very low levels of oil inventory and a backwardated futures curve, implies a constructive outlook for oil prices and also for the GCC markets. Consequently, our outlook for GCC, remains cautiously optimistic.

Acknowledgements
On behalf of the Fund Management Body, I extend my thanks to His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tariq bin Taimur for his government's progressive policies and constant encouragement to the financial services sector.

I also take this opportunity to thank the members of the Fund Management Body for their valuable time and guidance, the CMA, MSM & MCD for their support and cooperation, the fund manager and service providers for their efforts and you, our valued unitholder, for your continued support and trust.

On behalf of the Fund Management Body
Chairman
July 24th, 2023

Statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income For 30 June 2023

	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO
INCOME		
Dividend income	132,987	130,236
Interest income	341	20
Net realised gain / (loss) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	353,880	308,587
Fair value changes in investments at fair value through profit or loss	167,129	(447,145)
Other income	--	--
Total income	654,336	(8,303)
Expenses		
Management fees	39,536	46,215
Brokerage commission	79,575	32,837
Custodian & Administration fees	6,943	13,801
Performance Fee	--	--
General and administration	8,296	20,929
Fund Management Body fee	2,480	3,479
Total Expenses	136,829	117,261
Net profit and total comprehensive income for the year	517,507	(125,564)
Net profit per unit	0.104	(0.025)

Statement of financial position As 30 June 2023

	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO
ASSETS		
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	5,575,343	5,111,433
Cash and cash equivalents	88,788	444,135
Other receivables	16,641	14,937
Total assets	5,680,772	5,570,506
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Accruals and other payables	18,3245	24,434
Total liabilities	18,3245	24,434
Total net assets attributable to the Unitholders	5,662,427	5,546,071
Net asset value per unit	1.143	1.116

For more information please contact:
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Tel: 24 940 032/030, Fax: 24949099, Email: ubhargccfund@u-capital.net, website: www.u-capital.net

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Companies specialized in the field and registered with Tender Board, may obtain tender documents for the website through the following link: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) against non-refundable fees as mentioned below starting from the date of this announcement and until the end of deadline stipulated below.

Tender Number	Description of Tender	Last date to collect the tender	Tender return date	Grade
PRE/22/129 100/2022/MM/QS-64	Design & Construction of Channelization and protection works of Wadi Bosher (Re - Call)	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	First
PRE/23/092 46/2023/MM/HQ-17	Supply and Installation of benches in Public Parks in Muscat Governorate (Re – Call)	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/136 2023/MM/HQ-33	Renewal of Hardware Maintenance Services & Accessories	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/140 2023/MM/HQ-34	AMC for UPS Systems at Muscat Municipality – Various Locations	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/154 2023/MM/QS-56	Beautification Works at Nazi Moya Area at Muttrah	05/08/2023	09/08/2023	Forth
PRE/23/162 2023/MM/HQ-35	Supply of Traffic Signs for Roads 2023-2024	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/171 2023/MM/HQ-36	Supply, Install & Commissioning of Decorative Lighting for National Day in Muscat Governorate	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/173 2023/MM/QS-57	Supply of Equipments for Food Inspection Department (Re-Call)	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist
PRE/23/174 2023/MM/QS-58	Hire of Water Tankers at Al Amirat & Qurriyat	15/08/2023	07/09/2023	Specialist

1- Bidders shall submit their offers electronically.

2- Clarification and Support:

• For any inquiries regarding tenders, please visit e-tendering website: (<https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>) .

• For technical support of e-tendering system please send an email to (etenderhd@mtcit.gov.om) or call (+96824402200).

Anqudi conquers Mt Damavand

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Seasoned Omani adventurer Khalid Said al Anqudi has added another feather in his cap by conquering Mount Damavand. At an altitude of 5,671m, the Iranian peak is the tallest in Western Asia and Asia's highest volcano. Anqudi embarked on this expedition with the dual aim of promoting Omani tourism and encouraging a spirit of adventure among the youth.

In a call to Muscat Daily from Iran, he said, "Damavand has a special place in Persian mythology and folklore. The mountain, 66km northeast of Tehran in Alborz Province, overlooks the southern coast of the Caspian Sea."

Anqudi triumphed over harsh elements, braving strong winds and heavy snowfall, to reach the base of Damavand on July 9.

His mission was finally accomplished on July 12 at 1pm when he planted the flag of the sultanate atop the mountain. "The climb was fraught with challenges. The thin air was a formidable hurdle," he informed.

Among his team members were fellow Omani climbers Dr Ali al Ajmi, Kawthar al Habsi and Suleiman al Maamari.

To prepare for the difficult ascent, the group engaged in rigorous physical training, including daily walks of five to six hours for two months. Anqudi emphasised the importance of mental preparedness alongside physical strength in overcoming such daunting challenges.

This recent feat is another addition to Anqudi's impressive record. He has successfully



(Supplied photo)

scaled 15 mountains, including three of the Seven Summits - Kilimanjaro, Elbrus and Aconcagua. His aim is to conquer all seven.

Anqudi's impressive portfolio includes scaling the Italian Alps, Ararat in Turkey, Toubkal in Morocco, Kala Patthar and Everest Base Camp in Nepal, Apo in the Philippines, Fuji in Japan, Cheget in Russia, Kinabalu in Malaysia, and Bromo and Semeru in In-

donesia.

"I have already traversed more than 76 countries to promote the sultanate. I will persist in my quest to conquer the world's peaks and fulfil my dream of scaling the seven global summits," he said of his future pursuits, while encouraging the youth of Oman to embrace their dreams with patience and determination.

MoSD launches leadership training for women decision-makers

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Social Development (MoSD), represented by the Department of Women's Affairs, launched a programme called 'Leadership Empowerment of Women in Decision-Making Positions' on Tuesday.

The inaugural session of the programme was held at the National Autism Centre in Al Khoud with participation of several influential women leaders.

The programme is designed to equip participants with crucial skills in leadership, communica-

The country has ensured women's active participation in the national development process

WADHA AL ALAWI

tion and decision-making.

Additionally, it intends to empower them with planning and management expertise for media enablers, such as campaigning. It also aims to put the spotlight and

share successful stories of women empowerment.

Wadha al Alawi, Director of Department of Women's Affairs at MoSD, said that Omani women have received considerable attention and respect in the sultanate. "The country has ensured women's active participation in the national development process, supporting and empowering them in various fields."

She underscored that Omani women serve as successful models due to their significant role in bolstering the national economy.

At the inaugural programme, Ahmed bin Ali al Mukhaini, policy

analysis and development expert, presented a paper titled 'The Electoral Campaign: Its Components and Stages' which detailed the formation and building of work teams, organisations, volunteer management, campaign planning and implementation, and budget estimation.

The second session of the programme delved into Oman's constitutional, legislative and legal framework, exploring tools and strategies for studies, hosting discussions, making proposals and development plans, budgets, and relevant legislative and regulatory frameworks.

Oman and Portugal hold political consultations

Muscat - The first political consultations session between the Sultanate of Oman and the Republic of Portugal was held at the Foreign Ministry in Muscat on Tuesday.

The session discussed bilateral relations and the two sides stressed keenness to continue promoting these in various areas.

The two sides also exchanged views on several regional and international issues of common interest.

During the session, the Omani side was chaired by Munthir Mahfoudh al Manthri, head of Foreign Ministry's Europe Department, while the Portuguese side was chaired by Ruy Fenhas, Director General of Foreign Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

It was attended by Dr Afkar Nadhim al Farsi, head of the Foreign Trade, Knowledge Economy and Technology Department, and a number of officials from both sides.

Fostering a resilient, efficient work environment

Continued from Page 01

This is permitted after notifying workers about the areas of deficiency and providing them with an adequate period of no less than six months to rectify it. This clause, when implemented, can boost productivity within the establishment and promote competition among workers.

It also simplifies the Omanisation process by enabling termination of non-Omani employees when an Omani worker can replace them. To maintain operational continuity and prevent work stoppage due to strikes, the

law requires workers to inform the settlement committee to initiate dispute resolution swiftly.

The new law includes fresh leave provisions aimed at enhancing worker productivity and performance, such as a seven-day paternity leave and a 15-day caregiver leave. Sick leave days has been increased to 182 (with conditions), and maternity leave duration extended.

The law underwent several stages of consultation and revision, involving 125 participants from various sectors, before being enacted by a Royal Decree.

Low pressure to bring isolated rains in next four days: CAA

Muscat - The current weather conditions are likely to continue over Oman with isolated rains and wadis expected to overflow, Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) stated on Tuesday.

In a weather report, CAA said that there are chances of isolated rains in the governorates of South Sharqiyah, Dhofar and Al Wusta from Tuesday to Saturday.

'Isolated rain of 10mm to 30mm may cause wadis to overflow, while the state of the sea will be moderate to rough with maximum wave height of 2.5m.'

The weather will be cloudy to partly cloudy in the rest of the governorates, with the possibility of isolated rain and occasional thunderstorms over the Al Hajar Mountains during this period.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Water Resources, Al Kamil Wal Wafi recorded 35mm of rainfall over July 24 and 25.

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Tender No	Description	Last Date For Collection Of Tender Document	Bid Submission Closing Date on/ Before 10:00 am Monday	Eligibility	Tender Fee (Non-Refundable)
2730/2023/MOH/D GRHP-136	Supplying other Commodities at Royal Hospital	22/Aug/2023	11/Sep/2023	Specialized Companies Registered With Tender Board	25 RIALS
2731/2023/MOH/D GRHP-137	Supply & Install Swing Doors No. 3Nos at Royal Hospital	6/Aug/2023	28/Aug/2023	Specialized Companies Registered With Tender Board	25 RIALS

Tenders should be submitted on line on <https://etendering.tenderboard.gov.om>.

Ministry is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept or reject any tender.

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Khazaen Dry Port, Tanuf sign agreement to provide storage, transport, handling services

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Khazaen Dry Port (KDP), an affiliate of Asyad Group, signed a new service agreement with the National Mineral Water Company SAOG (Tanuf) to provide storage, transport and handling services through KDP's top-notch facilities.

With this agreement, Tanuf will capitalise on Asyad Group's state-of-the-art integrated logistics ecosystem through KDP, reducing distribution times and logistics costs. Tanuf will also leverage KDP's strategic location in proximity to Oman's major consumer hubs, commercial ports and Muscat International Airport to optimize transportation and storage operations.

KDP's partnership with Tanuf is further proof of the port's vital role in the domestic supply chain, boasting an integrated logistics offering and comprehensive infrastructure that encompasses developed storage facilities and advanced technical capabilities.



Situated in Oman's flagship Khazaen Economic City (KEC), KDP is ideally positioned to meet the local market's demand, in line with Asyad's commitment to

empowering Oman's private sector with unparalleled access to major regional and global markets.

Highlighting the significance

of this collaboration, Saad Ramadhan Bait Nasib, Executive Director of KDP, stated, "Our partnership with Tanuf showcases our unwavering commit-

ment to putting our enhanced value proposition at the service of local producers looking to bolster their commercial activities and improve their competitive-

ness and efficiency. This reflects Asyad Group's consistent efforts toward enhancing Oman's national food security through its integrated assets and targeted partnerships. Keeping pace with Asyad's strategy, KDP will continue to seek out enabling partnerships and improve its offering

graphic location to tap into thriving regional and global markets."

As Oman's first land port, KDP covers in its initial phase an area of 100,000sqm in South Batinah and has witnessed remarkable progress in business and operations since its launch in 2021. Today, it features an an-

Our partnership with Tanuf showcases our unwavering commitment to putting our enhanced value proposition at the service of local producers looking to bolster their commercial activities

SAAD RAMADHAN BAIT NASIB

to position itself as a pivotal trade hub across industries."

Abdel Nasser al Daissy, General Director of Tanuf, said, "We are excited about this partnership with KDP, as it provides us with vital access to a world-class infrastructure network and a wide array of integrated logistics services. With KDP by our side, Tanuf can now take full advantage of Oman's strategic geo-

nual handling capacity of 70,000 containers.

KDP continues to improve its value proposition and attract local and global customers, in line with Asyad Group's strategy of supporting the private sector and enabling Oman's various industries, thereby cementing Oman's standing as a prominent manufacturing and distribution center and a key global logistics hub.

BRIEFS

Unilever profit jumps on asset sale, price rises

London, UK - British consumer goods giant

Unilever on Tuesday said its net profit jumped more than a fifth in the first half thanks to an asset sale and price increases.

Profit after tax rose 22% to €3.54bn (US\$3.9bn) in the six months to the end of June from a year earlier, said the maker of products ranging from Magnum ice cream and Cif surface cleaner to Dove soap.

Unilever said it gained €497mn from the sale of personal-care business Suave in North America, adding it had passed on higher costs to customers in the form of sharp price increases for goods.

"In normal circumstances, significant price rises would be accompanied by large declines in volumes as customers move elsewhere," noted Richard Hunter, head of markets at Interactive Investor.

De Beers gets 1st diamonds from new S Africa mine

Johannesburg, South Africa - A US\$2.3bn mining tunnel in South Africa has started to produce its first diamonds, mining giant De Beers said on Tuesday.

In 2012, the global firm started digging beneath the country's largest diamond mine, Venetia, seeking to reach gems at a depth of more than 1,000m.

Venetia is an open mine in northeastern South Africa, close to the border with Zimbabwe and Botswana, that closed in December 2022 after 30 years of production. The firm described the first diamonds as 'a key milestone' but did not give further details. The underground operation, employing about 4,300 people, is now 70% complete, it said. The facility is expected to produce about 4mn carats of diamonds annually, De Beers said after rectifying earlier, higher estimates.

Kuwait petroleum company announces unprecedented profits of over \$3bn last FY

Kuwait City, Kuwait - Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC) announced on Tuesday record-breaking profits of KD1.016bn (US\$3.32bn approx) for the fiscal year 2022-23.

Company's CEO Wadha al Khateeb expressed her pride in this exemplary achievement, indicating that the company had logged in a KD675mn (US\$2.2bn approx) increase against the previous year's KD341.380mn, marking a 198% jump.

Wadha attributed this significant jump in profits to various factors including the global increase in prices of oil products, and the company's improved op-



erational performance especially following the complete and successful operation of eco fuel proj-

ect in Mina Ahmadi and Mina Abdallah refineries.

The project, Wadha clarified,

took quality of products to better levels, up to par with latest global standards, allowing the company

to market products in new global markets and creating profitable opportunities.

These new large and innovative projects were accompanied with a rise in refining capacity aiming to meet demands of local markets and keep up with augmenting global demands, explained the CEO. Wadha presented a number of marketing indices that contributed to the achievement of such profit, including putting out improved diesel and low sulfur gasoline.

Moreover, she took the opportunity to applaud the company's cadres in all its various sectors, saying that what has been achieved is nothing but the fruit of their labour.

KUNA

Türkiye eyes \$10bn in defence exports, says vice president

Istanbul, Türkiye - Türkiye eyes its defence exports to soon exceed US\$10bn, the country's vice president said on Tuesday.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 16th International Defence Industry Fair (IDEF) in Istanbul, Cevdet Yilmaz said Turkish defense exports totaled US\$2.4bn in the first half of 2023, and are expected to reach US\$6bn by the end of the year.

The IDEF, one of the largest global defence events, which will continue until Friday, is exhibiting a range of defence products including land vehicles, weapons, simulators, radars, sonars, naval platform solutions, aviation systems, missiles, logistic vehicles, supply equipment, and security systems.

Yilmaz said Türkiye is located in a geography where conflicts are intense, adding that "past experiences show Türkiye's independence depends on the design and production of defence products".

The Turkish defence industry is a large ecosystem that develops its own products with its worldwide contractors, SMEs, research institutions, technology and industry clusters, he added.

The vice president said Türkiye had a defence industry



The sector has 3,000 companies and more than 80,000 staffers. We are ready to share the knowledge, experience and technology with our friends

CEVDET YILMAZ

budget of approximately US\$5.5bn in 2002, which has now reached US\$90bn.

Pointing out that the sector has 3,000 companies and more than 80,000 staffers, Yilmaz said, "The number of our national defence projects has increased to around 850."

He said Türkiye is among the top three countries in drone technology, and among the top 10 which produce warships.

"We are ready to offer the knowledge, experience and technology we have gained in the defence industry to the benefit of our friends," Yilmaz said. "We are not a country that shows jealousy and stinginess like others."

Anadolu Agency

OPINION

SALEH MIRI, MUSCAT DAILY COLUMNIST, IS AN ARCHITECT WHO CAME TO OMAN IN THE EARLY 1980S

The recent events in Ukraine have put an emphasis on the supply of wheat coming from this area and intended for some African countries. But the wheat from Ukraine counts only for 3.1% of the total production. China produces 17%, India 12.6%, Russian Federation and USA 8.4%, and France 5.4%.

Essential foods such as rice and others are also becoming difficult to produce, partially because of political tensions, and mainly because of the rise in temperature on the planet, causing wild fires almost everywhere and this will consequently make the supply more and more difficult. If today, acquiring an avocado from Mexico, from the Dominican Republic or Peru is easy, tomorrow it might change. How are we going to feed humans in the future? Most of the countries have started realising that the pollution needs to be reduced and everybody looks for electrical cars and



TOMORROW'S FOOD

buses, developing solar and hydrogen projects, but it is probably too late for these changes. Ice has melted strongly in many areas and most of the mountains are losing their white cover.

Some countries, such as China have worked hard to find solutions. In China, a celebrity, Yuan Longping invented a method for producing rice in seawater. Today, more than 80mn people are fed in China alone and several

countries start to test this method.

Each country needs to make the right searches to see what can be produced locally. We live on a planet where everything changes rapidly and we have almost lost control over this phenomena. Drought is also the result of heat gain, which often is followed by heavy floods, often wiping out entire villages. The need for access to water is essential for any future production of vegetables and fruits. Many countries are trying now to restrict access to water, banning swimming pools and other water uses.

Dubai started last year the vertical farm process which allows production of vegetables in an enclosed interior environment and agrivoltaic farming has also become important for many. With the world changing, we need to come up with new solutions, to be able to feed our 8bn people, if we want to avoid the collapse of our world.

The views and opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Muscat Daily or Apex Press & Publishing

IMF nudges up 2023 economic outlook but warns of global growth slowing down ahead

Washington, US - The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has slightly upgraded its outlook for global growth this year on the back of resilient service sector activity in the first quarter and a strong labour market, the lender said on Tuesday.

But despite the mildly better economic outlook, global growth is expected to slow to three percent this year and then stay there, held down by weak growth among the world's advanced economies, the IMF announced in a new report.

"We're not out of the woods yet and growth remains on the low side," IMF Chief Economist Pierre-Olivier Gourinchas told AFP in an interview ahead of the report's publication.

The global growth forecast for this year was raised by 0.2 percentage points from the IMF's last forecast in April, putting the world economy on track for three percent growth in both 2023 and 2024.

This is down from global economic growth of 6.3% in 2021, and 3.5% last year, the IMF announced in its update to the World Economic Outlook (WEO).

The IMF published its lowest medium-term forecast since the 1990s, citing slowing population growth and the end of the era of economic catch-up by several



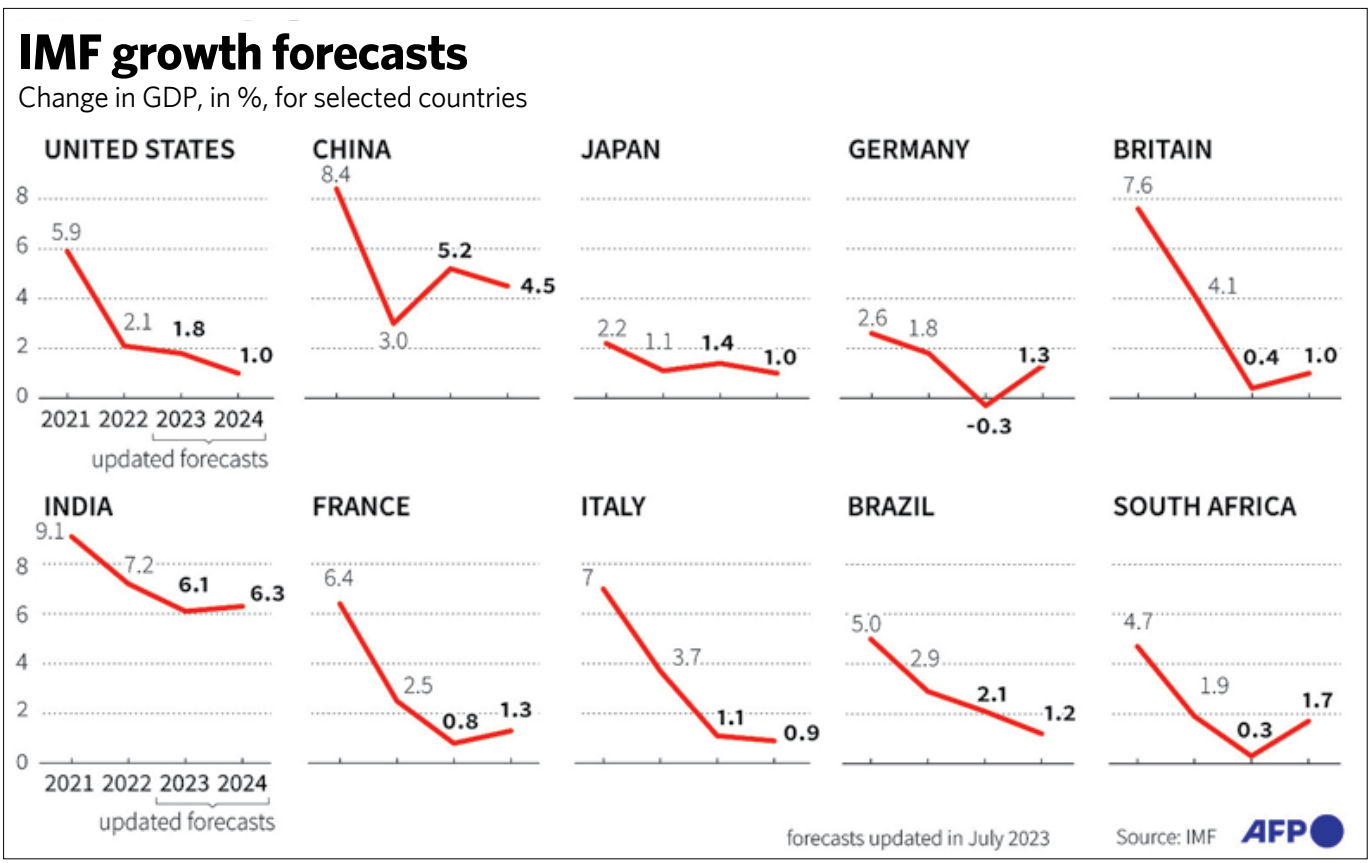
We are cautiously prudent that the US economy could avoid a recession... glide towards its inflation target without having a recession

PIERRE-OLIVIER GOURINCHAS

countries including China and South Korea.

On Tuesday, the IMF said the global inflation picture has improved somewhat, with consumer prices now forecast to increase by 6.8% this year, down 0.2 percentage points from the previous forecast in April.

This is "largely on account of subdued inflation in China", the IMF said, adding that global infla-



tion remains well above its pre-pandemic levels of around 3.5%.

'Resilient' US consumption

The IMF has lifted its outlook for US growth this year to 1.8%, up 0.2 percentage points from April, citing 'resilient' consumption growth in the first quarter.

The still-tight labour market in the world's largest economy

'has supported gains in real income and a rebound in vehicle purchases', the IMF said in its report.

The IMF sees US growth slipping to 1.0% next year, as savings accumulated during the pandemic dry up and the economy loses momentum.

"We are cautiously prudent that the US economy could avoid a recession and, you know, glide

towards its inflation target without having a recession in its future," Gourinchas told AFP.

"But it's a very, very narrow path," he added.

Asian economies still dominate

As with the April forecast, much of the global growth this year is forecast to come from emerging market and developing

economies (EMDEs) like India and China, with economic activity in advanced economies predicted to slow substantially this year and next.

Advanced economies are now forecast to grow by 1.5% this year, up 0.2 percentage points from April, and by 1.4% in 2024.

Citing positive recent economic news from the United

Kingdom, the IMF has lifted the country's forecast for 2023 growth to 0.4%, leaving Germany as the only G7 economy expected to contract this year.

The news is much more positive among the EMDEs, which are forecast to grow by 4.0% this year, and by 4.1% next year.

The IMF's 2023 growth forecast for China remained unchanged at 5.2%, although it notes there has been a change in composition due to the under-performance of investment due to the country's troubled real estate sector.

Alongside weakness in the real estate sector, the IMF said foreign demand remains weak and warned of rising and elevated youth unemployment, which reached almost 21% in May.

The IMF lifted India's 2023 growth prospects to 6.1%, up 0.2 percentage points from April, citing "momentum from stronger-than-expected growth in the fourth quarter of 2022 as a result of stronger domestic investment".

The IMF now expects Russia's economy to grow by 1.5% this year, an upward revision of 0.8 percentage points from April, due to stronger-than-expected economic data fueled by 'a large fiscal stimulus'.
AFP

China appoints central bank governor as economy flags

Beijing, China - China replaced its central bank chief on Tuesday, state media said, as the world's second-largest economy struggles to revive flagging growth.

Economist Pan Gongsheng will take the place of outgoing central bank governor Yi Gang, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Yi has headed the People's Bank of China (PBOC) since 2018 and has reached retirement age.

The decision, made by Chinese legislators at a meeting on Tuesday, comes after Pan was appointed the PBOC's Communist Party secretary on July 1.

Pan previously headed China's foreign exchange regulator, a position he had held since 2016, when China faced major capital flight.

The 60-year-old has also served as one of the central bank's vice-governors since 2012.

Pan, who attended top univer-



Pan Gongsheng

sities Cambridge in the United Kingdom and Harvard in the US, is reputed to be deeply experienced in Chinese banking and politics, having also worked at two major state-owned banks.

'All these roles could have ended Pan's career if mishandled,' analysts at Beijing-based consultancy Trivium wrote in a note. 'Instead, he built a reputation for being a politically savvy problem solver,' the analysts said.

Neil Thomas, a China special-

ist at the Asia Society, said, "Pan Gongsheng is a financial technocrat, not a Xi loyalist."

"This suggests Xi is more concerned about China's economy than before the 20th Party Congress," Thomas tweeted, referring to a key conclave last year where Beijing's top leadership confirmed a third term in power for Xi.

The central bank has cut several interest rates in recent weeks in an effort to reinvigorate the economy, but a run of dismal economic data over recent months has ramped up calls for officials to unveil stronger support measures.

China said this month its economy grew 6.3% in the second quarter, much weaker than the 7.1% predicted in an AFP survey of analysts.

The disappointing result came despite a very low base of comparison with last year.

AFP

General Motors reports strong results as it girds for labour talks

New York, US - General Motors lifted its full-year forecast following another strong quarter on Tuesday as it girds for difficult labor negotiations and questions about demand for its growing electric vehicle business.

The big US automaker cited strong consumer demand that has allowed for solid pricing while keeping incentives in check.

Profits jumped 52% to US\$2.6bn on revenues of US\$44.7bn, which were up 25%.

In the spring, market watchers had spoken of a potential cooling in the US vehicle market due to persistently elevated inflation. But Wall Street analysts have recently pointed to the strong US labour market as a reason car sales have stayed robust.



"The biggest driving force behind our financial results is customer demand for our vehicles," said Chief Executive Mary Barra in a letter to investors.

But the buoyant results come as GM faces some imminent challenges.

These include talks on a new contract with the United Auto Workers, whose new president, Shawn Fain, has adopted an aggressive posture towards GM, Ford and Stellantis, signaling a willingness to strike.

AFP

FINCORP AL AMAL FUND

INTERIM STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 JUNE 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR THE PERIOD ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

Dear Unit holders,

On behalf of the Investors' Committee, I hereby present to you the un-audited financial results of Fincorp Al Amal Fund (AIGF), for the period ended June 30, 2023.

Fund Performance

Figures in OMR	30-Jun-23	30-June-22	31-Dec-22
Fund Income	545,746	-537,153	-832,221
Fund Expenses	-58,099	-64,130	-122,110
Net Profit / (Loss)	487,647	-601,283	-954,331

Figures in OMR	30-Jun-23	30-June-22	31-Dec-22
Net Asset Value	4,672,364	4,590,136	4,237,976
Units Outstanding	4,536,572	4,590,993	4,591,948
Net Asset Value per unit	1,030	1,000	0.923
Fund Performance (net of fees)	11.60%	-10.42%	-16.98%
MSCI ACWI	12.80%	-20.94%	-19.80%

Q2 2023 Performance

The positive momentum that began in Q1 2023 continued through Q2 2023 for the international markets on account of favorable economic readings signaling stabilization of macro trends, subsiding of banking crisis as customers confidence rebuilds suggested by rise in deposits and better than anticipated performance of advanced economies.

GCC markets recovered in Q2 2023 after registering a negative Q1 2023 with some volatility experienced in the month of May as oil continued its downward trend despite aggressive intervention by OPEC+ alliance through production cuts to support the prices.

During Q2 2023, MSCI ACWI increased by 5.58% and S&P 500 by 8.30% largely driven by limited leadership in large-cap technology stocks and excitement around emerging Artificial Intelligence sector. The broader participation of rally in other sectors have started to emerge with small-cap and some cyclical sectors like industrials and materials rebounding. On the other hand, S&P GCC Composite increased by 4.76% during the Q2 2023 led by Dubai surging 11.31%, followed by Saudi Arabia at 8.20% for the quarter.

Market Outlook

Equities are off to be strong start of the year, but we believe volatility could re-emerge in H2 2023 as central banks will have to maintain restrictive financial conditions (Inflation on a downward trend with CPI at 2-year low 4% and consistently moderating core at 5.3% yet remains above Fed specified target) while economic growth is slowing down. The main engine of US economic growth, household consumption, continues to be robust. Disposable income is rising with record high employment and strong wage growth, and unlike in 2022 it is now even rising in real terms (excluding inflation). This is despite leading indicators continuing to point towards softening which includes inverted yield curve and contraction of ISM manufacturing and services indexes further indicating possible near-term hiccups. However, the economy continues to remain resilient, and chances of deep recession appears to be almost impossible, with US economy recording 2% GDP growth for the final revision of Q1 2023 (Initial: 1.1%, 2nd revision: 1.3%) while Fed's own GDP tracker forecasting a healthy growth of 1.8% for Q2 2023.

China is expected to be no longer a headwind to global growth as it has been in 2022, but it will also not be the source of dynamism that was anticipated at the beginning of 2023. Domestic consumption and activity in the service sector have surged as travel restrictions are lifted, but investment spending and manufacturing activity have not experienced a similar recovery, instead merely stabilizing. Growth across the GCC region is likely to soften on lower oil production and contractionary monetary policy, but non-oil growth should hold-up well as elevated oil prices cushion the impact of softening growth prospects. Regional PMI data for June shows that GCC economies are continuing to post strong growth in non-oil sectors against the backdrop of high interest rates. The Saudi Arabia non-oil PMI rose to 59.6 in June from 58.5 in May largely on account of strong growth in new work and business output. The S&P Global UAE non-oil PMI increased to 56.9 in June from 55.5 in May which marks the highest reading in last four years. The only GCC economy to show momentum slowing was Qatar, where the non-oil PMI fell to 53.8 in Jun from 55.6 previous month.

Investment Strategy

As the world economy is witnessing a slowdown in a constantly high inflation environment (even if easing) and interest rates near to peaking, we remain cautious yet optimistic to utilize near-term volatility to position investments in fundamentally quality names with revenue diversification (geographically as well as Product or Services wise) at the epicenter of our strategy.

On the surface, the global economy appears poised for a gradual recovery with contention of global inflation via synchronous tightening of monetary policies and unwinding of supply chain disruptions. The focus remains on capitalizing high earning growth opportunities in fast growing economies while ensuring portfolio resiliency via sufficient defensive asset allocation.

In Conclusion

The Investors' Committee would like to express its appreciation and gratefulness to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tariq and the Omani Government for providing a secure and stable economic environment focused on driving growth and continued prosperity for all.

The Committee also wishes to thank the Capital Market Authority and Muscat Securities Market for their sustained and continued efforts in building a vibrant capital market and the management team for their diligence and dedication in managing the fund successfully in a challenging economic environment.

On behalf of the Investors' Committee, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all the unit holders for their continued support and confidence.

On Behalf of the Investors Committee
Aymen bin Hamed Al Busaidi
Chairman -Dated: July 24, 2023

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT

	30 June 2023 RO	30 June 2022 RO	31 December 2022 RO
ASSETS			
Current assets			
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	4,287,273	4,478,276	3,793,820
Receivables	223,422	67,465	359,440
Cash and cash equivalents	218,543	71,238	108,484
Total assets	<u>4,729,238</u>	<u>4,616,979</u>	<u>4,261,744</u>
UNITHOLDERS' FUNDS			
Fund capital	4,536,572	4,590,993	4,591,948
Retained earnings	135,792	(857)	(353,972)
Total Unitholders' funds	<u>4,672,364</u>	<u>4,590,136</u>	<u>4,237,976</u>
LIABILITIES			
Current liabilities			
Accruals and other payables	13,590	6,321	6,858
Amount due to related parties	43,284	20,522	16,910
Total liabilities	<u>56,874</u>	<u>26,843</u>	<u>23,768</u>
Total unitholders' funds and liabilities	<u>4,729,238</u>	<u>4,616,979</u>	<u>4,261,74</u>
Net asset value per unit	<u>1.030</u>	<u>1.000</u>	<u>0.923</u>

UN AUDITED STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

	Six-month period from 1 January 2023 to 30 June 2023 (unaudited)	Three-month period from 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023 (unaudited)	Six-month period from 1 January 2022 to 30 June 2022 (unaudited)	Three-month period from 1 April 2022 to 30 June 2022 (unaudited)
INCOME				
Dividend income	90,628	24,024	61,777	23,829
Realised gains on sale of investments at fair value through profit or loss	157,542	77,780	274,530	18,748
Unrealised gains/(losses) on investments at fair value through profit or loss	290,763	156,759	(885,306)	(1,069,388)
Interest income	3,919	2,003	966	789
Redemption charges	137	21	1,665	1,665
Foreign exchange gains (net)	2,757	1,803	9,215	3,320
	<u>545,746</u>	<u>262,390</u>	<u>(537,153)</u>	<u>(1,021,037)</u>
EXPENSES				
Management fees	(12,736)	(6,553)	(16,051)	(7,797)
Administration fees	(10,420)	(5,361)	(13,133)	(6,379)
Advisory fees	(10,420)	(5,361)	(13,133)	(6,436)
Custodian service fees	(2,006)	(1,531)	(3,772)	(1,032)
Investors Committee's meeting attendance fees	(4,165)	(2,094)	(3,965)	20,359
Brokerage commission expenses	(1,975)	(722)	(6,321)	(1,800)
General and administrative expenses	(6,665)	(3,343)	(7,755)	(3,519)
Performance fees	(9,712)	(9,712)	-	-
	<u>(58,099)</u>	<u>(34,677)</u>	<u>(64,130)</u>	<u>(6,604)</u>
Net profit/(loss) for the period	<u>487,647</u>	<u>227,713</u>	<u>(601,283)</u>	<u>(1,027,641)</u>
Earnings/(loss) per unit	<u>0.107</u>	<u>0.050</u>	<u>(0.124)</u>	<u>(0.211)</u>

Note:
The complete accounts, either in Arabic and English as requested, will be sent by mail within 7 days of request to any unitholder who requests the Fund at the address: PO Box 782, PC 131, Sultanate of Oman, Tel : +968 24822327, Fax : +968 24822390

P.O. Box 782, PC 131,
Sultanate of Oman, Phone: (968) 24822327,
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Website: www.fincorp.org

شركة المركز المالي ش.م.ع.
The Financial Corporation Co. SAOG

ادارة الاصول | واسطة | تمويل الشركات والاستشارات | بحوث
Asset Management | Brokerage | Corporate Finance and Advisory | Research

Dubai Airshow 2023 to drive forward limitless opportunities of space exploration

As the global interest in space exploration continues to grow, the industry is no longer the domain of government, aerospace or defence companies. The advancement of innovative space applications by private businesses and industries has led to a creation of a new space economy, one which the Space Foundation expects will grow beyond US\$634bn by 2026.

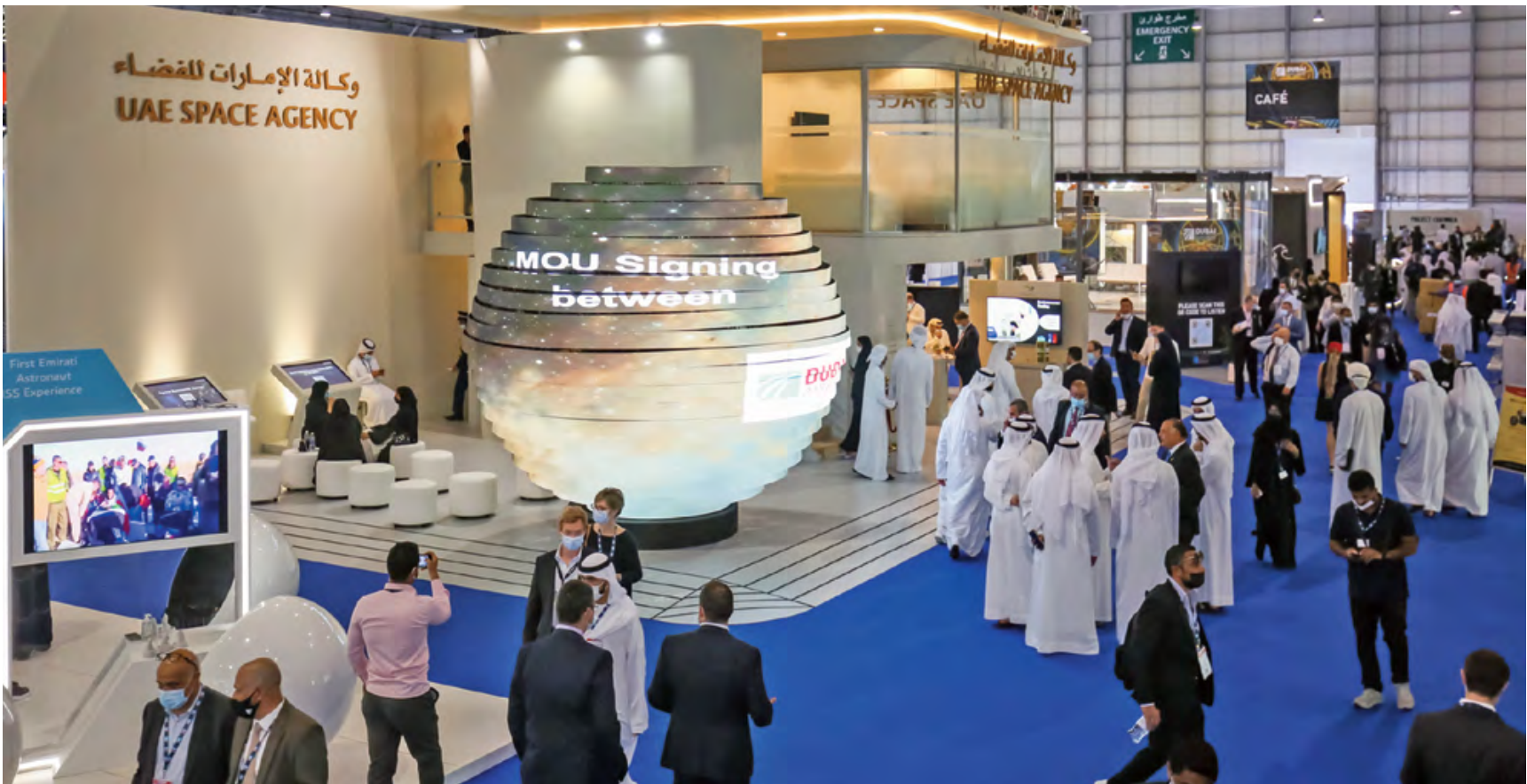
With space now expected to be a key component for the future growth of individual countries and the aerospace industry as a whole, it will be a key theme at this year's Dubai Airshow, with the support of the UAE Space Agency taking it to new horizons.

The 18th edition of Dubai Airshow 2023 will take place from November 13 to 17 at Dubai World Central (DWC), Dubai Airshow Site.

Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Dubai Airshow and the UAE Space Agency at the 2021 Airshow, the two parties are collaborating to further enhance the event's focus on space, strengthening this year's offering.

The aim is to create a more collaborative approach towards space, both locally and globally, in an effort to develop more pioneering partnerships and future projects.

Ibrahim al Qasim, Deputy Director General of the UAE Space Agency, and Salem Humaid al Marri, Director General of Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Cen-



tre (MBRSC) are also part of the Dubai Airshow Advisory Board, providing their strategic advice and insights on space-related themes and the world-class agenda of this year's airshow.

"The UAE has made great strides in building national capabilities in earth observation, training astronauts, sending missions to the moon and soon to the asteroid belt. The most critical component in the next five to ten years will be to build major capabilities in the private sector. We're looking to facilitate enor-

mous opportunities for startups to be established in the UAE, and there's no better platform to do this than at the Dubai Airshow. In its 18th cycle lifespan, the show has generated upward of 3 trillion dirhams in business," Ibrahim Al Qasim commented.

The space sector continues to be a vital industry for the UAE and is already inspiring future generations of astronauts and space scientists. Historic achievements this year include Sultan al Neyadi becoming the first Arab to walk in space, as

well as the Arab world's first interplanetary mission.

The UAE also recently announced the Emirates Mission to the Asteroid Belt (EMA), a groundbreaking 13 year project, featuring six years of spacecraft development and seven years of exploration, which promises to provide a significant boost to Emirati space startups and train Emirati talent.

Meanwhile, the Saudi Space Commission made history by sending its first female Saudi astronaut to space.

The same is being seen globally, as countries and their space agencies uncover the possibilities beyond Earth. The global space tourism market is growing at pace and is likely to reach US\$12,690.6mn by 2031, registering a CAGR of 36.4% from 2022 to 2031, as leaders such as Virgin Galactic and Blue Origin continue to explore new opportunities for commercial flights to space.

Additionally, as the overall space sectors moves along a growth path, Space Surveillance

& Tracking (SST) - a critical capability for ensuring the safety and security of space-based infrastructure, is also a major future business opportunity. A recent Frost & Sullivan study found that the SST market is expected to reach \$90m in 2023, growing to US\$370m in 2037 at a CAGR of 9.4% split across products and services. This represents a considerable growth opportunity for countries and corporate investment in a capability critical to humankind's exploration, expansion, and

exploitation of space.

Dubai Airshow will be a key platform for companies and investors who are keen to see and learn about the latest space technologies from industry trailblazers at the biggest Space pavilion to date.

Technology Innovation Institute (TII), a leading global scientific research centre and applied research pillar of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC), will be making its Dubai Airshow debut and is the host sponsor for this year's Aerospace 2050 stage, which will cover everything from driving sustainable aviation operations to space exploration and future workforce.

"The Dubai Airshow is a unique forum that brings together the world's leading stakeholders in the aerospace and space sectors. Through our presence and sponsorship, we look forward to enhancing awareness and driving innovation in this important sector - one of the UAE's core national priority areas," said Dr Gustavo Dos Santos, Chief Researcher, Propulsion and Space Research Centre at the Technology Innovation Institute.

In partnership with the UAE Space Agency, Dubai Airshow 2023 will host a dedicated two-day conference programme, gathering high profile leaders, government officials and change-makers who will bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise and visionary insights to push the boundaries of possibilities in space.

Ooredoo offers bonus data

Ooredoo is celebrating Khareef Season with amazing bonus data add-ons. Shahr postpaid customers can receive an extra 120GB of high-speed data by choosing the Khareef Nights add-on for just RO16.

This huge data bundle includes 20GB available from 8am to 11pm and 100GB from 11pm to 8am. That means more streaming, more gaming, and more of your favourite apps to share the moment and stay connected during the cool Khareef nights or nationwide this summer.

Oman Air running 26 flights daily between Muscat and Salalah

With the khareef season in full swing, Oman Air has increased its flights between Muscat and Salalah, reaching as many as 26 per day during the recent long weekend.

The airline announced the additions to its schedule in June in anticipation of surging demand for travel over the three-month-long season.

With a variety of natural and cultural attractions and visitor numbers growing each year, Dhofar continues to cement itself as a top destination among regional and international tourists.

Oman Air is currently the only airline offering wide-body service between Muscat and Salalah, including the Boeing 787 Dreamliner and Airbus A330, in addition to the Boeing 737. Guests can also choose to book First Class on selected flights and enjoy personalised service and Dine on Demand



meals.

Meanwhile, as part of its commitment to boosting Oman's tourism sector, the air-

line's global offices have been busy showcasing the highlights of khareef with a variety of awareness campaigns and spe-

cial offers on fares.

With flight timings from early in the morning to late at night, Oman Air ensures convenient

and seamless connections from a wide range of international destinations.

Oman Air (WY) began oper-

ations in 1993. Initially founded to serve important domestic routes, it has since undergone rapid growth and is today recognised as a major international carrier connecting cities around the world to Oman's stunning nature, rich heritage and welcoming culture.

The award-winning airline has been instrumental in transforming Muscat into one of the Middle East's most desirable travel destinations, while supporting adjacent commercial, industrial and tourism activities.

With a young and modern fleet including, among others, fuel-efficient Boeing 737 and 787 Dreamliner aircraft, which feature luxuriously appointed interiors, Oman Air is renowned for its exceptional products and services, both in the air and on the ground, and for the signature Omani hospitality it offers to every guest throughout their journey.

Six Senses Zighy Bay's summer sizzler guides people to Oman for retreat

This summer guests are invited to explore the breathtaking natural beauty of the Oman Peninsula and striking Al Hajar Mountains, whilst enjoying exceptional dining and spa experiences with Six Senses Zighy Bay's Summer Sizzler offer, valid until August 31.

The village-style resort is offering travellers a complimentary upgrade to a half-board meal plan, as well as a choice of either an exhilarating paragliding flight, or a rejuvenating spa treatment and wellness screening - a perfect opportunity to find balance and reconnect with oneself and the world around them.

The offer also includes a generous breakfast buffet, and a specially curated three-course evening meal at either bistro-style restaurant Summer House

where a mix of international dishes are served, or Spice Market, which offers Middle Eastern grills, Lebanese style pizza, hot and cold mezze, and the finest local seafood from Musandam, along with traditional vegetable stews and more, all served in a serene, rustic interiors.

With an abundance of unique dining experiences across the resort, guests may alternatively opt for credit of AED258 towards premium dishes on the a la carte menus or other dining experiences within the resort including themed events such as the Surf & Turf BBQ evening or In-Villa Dining.

For a meal to remember, the resort's Wine Cellar provides an exceptional location for a private dinner for up to eight guests or an intimate meal for two, where



diners can sit among some of the world's most diverse bottles with an expert sommelier on hand to guide them through dinner with wine pairings.

Daytime relaxation can be found in the privacy of every villa, and beachfront retreat, with each offering a secluded haven for guests as well as a private pool.

Stepping out of the villas, the Six Senses spa offers a sanctuary of rest and revitalisation, where guests can stay all day following their 60-minute treatment and wellness screening, which are included as part of the Summer Sizzler offer.

Any stresses or strains on the body and mind will show up in a screening in a non-invasive analysis, which guides guests on taking their first step to making long-lasting improvements.

The readings, along with discussions about each guest's lifestyle, are used to design a treatment or bespoke multi-day programme specific personal needs.

The spa offers nine treatment rooms where signature treatments include Arabian hammams, skin-purifying facials and soul soothing aromatherapy and hot stone massages.

Those wishing to linger longer can make use of a relaxing lounge, steam room, sauna room and an ice cave, while the fitness centre is available for those looking for an energy boost.

Visiting practitioners may also be available for consultations, bringing opportunities for guests to discuss specific concerns or treatments with true experts within their respective fields.

Chinese foreign minister Qin Gang removed from office: Report

Beijing, China - China's foreign minister Qin Gang was removed from office on Tuesday, state media reported, after not being seen in the public eye for a month.

His absence had sparked a storm of speculation that Qin, considered a confidant of President Xi Jinping, had fallen from grace or was subject to an official investigation.

"China's top legislature voted to appoint Wang Yi as foreign minister... as it convened a session on Tuesday," state media outlet Xinhua said.

"Qin Gang was removed from the post of foreign minister."

The report did not give a reason for Qin's removal but said Xi had signed a presidential order to enact the decision.

China has remained tight-lipped for weeks about the fate of Qin, who has not been seen in public since June 25 when he met Russia's deputy foreign minister Andrey Rudenko in Beijing.

Asked repeatedly about Qin on Tuesday, foreign ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning told



This file photo shows China's FM Qin Gang holding a copy of China's constitution during a press conference in Beijing on March 7 (AFP)

journalists that she had 'no information' to offer and insisted that 'China's diplomatic activities are steadily moving forward'.

Rumour mill in overdrive

The ministry had previously said 'health reasons' were to blame for Qin's absence.

But that did little to stem an explosion of rumours online, some of which claimed Qin was under official investigation for an alleged affair with a prominent television anchor.

Originally from the northeastern city of Tianjin, Qin frequently rubbed shoulders with Xi in an earlier role as chief of the foreign ministry's protocol department.

His promotion over more experienced candidates, first to US ambassador and then foreign minister, was attributed to the trust placed in him by Xi directly.

Qin had replaced Wang as foreign minister in December last year.

A fluent English speaker, Qin was a visible presence in Washington through public and media appearances in which he defended the Chinese geopolitical position.

He also previously served as a spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry, where he gained a reputation for caustic responses to difficult questions from journalists. Over the past month, many of Qin's duties had been taken on by Wang, China's top diplomat who leads the ruling Communist Party's foreign policy and outranks Qin in the government hierarchy.

AFP

New heatwave hits Greece as fires rage on popular islands

Rhodes, Greece - Greece sweltered in a new wave of soaring temperatures on Tuesday, as wildfires raged on several popular tourist islands, forcing mass evacuations.

Many regions of the country were on 'red alert', meaning there is an extreme risk of dangerous forest fires exacerbated by strong winds.

The very hot weather comes after a weekend of intense heat as thousands of locals and tourists fled forest fires on the Greek islands of Rhodes and Corfu, with the prime minister warning the heat-battered nation is 'at war' with the flames.

Scientists from the World Weather Attribution group said on Tuesday that the heatwaves that have hit parts of Europe and North America this month would have been almost impossible without human-caused climate change. "We have another difficult summer ahead of us," Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis told the cabinet.

WWF Greece on Tuesday said 35,000 hectares (86,500 acres) of forest and other land had already been scorched by fire in the country just in the past week.

In the capital Athens the heat is expected to reach 41 degrees Celsius (106 degrees Fahrenheit), and hit up to 44C in central Greece, according to the national weather forecaster EMY.

Authorities evacuated nearly 2,500 people from the Greek island of Corfu on Monday, after tens of thousands of people had already fled blazes on the island



A fire fighting aircraft drops water over a wildfire close to village of Vati in the southern part of the Greek island of Rhodes, on Tuesday (AFP)

The very hot weather comes after a weekend of intense heat as thousands of locals and tourists fled forest fires on the Greek islands of Rhodes and Corfu

of Rhodes, with many frightened tourists scrambling to get home on evacuation flights.

More than 260 firefighters were still battling flames for an eighth consecutive day on Rhodes, supported by two helicopters and two planes.

A source at Rhodes airport operators Fraport on Tuesday said the situation had normalised, with traffic levels consistent with the height of the summer season on one of Greece's prime travel destinations. The Greek transport ministry said over 2,100 people had flown home on emergency flights on Sunday and Monday.

Fires were also raging on Greece's second largest island of

Evia, where Greek civil protection authorities issued an overnight evacuation order in one northern locality. Mitsotakis said Greece's state apparatus faced a 'major challenge' as the prolonged heatwave and successive wildfires had officials on a 24-hour alert footing for 'several weeks'.

The mercury hit 46.4C in Gythio, in the southern Peloponnese peninsula on Sunday, though failed to reach the hottest temperature nationally on record of 48C.

Mitsotakis has warned that the country faced 'another three difficult days ahead' before high

temperatures are forecast to ease from Thursday.

The severe heatwave in Greece has also been reflected across much of southern Europe and Northern Africa.

In Algeria at least 34 people have died as wildfires raged through residential areas, forcing mass evacuations. In southeastern France officials on Monday issued a fire warning at the highest level in the Bouches-du-Rhone region, warning that the weather conditions make the risk of flames 'very high compared to normal summers'.

AFP

Sanchez named as caretaker PM after inconclusive vote

Madrid, Spain - Pedro Sanchez was on Tuesday formally named caretaker prime minister of an interim government that will remain in place until Spain resolves the political uncertainty that emerged from Sunday's inconclusive elections.

Although Alberto Nunez Feijoo's right-wing Popular Party (PP) won the vote, it fell short of a governing majority, handing Sanchez's Socialists a lifeline as they have more options to create alliances with smaller parties.

"I hereby declare the dismissal of Pedro Sanchez as head of government who will remain in office until a new prime minister takes office," King Felipe VI said in the official State Gazette.

If the political deadlock is not resolved in the coming months, Spain will likely have to hold a repeat election. Although Feijoo's PP won 136 of the 350 seats in parliament, it fell far short of the 176 needed to govern, and even with the support of Vox's 33 mandates, it can only reach 169.

Even so, Feijoo has demanded the right to form a minority government as winner of the vote, and on Monday began talks with various regionalist parties which look certain to fail given Vox's extreme positions and strong opposition to regional autonomy.

The Basque PNV party, which won five seats, already indicated on Monday that it had no interest in talking with Feijoo.

Although the left-wing bloc won fewer seats, with Sanchez's Socialists finishing second with 122 seats and its radical-left ally Sumar winning 31, giving them a total of 153, they can seek sup-



Pedro Sanchez (AFP)

If the political deadlock is not resolved in the coming months, Spain will likely have to hold a repeat election

port from ERC, a left-wing Catalan separatist party and the Basque separatists Bildu.

The biggest challenge for Sanchez would be to secure the abstention of hardline Catalan separatist party JxCat in a parliamentary investiture vote.

Sumar on Monday said it had tasked one of its Catalan representatives to seek talks with JxCat which, with its seven seats, became the unwitting kingmaker of Sunday's election.

If everything came together, Sanchez could rally 172 lawmakers behind him, which would be enough to get through a second investiture vote where only a simple majority is required - as long as JxCat didn't want to vote against him.

AFP

AFTER A DEADLY STORM



A man takes a photo of a car crushed under a fallen tree in Milan on Tuesday after an overnight rainstorm hit the city. Two people died after violent storms hit northern Italy (AFP)

16 die in airstrikes on Khartoum homes

Wad Madani, Sudan - Airstrikes and artillery barrages from Sudan's warring generals killed at least 16 people in a Khartoum neighbourhood on Tuesday, a neighbourhood group reported.

After more than 100 days of war, the latest bombardments added to a toll of at least 3,900 killed nationwide.

'Sixteen citizens died today in this senseless war' when shells hit civilian homes in the Ombada area of Khartoum's northwest, the neighbourhood group said.

It is one of many pro-democracy 'resistance committees' that have cobbled together supplies over the patchy Internet, land lines, or by risking their own lives to venture out since the war began.

The total number of casualties from the latest strikes was still unclear, the committee added in statements provided to AFP.

Mohamed Mansour, a local resident, told AFP he "helped pull eight bodies" from the rubble of homes destroyed by the blasts.

"Four people were killed in the house next door, including two



Smoke billows after similar strikes in north of Khartoum on Saturday (AFP)

children," said another resident, Hagar Youssef.

The war that began on April 15 between army chief Abdel Fattah al Burhan and his former deputy Mohamed Hamdan Daglo, commander of the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF), has uprooted more than 3.3mn other people from their homes.

Much of the fighting has taken place in densely populated neighbourhoods of the capital Khartoum, where residents on

Tuesday reported a renewed RSF attack on the army's ammunition corps in the city's south.

Pro-democracy lawyers said late on Monday that civilians in the city's south and centre were again being "forcibly evacuated from their homes, to be used by fighters" as bases.

Mediators from the United States and Saudi Arabia have previously accused the RSF of "occupation of civilian homes, private businesses, and public buildings."

'Catastrophic humanitarian crisis'

For more than three months, millions have been rationing water and electricity in the stifling heat, shielding their families from blasts and unable to reach the few health care facilities still functioning.

The World Health Organization warned Tuesday of the 'catastrophic humanitarian crisis' facing Sudan, 'with more than 67% of the country's hospitals out of service'. Health care and aid facilities have themselves frequently come under attack or been looted by both forces.

Fighters have also been accused of rampant sexual violence, reports which the WHO said it was 'appalled by'.

Alleged sexual and gender based crimes are a focus of a new investigation announced earlier this month by the International Criminal Court into alleged war crimes in Sudan. The WHO reiterated demands for an urgent response to help prevent outbreaks of diseases.

AFP

Top Russian, Chinese officials to visit N Korea after lengthy pandemic closure

Seoul, South Korea - North Korea will this week welcome Russia's defence minister and a high-level Chinese delegation to Pyongyang for Korean War armistice anniversary celebrations, state media said on Tuesday, a sign it could be reopening its borders to high-level visitors after a lengthy pandemic closure.

"A military delegation of the Russian Federation led by Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu will pay a congratulatory visit to the DPRK," the Korean Central News Agency said, a day after it confirmed a Chinese delegation would also attend the Thursday event.

Russia, one of Pyongyang's historic allies, remains one of a handful of nations that maintains friendly relations with the North, and its leader Kim Jong Un has recently been steadfast in his support for Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, including, Washington says, supplying rockets and missiles. "This visit will contribute to strengthening Russian-North Korean military ties and will be an important step in the development of cooperation between the two countries," the Russian Defence Ministry said in a statement.



People visit the National Photo Exhibition, which was opened at the People's Palace of Culture in Pyongyang on July 19, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the end of the Korean War, which the country celebrates as the 'Victory Day' (AFP)

The foreign visitors are set to attend events in Pyongyang to mark 70 years since the signing of the armistice, known as Victory Day in the North

China, North Korea's main trading partner, also confirmed on Tuesday it would send a dele-

gation led by Politburo member Li Hongzhong. The foreign visitors are set to attend events in Py-

ongyang to mark 70 years since the signing of the armistice, known as Victory Day in the North, which KCNA said would be celebrated in a 'grand manner that will go down in history'.

A large-scale military parade and other events are expected to be held this week, with satellite images indicating that soldiers and civilians have been training

for the parade for months, Seoul-based specialist site NK News reported. Leader Kim's biggest nuclear-capable missiles and other military capabilities are likely to roll through Kim Il Sung Square during the event, it added.

Seoul, Washington monitoring
Seoul's defence ministry said on

Tuesday it had detected more 'people and equipment' in the capital Pyongyang, adding that South Korean and US intelligence agencies were closely monitoring the North's upcoming celebration. The visits by the Chinese and Russian delegations are the first known visits by any foreign delegations since the start of the pandemic.

North Korea has been under a rigid self-imposed coronavirus blockade since early 2020 to protect itself from COVID-19, which has prevented even its own nationals from entering the country. It only resumed some trade with China last year, and allowed Beijing's new envoy to take up his position this year.

Beijing said the delegation would travel to Pyongyang on Wednesday, suggesting they would not be required to undergo an extensive quarantine ahead of the Thursday anniversary event.

An armistice agreement ending Korean War hostilities was signed on July 27, 1953 but the two Koreas remain technically at war because the agreement was never replaced by a peace treaty.

"It is expected that North Korea will try to reap the benefit

of Beijing condoning its nuclear development by unveiling a new ICBM when a Chinese high-level delegation attends its large-scale military parade," Yang Moo-jin, president of the University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, told AFP.

"It seems that the intention is to show off the strengthening of solidarity between North Korea and China amidst the global political disruption caused by the ongoing US-China conflict."

He added that it could also be a sign that the border between the North and China might be reopened in the not too distant future. Beijing is North Korea's most important ally and economic benefactor, their relationship forged in the bloodshed of the Korean War in the 1950s. North Korea fired two ballistic missiles late on Monday, Seoul said, the latest in a series of weapons tests in recent weeks by Pyongyang, which comes as Seoul and Washington ramp up defence cooperation.

Last week South Korea hosted a visit by a US nuclear-capable submarine, the first such deployment since 1981.

AFP

Work nearly complete on naval base in Cambodia

Phnom Penh, Cambodia - Cambodia confirmed on Tuesday that work is almost complete on a naval base Washington fears is intended for Chinese military use, after satellite images showed a major pier had been built.

US officials suspect the Ream base is being converted for use by China, a close ally of Cambodia, as Beijing seeks to buttress its international heft with a network of naval and military outposts. Cambodia has long denied the base on the Gulf of Thailand is for use by any foreign power - despite Beijing funding the revamp - but the row has been a festering sore in ties with the United States for years.

"It is near completion. We will inaugurate it soon," Chhum Socheat, a Cambodian defence ministry spokesman, told AFP.

"We already declared that there is no Chinese military base there - we are just modernising our military to reach a capable level in order to protect our territorial integrity."

New satellite images from



The site of a naval base under construction in Ream, Cambodia

BlackSky, a US commercial imagery company, show rapid progress in building work at the site over the past two years.

The pictures show a pier 363 metres (1,190 feet) in length jutting into the sea, according to an expert quoted by BlackSky.

"There is a near-exact similarity between an angled deep-water pier located on the western shore of the Ream base and another military pier at the People's Liberation Army Support Base in Djibouti," said the expert, Craig Singleton of the

Foundation for Defense of Democracies, a hawkish Washington security think tank.

The Cambodian defence ministry spokesman rejected the claims about the pier being built to berth aircraft carriers.

US fears about the base go back as far as 2019, when the *Wall Street Journal* reported on a deal allowing Beijing to dock warships at Ream.

Cambodia has grown close to China under longtime ruler Hun Sen. AFP

Macron urges N Caledonia to build future

Noumea, France - President Emmanuel Macron urged 'compatriots' in New Caledonia to forge a common future on Tuesday during a landmark visit, more than a year after the overseas territory's disputed vote to remain part of France.

Macron faces a significant challenge charting an acceptable path for both French loyalists and the pro-independence, indigenous Kanaks who widely boycotted the December 2021 referendum and rejected its result. "It is not a full stop, it is a semi-colon," Macron said after a string of three independence referendums over the past five years, all of which rejected independence from France.

He held out the prospect of a 'slow, humble, demanding' process to build a 'shared history' for New Caledonia through a process of 'truth and reconciliation'. In separate remarks to French television, the president stressed that the series of referendums was 'unprecedented'.

"The choice that was expressed was to stay in France and the Republic," he stressed, on his first visit to New Caledonia



French President Emmanuel Macron attends a welcome ceremony with traditional dancers and warriors at the local Senate in Noumea on Tuesday (AFP)

in five years.

"I am with our compatriots during these days to define together the basis for this new path, of this new project for the future of New Caledonia - respectful of its identity, of its history but in the light of the choice that has been made."

Pro-independence campaigners had boycotted the third independence referendum arguing a fair campaign was impossible during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The vote outcome has fed ethnic tensions, with the poorer indigenous Kanak community generally favouring independence over the wealthier white community.

Macron, who attended a French military display in the capital Noumea, is also seeking to reassert his country's importance in the Pacific region, where China and the United States are vying for influence but where France has territories such as

New Caledonia and French Polynesia. He has had to reassemble a French strategy in the region since Australia in 2021 tore up a deal for France to provide build a fleet of diesel-powered submarines, opting instead for US and British-built nuclear-powered vessels.

France has nearly 1.5mn citizens in the Asia-Pacific through its various territories, as well as several thousand troops. AFP

Philippines orders evacuations ahead of super typhoon

Manila, Philippines - A super typhoon swept towards the northern Philippines on Tuesday, the country's weather agency said, triggering evacuation orders for coastal communities expected to bear the brunt of the powerful storm.

Super Typhoon Doksuri was packing maximum sustained winds of 185kmph (115 miles per hour) as it headed towards the northern tip of the main island of Luzon.

The storm, which is called 'Egay' in the Philippines, was expected to make landfall or pass very close to the lightly populated Babuyan islands or northeastern Cagayan province by Wednesday, the agency said in its latest bulletin at 0300 GMT.

It would then move towards Taiwan and southeastern China. Coastal communities in northwestern and northeastern



A farmer leads his water buffalo to a safer place in Ilagan town, Isabela province, north of Manila on Tuesday (AFP)

Cagayan province had been ordered to evacuate their homes in anticipation of storm surges reaching, or even exceeding, three metres (10 feet).

Three of the five Babuyan islands are inhabited, with a population of around 20,000 people.

Local disaster official Charles Castillejos said people living near the shores of those islands had been ordered to go inland, while fishermen had been told to get their boats out of the water.

"We sent the police to convince the hard-headed ones who

refuse to evacuate," Castillejos told AFP.

Science and technology secretary Renato Solidum said people needed to be prepared for the typhoon because 'things happen fast'. "We need to remind our people the importance of readi-

ness against storm surges, strong winds and also possible floods," Solidum told reporters.

Some farmers in the northern province of Isabela, bordering Cagayan, were seen leading their livestock to safety ahead of the storm. "Those living on coastal areas have been moved to higher ground," Isabela provincial disaster officer Constante Foronda told local radio station DZBB.

"Our water search and rescue teams are now deployed in those areas most likely to be affected," Foronda said.

The Philippines is hit by an average of 20 major storms each year that kill hundreds of people and keep vast regions in perpetual poverty. Scientists have warned that such storms are becoming more powerful as the world gets warmer because of climate change.

AFP

Singapore to execute first woman in nearly 20 years

Singapore, Singapore - Singapore is set to hang two drug convicts this week, including the first woman to be sent to the gallows in nearly 20 years, rights groups said on Tuesday, while urging the executions be halted.

Local rights organisation Transformative Justice Collective (TJC) said a 56-year-old man convicted of trafficking 50 grams of heroin is scheduled to be hanged on Wednesday at the Southeast Asian city-state's Changi Prison.

A 45-year-old woman convict who TJC identified as Saridewi Djamani is also set to be sent to the gallows on Friday. She was sentenced to death in 2018 for trafficking around 30 grams of heroin.

If carried out, she would be the first woman to be executed in Singapore since 2004 when 36-year-old hairdresser Yen May Woen was hanged for drug trafficking, said TJC activist Kokila Annamalai.

TJC said the two prisoners are Singaporeans and their families have received notices setting the dates of their executions.

Singapore imposes the death penalty for certain crimes, including murder and some forms of kidnapping.

It also has some of the world's toughest anti-drug laws: trafficking more than 500 grams of cannabis and 15 grams of heroin can result in the death penalty.

AFP

UN starts defusing ‘ticking time bomb’

UN began transferring 1 mn barrels of oil from the rusting tanker off war-torn Yemen

Hodeida, Yemen - The United Nations said on Tuesday it had begun transferring one million barrels of oil from a rusting super-tanker off war-torn Yemen, in a bid to avert a catastrophic spill.

“The United Nations has begun an operation to defuse what might be the world’s largest ticking time bomb,” UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a statement. “A complex maritime salvage effort is now underway in the Red Sea off the coast of war-torn Yemen to transfer one million barrels of oil from the decaying FSO Safer to a replacement vessel.”

The transfer of 1.14mn barrels of Marib light crude from the 47-year-old FSO Safer to the new vessel is expected to take ‘less than three weeks’, David Gressly, the UN’s resident coordinator for Yemen, said on social media.

Experts say success is far from certain, as scorching summer temperatures, ageing pipes and sea mines lurking in surrounding waters all pose potential threats to the operation.

“Because it is the start of the emergency phase of the project to remove the oil, we need to be very cautious,” Sarah Bel, spokeswoman for the UN Development Programme, told reporters in Geneva.

The UN hopes the US\$143mn operation will eliminate the risk of an environmental disaster that it estimates would cost US\$20bn to clean up.

Because of the Safer’s position in the Red Sea, a spill would also cost billions of dollars per day in shipping disruptions through the



A worker stands on the deck of FSO Safer oil tanker in the Red Sea off the coast of Yemen’s contested western province of Hodeida on July 15 (AFP)

omment Programme, told reporters in Geneva.

The UN hopes the US\$143mn operation will eliminate the risk of an environmental disaster that it estimates would cost US\$20bn to clean up.

Because of the Safer’s position in the Red Sea, a spill would also cost billions of dollars per day in shipping disruptions through the

Bab al-Mandab Strait to the Suez Canal, while devastating ecosystems, coastal fishing communities and lifeline ports.

The Safer, a floating storage and offloading facility, has been moored around 50km (30 miles) from the port of Hodeida since the 1980s.

It has not been serviced since war broke out eight years ago

between Yemen’s Huthis, who control the capital Sanaa and the waters where the Safer is positioned, and a Saudi-led coalition backing the internationally recognised government based in the southern Yemeni city of Aden.

The ageing vessel, with its corroding hull, is carrying four times as much oil as was spilled

in the 1989 Exxon Valdez disaster off Alaska.

Disputes expected

For years, a skeleton crew of workers remaining on the ship, numbering no more than seven or eight at any given time, have strained to prevent the kind of leak or on-board explosion that would send a thin slick of oil

across the Red Sea.

In March, the UN purchased a replacement vessel, the Nautica, with an eye towards getting the oil off the Safer. Two months later, experts from the private company SMIT Salvage arrived to ensure the Safer could withstand the transfer operation.

Last week, the UN engaged in a symbolic handover of the Nautica to ‘the people of Yemen’, though the shipping firm Euronav will continue to administer it on the UN’s behalf for at least six months. Even if the transfer succeeds, the Safer ‘will pose a residual environmental threat, holding viscous oil residue and remaining at risk of breaking apart’, the UN has warned.

Disputes are also expected over ownership of the oil and the Nautica, which has been renamed the Yemen, pitting the Huthis against the Aden-based government.

But some see progress on the Safer crisis as a positive sign.

“I hope it will be the beginning of the peace process,” Fathi Fahem, the Yemeni business leader who first put forward the idea of a replacement vessel for the Safer two years ago, told AFP last week.

AFP

Thailand postpones vote to choose PM

Bangkok, Thailand - Thailand’s parliament on Tuesday postponed a vote to choose a new prime minister, prolonging the kingdom’s political deadlock more than two months after an election won by opposition parties.

Reformist candidate Pita Limjaroenrat, whose party won the election, failed to get enough votes in a first parliamentary sitting to select a prime minister on July 13 - blocked by military and pro-royalist senators.

He was refused a second ballot on July 19, but this decision is now being challenged at the Constitutional Court.

House speaker Wan Muhamad Noor Matha said the new vote for premier, scheduled for Thursday, had to wait for the court’s decision.

“We have to cancel because the Ombudsman is about to send a case to the Constitutional Court,” Wan told reporters.

“If we go ahead with the sitting on July 27, before the court has ruled, it could cause problems.” Pita’s Move Forward Party (MFP) rode a wave of young and urban support to win a shock victory in May’s election.

AFP



Israeli security forces block ambulances of the Palestinian Red Cross from advancing near the West Bank city of Nablus on Tuesday (AFP)

Three Palestinian fighters killed by Israeli troops in West Bank

Nablus, Palestinian Territories - Israeli troops killed three Palestinians in the occupied West Bank on Tuesday, the Palestinian health ministry said, the latest deaths in a surge of violence in the territory since early last year.

“Three Palestinians have been killed by Israeli bullets in Nablus,” the ministry said. Palestinian fighter group Hamas, which controls the Gaza Strip, said the three were members of its armed wing.

The Israeli army said three ‘armed assailants’ had opened fire on its soldiers from a vehicle in a Nablus neighbourhood and the troops fired back ‘to neutralise’ them.

The soldiers recovered three M-16 rifles, a gun, cartridges and other military equipment, the army said in a statement.

The Palestinian health ministry identified the dead as Nour al-Deen al-Ardah, 32, Montaser Salameh, 33, and Saad al-Kharaz, 43.

Hamas said the three were members of its Ezzedine al-Qas-sam Brigades armed wing.

“We mourn our heroic Qas-sam martyrs who died this morning in an armed clash with the occupation forces in Nablus,” Hamas said in a statement.

The Palestinian president’s spokesman, Nabil Abu Rudeineh, said the killing of the three men amounted to a ‘war crime’.

“Israeli crimes will not bring our people to their knees, and will not bring security and stability to anyone,” he said in a statement.

Israel has occupied the West Bank since the Six-Day War of 1967.

Since early last year, the territory has seen a string of attacks by Palestinians on Israeli targets, as well as violence by Israeli settlers against Palestinian communities.

Violence linked to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict this year has killed at least 201 Palestinians, 27 Israelis, one Ukrainian and one Italian, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources on both sides.

They include, on the Palestinian side, combatants as well civilians and, on the Israeli side, three members of the Arab minority.

Excluding Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem, the West Bank is home to nearly three million Palestinians, as well as around 490,000 Israelis who live in settlements considered illegal under international law.

AFP

India: Zero cross-border infiltration in last 6 months

New Delhi, India - There has not been a single incident of cross-border infiltration through the international border (IB) and Line of Control (LoC) during the last six months, the Central government informed the Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai shared the input in a written reply to the query of a member, pointing to a ‘perceptible decline in cross-border infiltration’ in recent years. Sharing the data, the minister said ‘zero’ cross-border infiltration was noted till June 30, 2023.

Giving the reason behind the achievement, the minister said the ‘Government of India has adopted a well-coordinated and multi-pronged strategy to tackle cross-border infiltration’.

He further said that the strategy included tactical deployment of forces at the in-

ternational border and Line of Control (LoC), use of technology like surveillance cameras, night vision cameras, heat sensing gadgets, multi-tiered deployment along the IB and LoC, border fencing, deployment of intelligence personnel to collect advance and target-oriented inputs on infiltration, ambushes and foot-patrolling by army and Border Security Force (BSF), and establishment of border police posts for generating local intelligence and taking pro-active action against infiltrators.

“The approach adopted by the Government of India to tackle cross-border infiltration has ensured a perceptible decline in infiltration,” said the MoS.

As per the data, a total of 14 incidents of cross-border infiltration were noted in 2022, 34 in 2021, 51 in 2020, and 141 in 2019.

ANI

STOP VIOLENCE



Students hold placards as they take part in a demonstration in Chennai, on Tuesday, against ongoing ethnic violence in India’s north-eastern state of Manipur (AFP)

Ending treacherous bid for better life in Europe

Khairatta, Pakistan - After spending weeks in Libya trying to reach Europe illegally, Muhammad Naeem Butt turned back - abandoning a journey that has already cost hundreds of Pakistani lives this summer.

Shovelling sand onto a truck surrounded by Pakistan’s Kashmir valley, he says he ended his treacherous bid for a better life when an overloaded fishing trawler sank off the coast of Greece last month.

Up to 350 Pakistanis were believed to be among the 600 who drowned, including 24 from Butt’s hometown of Khairatta in the lush Kashmir valley.

“Looking back, I realise that the risk I took was not worth it,” Butt told AFP. Butt is one of several men from Khairatta who told AFP the disaster prompted them to give up on the journey after reaching Libya.

“Life is defined by the quality time you spend with your chil-



Pakistani worker Muhammad Naeem Butt is kissed by his mother Razia Latif at their home in Khairatta, Pakistan (AFP)

dren and spouse, not the amount of money you possess,” he said.

Tens of thousands of young men have handed over family fortunes to agents who smuggle them to Europe, from where remittances - even more valuable since Pakistan’s economy

slumped into crisis last year - can be wired home.

Butt sought help from friends and family, and his wife sold her precious wedding jewellery to scrape up the 2.2mn rupees (around US\$7,500) he needed to pay the human traffickers or-

ganising the trips. The first legs of his journey were uneventful - commercial flights to Dubai and Egypt, then overland to Libya, where his ordeal really started.

He spent two months in a makeshift shanty camp with 600 other migrants, waiting for the day they would be put on a cargo ship to make the journey across the Mediterranean.

The anguish of families

Instead, they were crowded onto a rickety fishing boat and spent eight days floundering in international waters, where they were first fired on, then rammed, by a Libyan naval vessel, Butt said.

They only stayed afloat because the navy ship abandoned them when a storm struck, he added - but it returned days later to tow them back to port, where they were thrown in jail.

“They gave us the minimal amount of food to keep us alive...

a plate of macaroni or boiled rice would be shared among five people,” Butt said.

“They were brutal people.”

While he was in jail, news reached his hometown of the migrant boat sinking off Greece, causing heartbreak and distress.

“I can’t explain the pain and anguish I went through for a week,” Butt’s wife Mehwish Matloob told AFP. “I felt as though my entire world had crumbled before me,” the 31-year-old said, clutching a shawl.

Butt finally got out of jail and was able to contact his family to tell them he was alive.

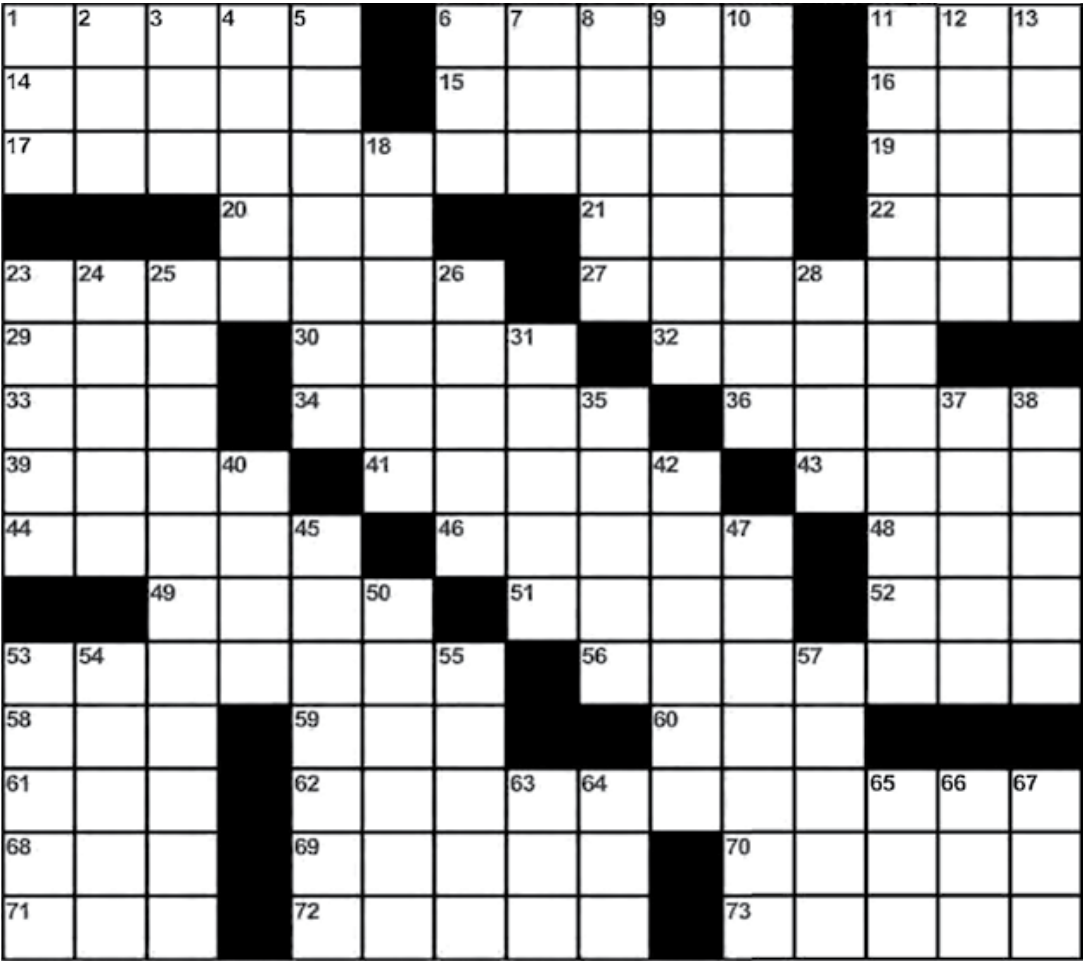
His mother, 76-year-old Razia Latif, says she now regrets the danger he endured.

“We thought that others were making it to Europe, so why not send him,” she said.

“We would have preferred begging had we known it was that difficult.”

AFP

DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- 1) Tub activities

6) Flat-necked snake

11) It may be skipped in alphabetization

14) "I, Robot" author Asimov

15) Head piece?

16) Bottom seam

17) "Pronto!"

19) Monte Rosa, e.g.

20) United Kingdom brew

21) Psychology 101 topic

22) Trike rider

23) International agreement

27) Mass-to-volume ratio

29) Outburst from Homer Simpson

30) Cows' chew

32) Some bread loaves

33)_ few rounds (box)

34) Susan Lucci character

36) Lauer and LeBlanc

39) Carpenters and har-vesters

41) Cause of some food poi-soning

43) Ill-mannered one

44) Send for consultation

46) Fabric with patterns

48) Not to be trusted

49) Curtain that no longer exists

51) Hand part

52) Feel feverish

53) Surgically ties

56) Class within a class

58) Flightless bird

59) Android offering

60) Chairman in The Beat-les' "Revolution"

61) Damage superficially

62) Now-or-never time

68) Store in casks, as wine

69) Kind of silence

70) Crystal-bearing rock

71) They are not positive

72) Searched for bugs

73) Old-fashioned music hall.

DOWN

1) Power-drill accessory

2) Type of pile at a camp-ground

3) Mai_ (tropical beverage)

4) Hurriers make it

5) High school subject

6) "Elementary" network

7) Dinner table crumb

8) Emulated a sheep

9) Horseshoe score

10) Contrary word?

11) "What I meant was ..."

12) Old serf

13) Ready for a refill

18) Kind of study or trail

23)_ Allan Poe

24) "There's_, here but us ..."

25) "Makes sense"

26) Formal proclamation

28) "Clapping" animal

31) Ice-cream utensil

35) Name on a wanted poster

37) Early spring bloom

38) What the rich live in?

40) Evening, in Milan

42) Light

45) Spins, as the earth

4 7) Commerce stoppage

50) Certain male relative

53) Lake_ (Lake Geneva)

54) Adult insect

55) Church steeple

57) Teased (with "with")

63) Tentative taste

64) Animal doc

65) Bambi's mother, for one
- 66) Shakespeare's "Much_ About Nothing"

67) Tokyo cabbage?

NOTE PAD

SCARCOMBSFEEDLOBEVARYAXLEAREASARANVIVA BEDBOTTLECOOLER SALES PRESS THEORYONES BIRRFRIARKE SKIBARRELBALLET PENMOODYASEA INSETRANGORWELL BOYPISTOLHEATER EIRECANOEKAYO ASIAAMOUR EXEC MEATNERDS RISK
- YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE
- ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19
In order to get a lot done today like you want to, you're going to have to learn how to say no. Stop worrying so much about staying social. Accepting every invitation that comes your way might be a great way to stay busy, but it's also an effective way of driving yourself nuts! Is there some reason you're avoiding alone time? Think about it. Clearing up your schedule doesn't have to be difficult if you make sure it's not so crowded in the first place!

LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22
A compromise you made a few days ago is starting to bug you. You may be feeling like you were manipulated. Coming to the realization that you were controlled by someone else isn't a good feeling, but before you confront them about it, ask someone for advice. Tell them the story and see what they say. Make sure you're as objective as you can be, and don't lead them to any conclusions. You're extra sensitive lately, and you might be jumping to the wrong conclusion.

SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21
Your conversations can reveal major things today, but only if you go about them in the right way. Be more questioning when you're talking to the people who have the answers. Ask probing questions and do not shy away from having a heated debate. Sometimes people withhold information simply because they don't know that anyone wants it. Your curiosity will help you uncover new facts, and you'll even get someone to spill a juicy secret they've been holding on to for quite a while!

TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20
The inexplicably tense or awkward communication you recently had with a coworker will suddenly make sense today when you learn something new about them. This new information will lift a weight off your shoulders and help you stop worrying about what they think of you. You're getting a fuller picture of this person and your role in their life. Look for things to loosen up between you two and even for some silliness to emerge! There's a great sense of humor under their seriousness.

VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22
One of your friends needs your help, but they're too shy to ask you for it. If you notice one of your friends acting oddly or stuck in a blue funk, reach out to them. Let them know that they can rely on you for support. And if they don't immediately take you up on your offer to talk, don't take it personally. Maybe you're just not the right person for the job, maybe they're not ready to talk about it with anyone. What matters most is that you offered to help them.

CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19
Today, you need to deal with a relationship issue as early as you can, but, luckily, it will end up being pretty much a non-issue as soon as you two start talking. You are both good at communicating what you need and even better at listening to what the other person has to say. Together, you can come up with the solution in no time and be able to start having fun much sooner than you thought! The best plan is a low-key one. A nice early dinner and lots of talk is the perfect idea.

GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21
One of your friends has suddenly gone missing, socially speaking. Your calls aren't getting answered, and your texts aren't getting replies. What gives? They might have some new things going on in their life. Maybe they're simply too busy to get back to you. Don't take it personally. And if they're hanging out with a new friend, don't feel threatened by it. You've got to curb any possessive impulses and know that there is plenty of room in their life for the both of you.

LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22
You're wise to avoid the people who are bragging today -- not only do they have nothing to brag about, but people who exaggerate their worth do so because they're really pretty uninteresting. So skip the big talkers. Don't get upset if they aren't noticing you. Why would you want attention from someone who is so shallow and powerless? Stick with the people you already know and love. Now is the time to cherish the people you have in your life.

AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18
Today, you might suddenly sense a disturbance in the room. Someone has just said something controversial, and all eyes are on them. Instead of joining in on the recriminations, just do your own thing. Ignore the growing drama around you and quietly move along according to your own agenda. Adding your voice to the mix will only add fuel to the fire. Folks have been waiting for an excuse to get angry, but you shouldn't be a part of it. Try not to let their antics distract you.

CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22
This fantastic new beginning you've got going on in your life is wonderful and all, but could it be distracting you from the tried-and-true pals who were such a big part of your past? If you've had to break plans with them recently, it could have left them feeling a bit taken for granted. Check in with your dearest friends today. Send a group email. Find the next date when everyone can get together to catch up and hang out. Show them that they still matter to you!

SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21
Just because your dreams have been giving you interesting messages lately doesn't mean that you have to try to decode all of them. Sometimes, dreams are just dreams and nothing more. If you worry that you have to figure things out in your life, then look to your waking hours instead of your sleeping ones. There are far clearer clues there for you to unravel. Attributing greater meaning to what your brain does at night could be a way of putting off accepting the reality of your situation.

PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20
After a little bit of a rocky period, the balance of power between you and a romantic or professional partner is healthy again. Each of you is performing your half of the duties well, so this is a time of great stability for you two. As a strong team, you can begin to explore new territory together. It is time to have that discussion you've been putting off. Find out if what they want for the future is the same as what you want, then take it from there.
-
- TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE
01. When Sir Alex Ferguson re-tired in May 2013 after 26 years as manager for Man-chester United Football Club who succeeded him ?
A. Wayne Rooney
B. José Mourinho
C. David Moyes
D. David Beckham

02. What is the title of ex-Aus-tralian Prime Minister John Howard's autobiography, pub-lished in October 2010?
A. A Galah in Charge of the Menagerie
B. Lazarus Rising
C. Is That It?
D. Too Little, Too Late

03. The long-established cere-mony in Oxfordshire, England, of "scouring the Horse", de-scribed by academic and archivist Francis Wise in 1736, relates to what?
A. Re-enacting the ride of Lady Godiva
B. Mass medication of young foals after spring growth
C. The Uffington White Horse
D. County races

Answers: 1. C 2. B 3. C
- KIDS COLOURING
- BOGGLER

O	U	R	Y
R	E	I	N
A	A	L	M
S	L	R	N

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

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

WORD BUILDER

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

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

SUDOKU EASY ANSWER

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

RAIN REIGNS BUT INDIA UNSTOPPABLE

Final day washout sees India wrap up series win over West Indies

Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago - India clinched a fifth consecutive series triumph in the West Indies on Monday when the second and final Test of their series ended as a draw with no play possible because of rain on the final day.

West Indies closed day four at 76 for two having been set a daunting victory target of 365 to square the series at Queen's Park Oval in Trinidad.

However early showers put paid to any prospect of play in the morning and when they returned with greater intensity in the afternoon, the umpires were left with no option but to abandon the day's play and the end of the Test match and the series.

Mohammed Siraj, whose Test-best figures of five for 60 in the West Indies first innings opened the door to victory for India on the fourth morning, was named "Player of the Match".

"There was no help for fast bowlers on this wicket and when you get success like this in these conditions it gives you confidence," said Siraj via an interpreter on receiving the award.

"I had simple plans and just executed them. The captain just asked me to keep on doing what I have been doing before."

For his skipper, Rohit Sharma, the disappointment of not being able to push for victory on the last day to earn a 2-0 sweep was tempered by the satisfaction of seeing this team succeed without key performers in the bowling department.

"It was really pleasing to see how Siraj has led the attack in the



Indian captain Rohit Sharma with the trophy after winning the Test series against the West Indies on Monday (AFP)

absence of (Jasprit) Bumrah and (Mohammed) Shami," he observed.

"We have been playing really good Test cricket and I hope we can continue to do that. It's great to see how everyone has been ready to play their role, like yesterday when we needed quick

runs," he said.

'A lot of belief'

For Kraigg Brathwaite, the captain of a West Indies team that last defeated India in a Test match in May 2002, it was yet another case of fishing for positives in a sea of setbacks.

"The key from here is obviously to be consistent," said the opening batsman in what has become a familiar refrain after every failed campaign.

"We will continue to work on our game, but it is encouraging to see the emergence of Alick (Athanaze) and Kirk (McKenzie)

in the middle-order. I think these two guys have the promise and they are the future. I have a lot of belief in these two."

India won the first Test in Dominica by an innings and 141 runs - a record margin of success for them in the Caribbean - in three days.



Harmanpreet Kaur

ICC bans India women's cricket captain Kaur for two matches

New Delhi, India - India's women's cricket captain Harmanpreet Kaur was banned for two matches by the game's apex body Tuesday for her verbal swipe at umpires and on-field behaviour against Bangladesh.

Kaur was also fined 75 percent of her match fee by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

She admitted "showing dissent at an umpire's decision" and "public criticism in relation to an incident occurring in an international match", the ICC said in a statement, adding that she accepted her punishment.

The team India all-rounder hit the stumps after being given out on 14 in the one-day international on Saturday -- which ended in a rare tie -- and later called the umpiring "pathetic".

She was heard telling her

Bangladeshi counterpart Nigar Sultana to invite the umpires on stage after the post-match presentation, forcing the Bangladesh players to opt out of a joint photo session.

Kaur is one of the biggest stars in the women's game in India, which launched a women's equivalent of the money-spinning Indian Premier League earlier this year.

The 34-year-old is seen as an aggressive leader and dependable batter, and captained the Mumbai Indians to victory in the inaugural edition of the T20 tournament.

"I have been watching cricket for a long time, but have never seen anyone behave that way," former women's captain Diana Edulji wrote in her column in the Indian Express on Tuesday.

"She has set a bad example for her teammates," Edulji said.

Rain spoils day two after Pakistan take lead

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Abdullah Shafique and skipper Babar Azam steered Pakistan to a 12-run lead but rain halted their charge early on day two of the second Test against Sri Lanka on Tuesday.

The tourists were 178-2 after resuming under gloomy skies on 145-2 with Abdullah Shafique, on 87, and skipper Babar Azam, on 28, batting in a stand of 57.

Only 43 minutes of play were possible before the downpour began and forced officials to call lunch, tea and finally stumps with the ground fully covered.

More rain is predicted on day three and Pakistan, who lead the two-match series 1-0, will depend on an aggressive approach to clinch the series.



Pakistan's Abdullah Shafique (L) and Babar Azam run between the wickets during the second day of their second Test against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Tuesday (AFP)

Shafique and Azam took on the Sri Lankan bowlers with a string of boundaries after a couple of maiden overs to push for a big lead in response to Sri Lanka's total of 166.

Shafique has smashed eight fours and two sixes in his 131-ball stay so far. Azam, who began the day on eight, took on the bowlers with a six and two fours in the 10 overs since play resumed.

Pakistan bowlers combined to dismiss Sri Lanka in the second session on the opening day after the hosts elected to bat first.

Shafique extended Pakistan's domination with a second-wicket stand of 108 with Shan Masood, who made 51, to put Sri Lanka on the back foot with their attacking play.



Cameron Green (left)

Green admits that 'Australia got out of jail' in fourth Test

Manchester, United Kingdom - Australia all-rounder Cameron Green admitted the tourists had "got out of jail" in an Ashes-clinching draw at Old Trafford.

England dominated the fourth Test in Manchester and led by 275 runs on first innings. But with rain meaning only 30 overs were possible across the final two days on Saturday and Sunday, Australia held on for a draw.

The result meant Australia, as the holders, retained the Ashes - they are 2-1 up with just this week's fifth Test at The Oval left to play.

"I think we definitely got away with one there," Green, one of Australia's not out

batsmen, told the cricket.com.au website.

"There's no point denying it. Whilst we were behind the game, and you never know what would have happened, cricket is a funny game, but England dominated this one. We definitely got out of jail."

The towering 24-year-old added: "We didn't play our best game. The rain gods were in our favour the last couple of days. You just take it and move on to the next game."

Green's place at The Oval is under threat, with fellow all-rounder Mitchell Marsh in fine form and Australia contemplating a recall for spinner Todd Murphy.

Crawley adamant England still 'massively up' for Ashes finale

Manchester, United Kingdom - England batsman Zak Crawley has insisted the hosts will have no trouble motivating themselves for this week's fifth Test against Australia even though they can no longer regain the Ashes.

What had looked like being a thrilling series-decider at The Oval has had some of the edge removed after England's quest to draw level in the fourth Test at Old Trafford was thwarted by rain, with only 30 overs possible across the final two days.

England dominated proceed-



Zak Crawley

ings in Manchester, with Crawley's superb 189 against world Test champions Australia the standout individual performance.

But a rain-marred draw left England 2-1 down in the series with just this week's Test to come and Australia - as the holders - assured of retaining the Ashes.

Nevertheless, a win for England at The Oval would deny Australia their first away Ashes series victory since 2001.

"We're massively up for it," said Crawley, the series' leading run-scorer with 385.

He added: "As Ben Stokes

says, we're building as a team, this isn't the end just because it's the end of the Ashes. Hopefully, it's very much the start."

"I think 2-2 would be fair."

Prior to this series, a run of low scores saw Crawley's Test place called into question. But England captain Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum continued to back the 25-year-old opener.

"I feel I'm as good a player as I have ever been, I feel good about my game," said Crawley. "Fast bowling suits my game and the Australian attack is a quick attack."

BOLDEN BEAUTIFUL!

Philippines stun co-hosts New Zealand for first World Cup win

Wellington, New Zealand - The Philippines claimed their first win at a World Cup on Tuesday as they stunned co-hosts New Zealand 1-0 thanks to a first-half Sarina Bolden header.

New Zealand created a string of second-half chances and had a goal disallowed but the Philippines held on for a famous win in front of 32,357 in Wellington.

It was the Philippines' first victory at either a men's or women's World Cup and blows Group A wide open.

New Zealand's final group match is against Switzerland on



Sarina Bolden (L) of the Philippines celebrates after scoring against New Zealand in their Women's World Cup Group A match on Tuesday (AFP)

In the history of Philippines team sport I don't know if there has been a bigger win. It would have to be one of the best achievements in the history of the country

ALLEN STAJCIC, PHILIPPINES COACH

Sunday, the same day the Philippines face Norway.

On the eve of the game in Wellington, Philippines coach Allen Stajcic had said they wanted to "crash the party" against New Zealand's Football Ferns, who were on a high after their opening 1-0 win over Norway.

His unfancied side, beaten 2-0 by Switzerland on their World Cup debut, were as good as their word.

They scored the only goal after 24 minutes to stun the home crowd.

After New Zealand conceded a free-kick, Bolden out-jumped the home defence to head the

ball at home goalkeeper Victoria Esson, who could only watch in horror as her attempted parry looped over her into the net.

This was a better display from the Philippines - ranked 46th in the world, 20 places below New Zealand - compared to their opening defeat to Switzerland.

In contrast, New Zealand

showed little of the self-confidence which carried them past Norway for their opening World Cup win to end a 15-game winless streak.

It could have been 2-0 at the break had Philippines forward Katrina Guillou got her shot on target just before the half-time whistle.

New Zealand's Czech head coach Jitka Klimkova threw on Celtic midfielder Olivia Chance and veteran Annalie Longo as the Football Ferns created a string of second-half chances.

Hannah Wilkinson went agonisingly close to equalising as her header flew just over the bar.

Her forward partner Jacqui

Hand clattered her shot against the post, then had a headed goal disallowed with 20 minutes left after replays showed the ball went out of play in the build-up.

With time running out, New Zealand pushed hard for an equaliser, but failed to find their way past the resolute Philippine defence.



Phair

US-born South Korean becomes youngest Women's World Cup player

Sydney, Australia - Casey Phair on Tuesday became the youngest player to feature at a Women's World Cup after coming on as a substitute in South Korea's 2-0 defeat to Colombia aged 16 years and 26 days.

The striker was born in the United States and was called up by the country at youth level, but has now made her debut for South Korea. She came on in the 78th minute in Sydney, besting the previous record set by Nigeria's Ifeanyi Chiejine, who was 16 years and 34 days when she played at the 1999 World Cup.

Phair, born to an American father and Korean mother, is the first player of mixed descent to make the senior South Korean women's football squad.

South Korea's coach Colin Bell called Phair the future after his side started their World Cup with a toothless defeat.



Alex Morgan

US team liberated after winning equal pay battle: Alex Morgan

Auckland, New Zealand - Alex Morgan said Tuesday her United States team felt liberated after winning their fight for equal pay and can now focus on pursuing an unprecedented third straight Women's World Cup crown.

One of the best-known players in women's football, the 34-year-old hopes that other national teams will also eventually win their own battles for pay parity.

"Any time you take your focus off playing and what your job is, that is distractions that are unnecessary," the forward told reporters in Auckland.

"So not having distractions like having to fight for equal pay and working conditions moving forward, at all, ever again, it feels really good.

"I hope that will soon be the case for all of the players around the world at international level."

The US team, led by their highest-profile names like Morgan, Megan Rapinoe and Carli Lloyd, filed a complaint several years ago against the US Soccer Federation alleging wage discrimination. Their fight eventually led to a landmark collective-bargaining deal that was announced in May 2022 and meant the US men's

and women's teams would evenly share World Cup prize money.

Prize money from FIFA is not the same for the Women's World Cup as for the men's.

The total prize pot for this year's tournament in Australia and New Zealand is \$152 million, which is triple the figure from four years ago.

The figure for the men's tournament in Qatar last year was \$440 million, with the United States men's team pocketing \$13 million for reaching the last 16.

Numerous other women's national teams are fighting for the same conditions, with the Canadians threatening to go on strike earlier this year in a row over pay, funding and contractual issues.

The US team's triumphant campaign at the World Cup in France in 2019 was played out with that off-field battle looming over them.

Chants of "Equal Pay" rang out from the stands after they beat the Netherlands 2-0 in the final.

"Where we were in 2019 to where we are now is almost the same but also couldn't be more different," said Morgan.

AFP

Caicedo 'from another planet' as Colombia beat blunt South Korea to open campaign

Sydney, Australia - Linda Caicedo was hailed as "from another planet" after the teenager scored in Colombia's 2-0 win over South Korea to open their Women's World Cup campaign on Tuesday.

The 18-year-old Real Madrid striker, who overcame cancer three years ago, was the beneficiary of a glaring goalkeeping error against a blunt South Korea.

In bright sunshine in Sydney, Catalina Usme scored a penalty for the South Americans on the half-hour before Caicedo got the second nine minutes later.

South Korea coach Colin Bell brought on United States-born attacker Casey Phair as they chased the game in the second half. At 16 years and 26 days, she made history as the youngest Women's World Cup player ever.

But it was all about Caicedo, and one of the best young attackers in women's football has now scored at the Under-17 World Cup, the Under-20 World Cup and the biggest stage of all.

Assistant Angelo Marsiglia,



Colombia's Linda Caicedo celebrates after scoring against South Korea on Tuesday (AFP)

standing in for Colombia coach Nelson Abadia - who was suspended for the game - called Caicedo "extraordinary" and said she "brings a lot of joy to everyone". "She has been growing extraordinarily and has a very mature level," he said of the

teenager.

"She did what she had to do and made the difference.

"She wants the ball, never hides, she's from another planet, entirely unique."

Colombia move onto three points in Group H with Germany,

who thrashed Morocco 6-0 on Monday. Germany and Colombia meet next.

'Phair the future'

The Koreans actually made the better start in front of just over 24,000 spectators.

A goalbound attempt from Tottenham Hotspur's Cho So-hyun from outside the box deflected wide and then Choe Yu-ri should have scored but fired tamely at the goalkeeper.

Colombia have a reputation for being physical, and with strong backing from their noisy and colourful fans, so it proved.

Defender Manuela Vanegas was booked after only 10 minutes as they struggled to get a foothold. Colombia, known as "the Powerpuff Girls" and making their third appearance at the World Cup, grew into the game and took the lead after their first proper attack.

Defender Shim Seo-yeon blocked a goalbound shot in the box with her hand and Usme stepped up to stroke the resulting penalty into the net past a wrong-footed Yoon Young-geul.

The goal spurred the South Americans on and they led 2-0 six minutes before halftime.

AFP

High-flying Japan eager to shut down Costa Rica

Dunedin, New Zealand - Japan are eager to take their performance up a notch against Costa Rica on Wednesday and build on their flying start to the Women's World Cup.

They hit the ground running with an impressive 5-0 thrashing of Zambia in Hamilton and want another barn-storming display in Dunedin against the Costa Ricans, who lost their opening game 3-0 to Spain.

Forward Mina Tanaka said the Japanese team was more relaxed



Japan and Mina Tanaka (C) had plenty to celebrate in their first match

after the win but called for them to raise their game and secure another three points to stay on course for the knock-out stages from Group C.

"Compared to the first match, we're less nervous," Tanaka told reporters Tuesday. "I think we could play better."

The Japanese want more rock-solid defending, having stopped Zambia from getting a single shot on target, but Tanaka said it wasn't as easy as it looked.

"The first match was tough.

We still got five goals. They got zero shots. We did it as a team and that is wonderful," she said.

The 29-year-old was relieved to get her first goal of the tournament having had two earlier efforts ruled offside, and keen to cause the Costa Ricans a few more problems.

Japan head coach Futoshi Ikedo hinted he may rotate the side ahead of their final group match against Spain next Monday in Wellington.

AFP

Adding insult to injury

Norway in World Cup peril amid Hegerberg injury and player unrest

Hamilton, New Zealand - Norway coach Hege Riise was left sweating on news of an injury which forced star striker Ada Hegerberg out of Tuesday's goalless Women's World Cup draw with Switzerland.

Riise's problems were exacerbated due to tensions in the squad with Caroline Graham Hansen unhappy at being left out of the line-up.

Winger Graham Hansen, a Champions League winner last month with Barcelona, was dropped by Riise for the game in Hamilton following Norway's 1-0 defeat to co-hosts New Zealand in the opening match of the World Cup.

Meanwhile, former Ballon d'Or winner Hegerberg had lined up on the pitch for the national anthems before heading back towards the dressing room injured, with Sophie Roman Haug coming in as a last-minute replacement.

The Norwegian Football Association said Hegerberg had felt a pain in her groin in the final sprint of the warm-up, with Riise admitting she only realised a change would need to be made at the last moment.

"We were quick to have (the line-up) changed so Sophie could



Ada Hegerberg

There is a lot of frustration that we didn't win. Caroline is entitled to be frustrated and to express an opinion, but since I arrived in this position I have always said the team is the most important thing

HEGE RIISE

come in and not use a substitute," said Riise, who did not provide any further update on the

extent of Hegerberg's injury. Graham Hansen's frustration at not starting might be a more

pressing concern for Riise with Norway now needing to win their last Group A game against the Philippines just to stand a chance of reaching the last 16.

According to Norwegian media, Graham Hansen complained she had not been shown respect after being left out of the starting XI.

"These are things we will handle internally," Riise said when asked about the player's reac-

tion. "There is a lot of frustration that we didn't win. Caroline is entitled to be frustrated and to express an opinion, but since I arrived in this position I have always said the team is the most important thing.

"All players want to start matches. I reached the decision in the best interest of my team and I defend my decision today," added the 54-year-old coach.

AFP



Al Nassr's Cristiano Ronaldo fights for the ball with Paris Saint-Germain's Gianluigi Donnarumma during their friendly match on Tuesday

PSG draw with Ronaldo's Al Nassr in Japan friendly

Osaka, Japan - Paris Saint-Germain's Japan tour started with a whimper on Tuesday as they played out a 0-0 draw with Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr in Osaka.

Japanese fans flocked to stadiums to see Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappe and Neymar strut their stuff in a series of friendlies for PSG last year, but none of that trio was on show this time around.

Messi has departed for Major League Soccer side Inter Miami and Neymar has been out with a knee injury since February and only just returned to full training.

Mbappe was sensationally left out of the squad on the eve of PSG's departure for Asia, with his

future at the club in doubt.

Carlos Soler tried an ambitious free-kick from distance in just the second minute in Osaka, but Al Nassr goalkeeper Nawaf Alaqidi was equal to the attempt.

Noha Lemina broke in behind for PSG 20 minutes later but saw his effort skew wide of the near post. The biggest reactions from the relatively modest crowd of 25,432 in the first half were reserved for a couple of Ronaldo efforts.

The first saw him denied from six yards by Gianluigi Donnarumma before an acrobatic overhead kick went wide of the target - although it wouldn't have counted because he was offside.

AFP

Ex-Crystal Palace forward Zaha signs for Galatasaray

Istanbul, Turkey - Wilfried Zaha has signed for three years with Galatasaray in a deal worth 15.4 million euros (\$17m) after his contract with Crystal Palace expired, the Turkish champions announced Monday.

The 30-year-old forward will receive a signing bonus of 2.33 million euros and an annual salary of 4.35 million euros, Galatasaray said.

Apart from brief stints with Manchester United and Cardiff City between 2013 and 2014, Zaha remained faithful to Crystal Palace since his professional debut in 2010, scoring 90 goals in 458 appearances.

The Ivorian, also a target of Galatasaray's city rival's Fenerbahce, will team up with Argentinian forward Mauro Icardi on loan at the Istanbul club from Paris Saint-Germain. He will also play alongside Congolese international striker Cedric Bakambu, who signed on Sunday.

Marseille sign Sarr

Marseille announced the signing of 25-year-old Senegalese international Ismaila Sarr late Monday.



Wilfried Zaha

day, further strengthening their front line following the arrival of Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang.

The winger is reported to have joined the French club on a five-year contract following a 13 million euro (\$14.4 million) deal, although there was no official confirmation from Marseille.

Sarr is the second big-name signing to arrive at the Stade Velodrome in recent days after Aubameyang joined on a free transfer from Chelsea last week.

The arrival of two forwards casts further doubt on the future of Alexis Sanchez. Out of contract since the end of June, the Chilean attacker has not yet committed to extending his stay on the south coast.

The move signals a return to French football for Sarr who began his career in 2016 at Metz, before joining Rennes in 2017.

The winger scored 18 goals and made 16 assists in 77 appearances for the Breton club.

Bayern midfielder Sabitzer signs for rivals Dortmund

Hamburg, Germany - Borussia Dortmund have signed midfielder Marcel Sabitzer from Bundesliga rivals Bayern Munich on a four-year deal.

The 29-year-old Austrian vice-captain has undergone a medical and signed a contract until June 2027, his new club announced.

"I can hardly wait to finally join the team and wear the BVB jersey," said Sabitzer, whose deal is reported to be worth 19 million



Marcel Sabitzer (left)



The president of Paris 2024 Organising Committee Tony Estanguet

Paris Olympics organisers face host of challenges with a year to go

Paris, France - The Paris Olympics begin with a spectacular ceremony on July 26, 2024 but with a year to go, organisers face a series of challenges.

If Russians do compete in Paris, it will undoubtedly be as a 'neutral' team without official team colours.

OPENING CEREMONY TO SET THE TONE

The unprecedented opening ceremony on the River Seine will set the tone for the Games. Instead of the traditional setting in a stadium, the teams will parade down the river on 115 boats, with the spectacular backdrop of the Eiffel Tower and the Paris landmarks and up to half a million spectators lining the river. "It will be a little bit like the signature of Paris 2024," the head of the Games' local organising committee, Tony Estanguet, said.

PROBE INTO ORGANISERS

The local organising committee was rocked in July when its offices were raided by police as part of an investigation into contracts awarded for the Games. The homes of Etienne Thobois, the Chief Executive Officer of Paris 2024, and Edouard Donnelly, the executive director of operations, were also raided.

The investigation will not stop the Games taking place but it is an embarrassment.

The organising committee says it is one of the most audited and scrutinised bodies in France and that no wrongdoing has been proven.

SHADOW OF UKRAINE WAR

With no end to the war in Ukraine in sight, the issue of whether Ukrainian and Russian competitors can compete side-by-side at the Paris Olympics remains unresolved and highly sensitive.

Ukraine's sports minister has threatened to boycott if Russian competitors are allowed to take part, although many potential Ukrainian Olympians are now questioning that stance.

IOC chief Bach's instruction to sports federations that Russians and their Belarusian allies should be allowed to compete in qualifying events for the Olympics has angered many Ukrainian sportspeople.

Bach argues that denying Russian competitors the right to compete because of their government's actions is tantamount to denying them their human rights.

TRANSPORT UNDER PRESSURE

While competitors should be whisked along dedicated Olympic lanes from the Athletes' Village to venues, spectators could face more problems getting about in an already congested city.

The race is on to complete the extension of Metro Line 14 so that it runs to the Athletes' Village in Saint-Denis, north of Paris, where the athletics venue Stade de France is also situated. Despite concerns, Jean Castex, the former French prime minister in charge of Paris transport authority RATP, says that line will be ready by June 2024.

Ledecky shines as Popovici flops at swimming worlds

Fukuoka, Japan - Katie Ledecky won a record-extending 20th gold at swimming's world championships on Tuesday but Romanian sensation David Popovici fell flat, missing out on a medal after an "awful" performance.

Ledecky romped home in the women's 1,500m freestyle in Fukuoka to bolster her credentials as the most decorated woman swimmer in the history of the world championships.

It was also her 15th individual world gold, drawing her level with fellow American great Michael Phelps.

Ledecky said that "every race has a story to it" after she won the 15,000m freestyle world title for a fifth time.

"I'm just feeling really locked into my distance races right now," the 26-year-old said.

"I dove in and felt really, really good."

Ledecky's gold was one of two for the United States, with Ryan Mason dethroning Italian champion Thomas Ceccon in the men's 100m backstroke.

Britain won its first gold of the



USA's Katie Ledecky celebrates after winning the women's 1500m freestyle at the World Aquatics Championships in Fukuoka on Tuesday (AFP)

championships as Matthew Richards stunned Popovici in the men's 200m freestyle.

Australia's Kaylee McKeown beat American rival Regan Smith to win the women's 100m backstroke, while Lithuania's Ruta Meilutyte came out on top in the

women's 100m breaststroke.

Ledecky came home in a time of 15min, 26.27sec to win the 15,000 freestyle ahead of Italy's Simona Quadarella on 15:43.31 and China's Li Bingjie on 15:45.71.

It was the third-fastest swim of all-time and gave Ledecky the

16 top times ever in the event.

"I feel good - it hurt a lot but I'm really happy with the outcome," Ledecky said.

"I'm just having a lot of fun this week."

Popovici was expected to share top billing with Ledecky but

he suffered a shocking meltdown in the first final of the evening.

The 18-year-old, one of swimming's brightest stars and the red-hot favourite to defend his 200m freestyle title, comfortably led from the start and looked set to coast to victory as he reached the home straight.

But he faded badly as his rivals closed in, and ended up out of the medals completely as Britain's Matthew Richards took gold in 1min, 44.30sec.

Popovici said he "felt awful" but believed his shock defeat could benefit him as he eyes gold at next year's Paris Olympics.

"If you have the absolute perfect race and you have nothing else to improve, you know that you've basically reached the top, the limit," he said.

"You know that you can do nothing better from there on. I'm glad it happened now and I'm sure it has a meaning and I'm going to learn from it," he added.



Naoya Inoue of Japan lands a punch on Stephen Fulton of the US

'Monster' Inoue beats Fulton to claim two world titles

Tokyo, Japan - Japan's Naoya Inoue knocked out American Stephen Fulton in his super-bantamweight debut to claim the WBC and WBO world titles in Tokyo on Tuesday.

The unbeaten Inoue, nicknamed "Monster", floored Fulton in the eighth round with a volley of juddering punches.

He took his record to 25-0, with 22 knock-outs, dethroning 29-year-old Fulton - one of the two world champions in the super-bantamweight division along with Marlon Tapales of the Philippines.

"In the super-bantamweight division, I think I can grow even stronger," Inoue told a roaring

crowd at the Ariake Arena after the fight.

"But I only hold two belts now - my goal is to unify all the four super-bantamweight titles."

In December, Inoue became the first undisputed world bantamweight champion in half a century - a feat last accomplished by Panama's Enrique Pinder in 1972 - by beating England's Paul Butler to add the WBO title to his WBC, WBA and IBF belts. Then in January, Inoue relinquished all his titles to move up to the super-bantamweight division.

While Fulton proved tenacious and returned fire with some clean shots, the Japanese boxer lived up to his nickname.

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Makeover TAKEOVER

Afghan women protest against a total ban on beauty parlours, which comes into effect by the end of July, denying them their right to employment and an opportunity for socialising



Afghan women stage a protest for their rights at a beauty salon in the Shahr-e-Naw area of Kabul

Security officials shot into the air and used firehoses to spray water to disperse dozens of Afghan women protesting in Kabul last week against an order by Taliban authorities to shut down beauty parlours, the latest curb to squeeze them out of public life.

Since seizing power in August 2021, the Taliban government has barred girls and women from high schools and universities, banned them from parks, funfairs and gyms, and ordered them to cover up in public.

The order issued last month forces the closure of thousands of beauty parlours nationwide run by women - often the only source of income for households - and outlaws one of the few remaining opportunities for them to socialise away from home.

"Don't take my bread and water," read a sign carried by one of the protesters on Butcher Street, which boasts a concentration of the capital's salons.

Public protests are rare in Afghanistan - and frequently dispersed by force - but AFP saw around 50 women taking part in Wednesday's gathering, quickly attracting the attention of security personnel.

Protesters later shared videos and photos with journalists that showed authorities using a firehose to disperse them as shots could be heard in the background.

"Today we arranged this protest to talk and negotiate," said a salon worker, whose name has been withheld for security reasons. But, no one came to talk to us, to listen to us. They didn't pay any attention to us and after a while they dispersed us by aerial firing and using water cannons."



The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) condemned the protest breakup.

"Reports of the forceful suppression of a peaceful protest by women against the ban on beauty salons - the latest denial of women's rights in #Afghanistan - are deeply concerning," it said in a tweet. "Afghans have the right to express views free from violence. De facto authorities must uphold this."

In June, the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice gave salons a month to close down, saying the grace period would allow them to use up stock. It said it made the order because extravagant sums spent on makeovers caused hardship for poor families, and that some treatments at the salons were un-Islamic.

Too much make-up prevented women from proper ablutions for prayer, the ministry said, while eyelash extensions and hair

weaving were also forbidden. The order said it was based on verbal instruction from the supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada.

Safe socialising

Beauty parlours mushroomed across Kabul and other Afghan cities in the 20 years that United States-led forces occupied the country. They were seen as a safe place to gather and socialise away from men and provided vital business opportunities for women.

A report to the UN's Human Rights Council last month by Richard Bennett, the special rapporteur for Afghanistan, said the plight of women and girls in the country was 'among the worst in the world'.

"Grave, systematic and institutionalised discrimination against women and girls is at the heart of Taliban ideology and rule, which also gives rise to concerns that they may be responsible for gender apartheid," Bennett said.

Akhundzada, who rarely appears in public and rules by decree from the Taliban's birthplace in Kandahar, said last month, Afghan women were being saved from 'traditional oppressions' by the adoption of Islamic governance and their status as 'free and dignified human beings' restored.

In a statement marking the Eid al-Adha holiday, he said that steps had been taken to provide women with a 'comfortable and prosperous life according to Islamic Sharia'.

Women have also mostly been barred from working for the UN or NGOs, and thousands have been sacked from government jobs or are being paid to stay at home.

AFP

“Today we arranged this protest to talk and negotiate. But, no one came to talk to us. They didn't pay any attention to us and after a while they dispersed us by aerial firing and using water cannons.”

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SUMMERWEAR



SHEER STYLE

The Fendi collection debuted back in February but its influence was fully felt last week in New York City. It's no longer taboo to have undergarments show through your frock—in fact, it's preferred. Almost every major collection on the NYFW runways incorporated completely see-through garments. While many of the sheer pieces would be suitable for street style statements or a night in a dimly lit room, Jason Wu gave us multiple examples of sheer design in formal wear. The designer sent a strong variety of sheer gowns down the runway in floral, sparkly, lace and jewel tones, to name a few.



LAVENDER HAZE

If you're a Swiftie, you'll love this trend. Runways and Instagram feeds are turning lavender as the color emerges as the top color of the summer. Designers like Victoria Beckham and Laquan Smith presented beautiful examples of how the shade can be incorporated into summer dressing with two-piece sets while Christian Cowan took a colorful approach to suiting. Lavender is a calming color and can therefore be worn head-to-toe without coming across as overbearing. If you're planning on attending a summer wedding, lavender is an excellent color option for a dress or suit.



ROSETTES

I hope you're not tired of the rosette trend yet because it's not going anywhere. Rosettes are perhaps the most delicate trend to dominate the summer fashion sphere. Whether you're shopping for a hair accessory, bridal look, going-out top or pair of shoes, there's a good chance you can find what you're looking for with a rosette attached. Blumarine can be credited for bringing the vintage trend back last year, and so, brands like Sandy Liang and Mirro Palais have hopped on board. Many celebrities love the rosette trend too. Most notably, Zendaya wore an entire rose garden to the 2023 SAG Awards. This trend works for any occasion and is easy to incorporate with fashion aesthetics.

CHOOSE YOUR adventure

Summer fashion trends in 2023 have taken on many bright hues and bold styles. The question is, are you ready to choose your adventure?



TOTAL TASSELS

Remember when feathers bordered every sleeve and hemline? Well, they've officially been replaced by tassels and fringe. Tassel trim is traditionally neutral-toned which makes it a great option for wardrobe minimalists and designers. Brands like Bevza to Bronx and Banco, a party-goers go-to, embraced long fringe. The textured tassel trim will be the ultimate party trick come spring 2023 but there's no reason why you need to wait to wear the trend. Tassels and fringe look incredible when incorporated with a neutral sweater, hanging from suede boots.

When it comes to trends, there is one question that reigns supreme - would you wear it? With mermaidcore, rosettes and shades of lavender dominating summer trends, you can see your favourite celebrities rock a trend before you decide if you want to yourself.

As consumers, we subsequently work through the same tug-and-pull of trends that designers do but on the receiving end. Do we aim to be aspirational or affordable? Do we shop for the moment? Exhilarating, though potentially fleeting. Or, do we shop for the future? Curated forever, at the risk of playing it a bit safe. Spoiler alert: there's no correct answer.

To be hyper-aware of trends and the evolving landscape of your own closet is to be a conscious consumer. The current state of the trend cycle moves at a dizzying pace - getting swept up in the current feels inevitable. The art of fashion and building your personal style forms when the wearer moves past consciously participating in trends and

chooses to selectively participate. No designer includes every upcoming trend in their collections and frankly, neither should you.

"You can scroll through every trend, but only a special few will realistically make it into your closet," says fashion writer Olivia Marcus in a recent article on www.stylecaster.com. Here's what she recommends:



MERMAIDCORE

It looks like fashion designers were just as excited as everyone else about the new The Little Mermaid movie release. With gadgets, gizmos, dresses and accessories a-plenty, Mermaidcore is the latest aesthetic to hit the runways and the big screen. Want to jump in? You'll need seashell-inspired bralettes, sequin skirts and knit coverups to wear over your bikini. Mermaidcore is all about taking ocean-inspired pieces and pairing them with your classic summer wardrobe items.



OBLIQUE CUT-OUTS

This past summer, cut-outs were everywhere, specifically a double oblique cut-out (like on this viral Cult Gaia dress). Cut-outs continued to dominate formal wear on the New York runways but this time, designers were picking a side. One-sided oblique cutouts were everywhere and on everyone - Gigi Hadid rocked the look at Tom Ford and Karlie Kloss wore a one-shoulder iteration at Carolina Herrera. The style is a great way to emphasise your waist, show a little skin and play up any simple gown.

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