

MHT to develop sustainable plan for Sharqiyah Sands

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) announced plans on Wednesday to develop an integrated management strategy for Sharqiyah Sands, aiming to attract eco-conscious tourists while preserving the desert's natural beauty. Partnering with a specialised consultancy, the ministry's approach reflects a commitment to sustainable tourism that balances environmental preservation with economic growth.

The announcement was made during a dialogue session on promoting investment in Oman's tourism sector organised by Authority for Small and Medium Enterprises Development (ASMED). The event brought together key figures, including H E Salim bin Mohammed al Mahrouqi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism; Halima bint Rashid al Zaria, Chairperson of ASMED; and Hussein bin Ali al Lawati, CEO of Oman Development Bank. The session included representatives from SMEs engaged in the tourism sector, creating a platform for discussion and planning.

H E Azzan bin Qassim al Busaidi, Undersecretary for Tourism, described the session as an important opportunity for entrepreneurs to engage with MHT initiatives. "The ministry is



The Sharqiyah Sands management plan will identify specific visitor categories and designate protected areas, aiming to maintain the desert's natural tranquility

H E AZZAN AL BUSAIDI

committed to developing programmes that directly support SMEs and strengthen their role in tourism," he said. He confirmed that the Sharqiyah Sands management plan will identify specific visitor categories and designate protected areas, aiming to maintain the desert's natural tranquility. "Investment opportunities will align with existing projects, boosting Sharqiyah Sands' competitiveness and expanding its tourist appeal," H E



Busaidi added.

The session covered four main areas essential to sustainable tourism: policies, regulations, operations and SME support. It addressed the need for flexible tourism laws and streamlined licensing, as well as standards for quality, safety and service. Guidelines for transparent operations and efficient use of land designated for tourism were also discussed.

The session explored access to financing, investment incen-

tives, training and partnership programmes to support SMEs. Participants discussed business incubators and accelerators as potential aids to emerging tourism ventures.

For heritage tourism, H E Busaidi highlighted new investment opportunities for Omani companies, particularly SMEs, in managing and operating historical sites. Several sites are already managed by SMEs with further opportunities expected to

open soon.

The session concluded with recommendations aimed at simplifying tourism legislation, raising public awareness on the importance of tourism, and launching both domestic and international campaigns to attract visitors. MHT's focus on sustainable tourism for the Sharqiyah Sands, coupled with SME support, aims to drive economic growth while preserving Oman's cultural and natural heritage.

Oman showcases net zero efforts at COP29

Baku, Azerbaijan - Oman's pavilion at the 29th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP29) in Baku opened on Wednesday to showcase the sultanate's commitment to sustainable energy and climate action. The opening drew international delegates and climate negotiators with H E Salim bin Nasser al Afi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, in attendance as chief guest.

H E Afi stated that Oman is committed to global climate agreements, affirming the sultanate's dedication to previously agreed goals as well as its focus on practical steps in energy transition and carbon capture. "Oman's approach to climate action is clear, and we believe that addressing climate change should not be seen as a contest between oil and gas producers and energy transition supporters. The world needs all available energy sources, with an emphasis on clean energy."

Oman's pavilion highlighted the sultanate's roadmap to

Oman's pavilion highlighted the roadmap to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050

achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050, presenting initiatives from various sectors, including industry, electricity generation, oil and gas, and transportation. It also underscored the work of Environment Authority in conservation and climate-related projects, from emissions reduction to energy transformation.

Dr Abdullah bin Ali al Amri, Chairman of Environment Authority, described the sultanate's participation in COP29 as "effective and successful". He highlighted Oman's progress in carbon reduction, renewable energy, solar, and green hydrogen projects, besides its proactive role in global climate efforts.



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Directors’ Report For The Nine-Month Period Ended 30 September 2024



Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Liva Group SAOG and its subsidiaries (the “Group” or “Company”), I am delighted to present the unaudited consolidated results for the Group over the nine-month period ended 30 September 2024.

Insurance Revenue

The Group’s Insurance Service Revenue reached OMR 240.9 million, reflecting a 5% YOY increase. This growth was primarily driven by an 18% rise in revenue from the UAE, supported by new business opportunities. In KSA, heightened competition and rate erosion led to a more cautious approach, resulting in slower growth within the motor portfolio.

Insurance Service Result

In the third quarter of 2024, amidst the challenges faced in the first half of 2024 due to unforeseen weather events, the Group achieved an insurance service result of OMR 8.2 million, an increase of OMR 5.4 million compared to the same quarter last year.

Our core insurance business has shown resilience and sustained strong performance despite the significant weather-related losses. We are committed to further enhancing our operations and managing weather-related claims with care and prudence whilst ensuring alignment with business principles.

Investment Income

The Group’s investment income reported OMR 10.1 million, reflecting a 17% YOY increase. This performance was largely driven by higher yields, attributed to strategic adjustments in asset allocation and market-to-market gains. The Group remains committed to maintaining a diversified portfolio, combining debt and equity

instruments to strike a balance between risk mitigation and maximizing returns.

Profit after Tax

Driven by strong insurance service performance and solid investment returns, the Group achieved a net profit of OMR 5.3 million for the quarter, reflecting a 279% increase compared to the same period last year. During the reporting period, the group reported a consolidated loss after tax of OMR 10.6 million, compared to a profit of OMR 0.3 million in the same period of 2023. Although we experienced significant losses in the first half of 2024 due to adverse weather events in the UAE, we remain confident in the resilience of our business model. We are proactively implementing measures to mitigate the impact of similar events in the future.

Outlook

Despite the external challenges, the Group has made consistent progress over the past nine months, fueled by growth in profitable business segments and improvements in technical quality. We remain committed to boosting efficiency, improving disciplines, and executing successful strategies in core markets. Looking ahead, we remain optimistic in sustaining this positive momentum, with a continued focus on profitable growth and new opportunities in key markets.

Environmental, Social, & Governance (ESG) Strategy

As we move into Q3, the Group continues to strengthen its sustainability efforts through a comprehensive ESG strategy focused on transparency and accountability ensuring to meet both stakeholder expectations and regulatory requirements. Through comprehensive research, benchmarking, local context analysis, and stakeholder engagement, key material topics have been identified. Additionally, we have reviewed ESG ratings and regulatory frameworks.

The ESG framework is now in development which will define strategic priorities, and leadership alignment in preparation for internal integration. Key upcoming milestones include analyzing materiality data, drafting an ESG policy, and preparing a GRI-compliant sustainability report. This structured approach aims to position the Group as one of the regional leaders in sustainability.

Recent Events

We are pleased to announce that KSA has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Malath Cooperative Insurance, as disclosed on the Saudi Stock Exchange (Tadawul). This potential merger is a strategic step toward achieving our goal of becoming a

leading multi-line insurance provider, delivering significant value to customers and generating sustainable, profitable returns for our shareholders. The MoU reinforces our strong commitment to Saudi Arabia, the largest and one of the fastest-growing markets in the GCC region. While no formal agreement has been reached, thorough due diligence process is being undertaken to ensure best outcomes for all stakeholders.

AM Best retained Liva Group’s Financial Strength Rating of A- (Excellent) and Long-Term Issuer Credit Rating of A- (Excellent), but with a negative outlook. The Group has implemented several corrective initiatives to further enhance the operating performance. The reaffirmation of the rating was supported by a strong balance sheet, conservative investment strategy, and diversified presence across Oman, the UAE, and the GCC region.

In line with our core values, our CSR initiatives are designed to make a meaningful impact on the communities we serve. Recent efforts included donations to the Oman Charitable Association, a blood donation campaign, a cancer awareness walk, and the provision of meals to those in need.

As one of the region’s leading insurers, we leverage our expertise and resources to extend our impact beyond traditional insurance, actively supporting the well-being of our communities. The Group launched the digital-driven Breast Cancer initiative, ‘Feel Free by Liva’, designed to empower women with the knowledge and tools for self-examination and early detection. The campaign achieved significant reach, garnering over 100,000 views on a single social platform, and received widespread attention with numerous influencers resharing the content.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to our inspirational leader His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for his vision and initiatives as he continues to lead the country on the path of development, peace, and enduring prosperity.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank the Oman Financial Services Authority, Muscat Stock Exchange, Central Bank of UAE & Bahrain and Insurance Authority of Saudi Arabia for their continued support and guidance. I would also like to thank our dedicated teams at Liva Group and across our Group companies for their commitment and hard work.

Khalid Muhammad AlZubair
Chairman

Unaudited interim condensed separate and consolidated statement of financial position				
as at 30 September 2024				
	Group		Parent Company	
	30 Sep 2024	31 Dec 2023	30 Sep 2024	31 Dec 2023
	RO	RO	RO	RO
Assets	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
Cash & bank balances	34,730,473	54,003,295	4,116,078	11,285,718
Bank deposits	130,395,819	122,753,154	26,006,996	19,173,355
Investment in securities	129,685,746	123,668,132	29,449,184	27,617,360
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	133,520,526	145,516,034
Insurance contract assets	473,057	889,696	-	-
Reinsurance contract assets	78,337,483	28,635,390	790,442	1,716,205
Other receivables and prepayment	28,773,108	31,883,319	8,249,512	22,506,901
Loans to policyholders	28,378	31,634	-	-
Property and equipment	7,667,756	7,379,782	3,553,170	3,492,307
Deferred tax asset	2,385,279	517,379	1,216,820	391,514
Intangible assets (including goodwill)	27,883,402	28,564,459	237,672	255,369
Total assets	440,360,501	398,326,240	207,140,400	231,954,763
Equity & Liabilities				
Equity				
Share capital	69,013,902	69,013,902	69,013,902	69,013,902
Legal reserve	9,775,095	9,775,095	9,775,095	9,775,095
Contingency reserve	17,576,121	17,576,121	17,576,121	17,576,121
Revaluation reserve	352,345	352,345	352,345	352,345
Mandatory convertible bonds	4,700,000	-	4,700,000	-
Fair value reserve	5,000,543	3,336,100	5,000,543	3,336,100
Foreign exchange translation reserve	(43,772)	(60,693)	(43,772)	(60,693)
Retained earnings	(9,561,901)	7,220,268	(6,786,626)	9,995,543
Total equity attributable to shareholders of the Parent	96,812,333	107,213,138	99,587,608	109,988,413
Non-controlling interests	18,490,030	17,361,561	-	-
Total equity	115,302,363	124,574,699	99,587,608	109,988,413
Liabilities				
Insurance contract liabilities	202,909,807	149,236,429	35,294,050	32,879,639
Reinsurance contract liabilities	13,326,293	13,199,660	1,139,034	978,509
Other liabilities	33,260,267	32,586,677	26,076,321	16,374,161
Term Loan from Bank	67,807,356	71,706,010	45,015,356	71,706,010
Corporate tax payable	7,754,415	7,022,765	28,031	28,031
Total liabilities	325,058,138	273,751,541	107,552,792	121,966,350
Total equity & liabilities	440,360,501	398,326,240	207,140,400	231,954,763

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Unaudited interim condensed separate and consolidated statement of comprehensive income				
for the nine months ended 30 September 2024				
	Group (Consolidated)			
	Three-month period ended Sep 2024	Three-month period ended Sep 2023	Nine-month period ended Sep 2024	Nine-month period ended Sep 2023
	RO	RO	RO	RO
Statement of profit or loss	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited & Restated for IFRS 17)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited & Restated for IFRS 17)
Insurance revenue	84,078,407	77,820,901	240,915,652	229,667,264
Insurance service expense	(75,410,251)	(69,149,681)	(285,640,205)	(208,655,718)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	8,668,156	8,671,220	(44,724,553)	21,011,546
Allocation of reinsurance premiums	(14,827,671)	(13,272,236)	(60,127,257)	(38,810,422)
Amounts recoverable from reinsurers for incurred claims	14,412,257	7,437,161	94,895,641	22,639,655
Net income/expense from reinsurance contracts held	(415,414)	(5,835,075)	34,768,384	(16,170,767)
Insurance service result	8,252,742	2,836,145	(9,956,169)	4,840,779
Investment income - net	3,268,191	2,853,755	10,229,456	8,594,563
Expected credit losses on financial assets	(53,297)	(5,514)	(140,683)	(8,593)
Total investment income	3,214,894	2,848,241	10,088,773	8,585,970
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(1,147,798)	(741,354)	(3,226,258)	(2,553,320)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	355,431	167,713	1,399,390	924,336
Net financial result	(792,367)	(573,641)	(1,826,868)	(1,628,984)
Other operating income/ (expense) – net	(837,007)	1,127,251	1,431,322	1,742,042
Finance cost	(1,070,932)	(1,184,030)	(3,207,352)	(3,256,302)
Non attributable Expenses	(2,561,176)	(3,970,698)	(7,932,817)	(10,044,693)
Profit/(Loss) before tax	6,206,154	1,083,268	(11,403,111)	238,812
Corporate tax expense	(903,016)	336,497	762,829	105,625
Profit/(Loss) for the period	5,303,138	1,419,765	(10,640,282)	344,437
Profit/(Loss) for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	4,802,497	1,280,980	(11,768,751)	96,244
Non-controlling interests	500,641	138,785	1,128,469	248,193
	5,303,138	1,419,765	(10,640,282)	344,437
Other comprehensive income/(loss)				
(Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss):				
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	3,752	(10,531)	16,921	(4,416)
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income – net	1,420,814	(432,375)	935,595	(170,607)
(Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss):	-	-	-	-
Change in value of investments carried at fair value through other comprehensive income unrealized gain/(loss) – Equity investments	613,050	311,951	415,430	617,691
Movement in other reserves	-	-	-	-
Other comprehensive income/ (loss)	2,037,616	(130,955)	1,367,946	442,668
Total comprehensive profit/ (loss) for the period	7,340,754	1,288,810	(9,272,336)	787,105
Total comprehensive profit/(loss) for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	6,840,126	1,150,030	(10,400,805)	538,921
Non-controlling interests	500,628	138,780	1,128,469	248,184
	7,340,754	1,288,810	(9,272,336)	787,105

Unaudited interim condensed separate and consolidated statement of comprehensive income				
for the nine months ended 30 September 2024				
	Parent Company			
	Three-month period ended Sep 2024	Three-month period ended Sep 2023	Nine-month period ended Sep 2024	Nine-month period ended Sep 2023
	RO	RO	RO	RO
Statement of profit or loss	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited & Restated for IFRS 17)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited & Restated for IFRS 17)
Insurance revenue	29,653,599	45,012,452	84,592,409	130,684,867
Insurance service expense	(28,394,302)	(42,699,580)	(89,598,227)	(128,239,797)
Insurance service result before reinsurance contracts held	1,259,297	2,312,872	(5,005,818)	2,445,070
Allocation of reinsurance premiums	(6,698,697)	(7,537,524)	(19,334,762)	(21,061,619)
Amounts recoverable from reinsurers for incurred claims	5,980,931	6,811,761	18,941,534	18,902,886
Net income/expense from reinsurance contracts held	(717,766)	(725,763)	(393,228)	(2,158,733)
Insurance service result	541,531	1,587,109	(5,399,046)	286,337
Investment income - net	758,001	1,438,161	2,258,140	4,247,369
Share of profit from subsidiaries	5,998,603	1,415,927	(6,511,379)	3,258,901
Expected credit losses on financial assets	(17,718)	(5,943)	(11,739)	(12,591)
Total investment income	6,738,886	2,848,145	(4,264,975)	7,493,679
Insurance finance expenses for insurance contracts issued	(67,345)	(337,793)	(316,458)	(1,383,389)
Reinsurance finance income for reinsurance contracts held	91,553	(5,471)	589,671	356,384
Net financial result	24,208	(343,264)	273,213	(1,027,005)
Other operating income/ (expense) – net	(827,571)	21,879	1,427,291	56,450
Finance cost	(656,999)	(1,151,684)	(2,314,701)	(3,256,302)
Non attributable Expenses	(937,883)	(1,927,459)	(2,424,607)	(4,012,619)
Profit/(Loss) before tax	4,882,172	1,034,726	(12,702,825)	(459,460)
Corporate tax expense	(79,675)	246,254	934,074	555,704
Profit/(Loss) for the period	4,802,497	1,280,980	(11,768,751)	96,244
Profit/(Loss) for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	4,802,497	1,280,980	(11,768,751)	96,244
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
	4,802,497	1,280,980	(11,768,751)	96,244
Other comprehensive income/(loss)				
(Items that are or may be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss):				
Exchange differences on translation of foreign operations	3,752	(10,531)	16,921	(4,416)
Changes in fair value of debt instruments at fair value through other comprehensive income – net	498,104	(431,889)	171,647	(168,372)
(Items that will not be reclassified to profit or loss):	-	-	-	-
Share of FVOCI from subsidiaries	922,723	486	763,948	2,238
Change in value of investments carried at fair value through other comprehensive income unrealized gain/(loss) – Equity investments	613,050	310,984	415,430	613,227
Movement in other reserves	-	-	-	-
Other comprehensive income/ (loss)	2,037,629	(130,950)	1,367,946	442,677
Total comprehensive profit/ (loss) for the period	6,840,126	1,150,030	(10,400,805)	538,921
Total comprehensive profit/(loss) for the period attributable to:				
Equity holders of the Parent Company	6,840,126	1,150,030	(10,400,805)	538,921
Non-controlling interests	-	-	-	-
	6,840,126	1,150,030	(10,400,805)	538,921



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Winners of 11th Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature announced

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Sultan Qaboos Higher Centre for Culture and Science declared winners of the 11th Sultan Qaboos Award for Culture, Arts and Literature on Wednesday.

The announcement was made by Habib bin Mohammed al Riyami, Secretary-General of the centre, at a press briefing in Muscat. This year's awards are exclusively for Omani citizens.

The award this year focuses on studies on the Omani environment in the Culture category, radio programmes in the Arts category, and classical Arabic poetry in the Literature category. Nominations for the award were open from March 31 to July 21.

In the Arts category, Ahmed bin Salem al Kalbani won for his radio podcast 'Witness Beyond



This year, 18 applicants were nominated in the field of Omani environmental studies, 49 in radio programmes and 69 in classical Arabic poetry

HABIB AL RIYAMI

the Ordinary' and Shamsa bint Abdullah al Naamani's collection of poems 'Maqamat Zulaykha'



claimed the Literature award. The award was withheld in the Culture category.

Riyami informed that 136 applicants met the nomination criteria this year. Of these, 18 were

nominated in the field of Omani environmental studies, 49 in radio programmes and 69 in

classical Arabic poetry. The award alternates focus every year; in one cycle, it is open

to all Arabs, allowing Omanis to compete alongside other Arab nationals, while in the next, it is limited to Omanis.

The award celebrates the contributions of intellectuals, artists and writers who help renew thought and raise awareness, underscoring Oman's role in enriching human civilisation with intellectual and cultural achievements.

The award was established by Royal Decree No 18/2011, issued on February 27, 2011, as part of a national commitment to promoting intellectual, artistic and literary accomplishments. It recognises Oman's historic role in fostering cultural awareness as a fundamental element in the progress of human civilisation, supporting intellectuals, artists and writers as key contributors to global cultural advancement.



Sayyida Sanaa wins Arab award for promoting sports among women

Abu Dhabi, UAE - Sayyida Sanaa Hamad al Busaidi, Chairwoman of Oman Women's Sports and Gender Equality Committee, has been conferred the Pioneers in Sports Award at the eighth edition of Fatima bint Mubarak Women Sports Awards.

The ceremony took place on Wednesday in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, President of General Women's Union, President of Supreme Council for Motherhood and Childhood, and Honorary President of the Family Development Foundation of the UAE, after who the award is named.

The award recognises Sayyida Sanaa's contributions to women's sports in Oman and her ongoing efforts to support women's participa-

tion both locally and regionally.

She has worked to develop programmes and initiatives that enhance the presence of Omani women in sports, and has also played a key role in formulating plans to support Omani female athletes and develop their skills in various disciplines of sports.

The Fatima bint Mubarak Women Sports Awards are among the most prestigious in the region honouring leading women in the field of sports across the Arab world. It highlights women who have made significant contributions in the field and helped elevate women's participation in sports, including female athletes, coaches, outstanding teams, best practices and initiatives, as well as federations, administrative bodies, and media outlets.

Oman gears up for crucial World Cup qualifier

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman national football team is ready and determined to secure a win, coach Rashid Jaber said ahead of Thursday's match against Palestine at Sultan Qaboos Complex in Bausher. The match marks the fifth round of the Asian qualifiers for the 2026 World Cup.

At a press conference, Jaber stressed the importance of securing a win, highlighting the fact that Palestine is in a similar situation. While acknowledging the absence of experienced players Salah al Yahyai, Amjad al Harthi and Ali al Busaidi, he reassured fans that capable substitutes with experience are ready to step in. Jaber added that every player



in the national team is qualified and deserves their spot, reiterating the importance of the Red Warriors leveraging their home advantage to secure a positive result.

While conceding that the "match will not be easy", forward Muhsen Saleh Abdullah Ali al Ghassani said the team is fully prepared and determined to secure a win. He added that the

team has learnt from previous matches and is ready to put in its best effort.

Ghassani expressed confidence in the unwavering support of fans, who will back the team in

Both Oman and Palestine are in a similar situation and need a win to go to the next round of qualification

RASHID JABER

full strength.

Oman is aiming for its second victory in the qualifiers, having previously defeated Kuwait in the third round. The team has faced losses to Iraq, South Korea and Jordan in the first, second and fourth rounds, respectively.

Oman is also preparing for its next match against Iraq on November 19 in Muscat.

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Muscat hosts five-day marine festival to mark National Day

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Represented by Bausher Wali's Office, Muscat is hosting Bausher Beach and Marine Sports Festival at Azaiba beach which started on Wednesday.

The five-day festival held under the slogan 'Love and Belonging to the Homeland' aligns with the 54th National Day celebrations and showcases a mix of sports and culture.

The festival has a diverse lineup of activities that celebrate Oman's rich marine heritage, including beach football and volleyball, kayaking, paddle boarding and sailing, providing fun for all age groups and skill levels.

The festival will have live traditional music and dance performances, alongside food stalls serving authentic Omani cuisine and a variety of family-friendly games and activities.

Officials expressed enthusiasm for the festival's potential to foster community spirit and patriotism, while highlighting its



The festival will have live traditional music and dance performances, alongside food stalls serving authentic Omani cuisine and a variety of family-friendly games and activities



role in promoting active, healthy lifestyles and celebrating national pride. The event is anticipated to attract large crowds, bringing together families and friends in a festive atmosphere that reflects Oman's unity and achievements.

The festival will culminate in special ceremonies and presentations honouring the nation's progress and rich cultural legacy as Oman marks its National Day.



Japanese Embassy honours academic for strengthening Japan-Oman ties

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Embassy of Japan in Oman hosted a reception on Monday to celebrate Prof Yasuhisa Kondo, who was honoured with the Japanese Foreign Minister's 2024 Commendation recently.

The prestigious award recognised Prof Kondo's significant contributions to deepening Japan-Oman cultural ties and promoting mutual understanding related to archaeology. The event was attended by diplomats, academics and key figures from Oman.

Prof Kondo has made major contributions to preserving archaeological and heritage sites from natural disasters.

One of his ongoing projects since 2018 focuses on excavations at Mugharat al Kahf cave

in Wadi Tanuf. Other projects include surveys of Northern Musandam's heritage, Unesco World Heritage Sites like Bat and Al Khutm, old agricultural sites and abandoned settlements highlighting the need for careful preservation.

Addressing the gathering, H E Jota Yamamoto, Ambassador of Japan to Oman, said, "Professor Kondo's dedication to fostering Japan-Oman relations highlights the shared values of cultural appreciation and cooperation between the two nations. The recognition celebrates his remarkable achievements in advancing academic exchange through archaeology between Japan and Oman."

The guest of honour at the event was H E Ibrahim bin Said al Kharusi, Undersecretary for Heritage Affairs in Ministry of Heritage and Tourism.

Frankincense season event in Dhofar from Nov 28

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism (MHT) has announced a special event from November 28 to December 6 to mark the frankincense season in Dhofar.

The event will be held at the Unesco World Heritage Site of Land of Frankincense, which includes Al Baleed Archaeological Park, Samharam Archaeological



Park, Wubar Archaeological Site and Wadi Doka Nature Reserve,

the ministry has stated. The event's programme will

include a presentation on how frankincense products and extracts were manufactured in the ancient times, besides throwing light on their exports by caravans through Dhofar.

According to MHT, the event will promote the historical features of the sites in the Land of Frankincense and their role in facilitating cultural and commercial exchange with various civilisations of the world, besides

highlighting the importance of the Land of Frankincense in attracting tourists from around the world.

According to ministry statistics for 2023, Al Baleed Archaeological Park and the Land of Frankincense Museum received 61,974 visitors, while the number of visitors to Samharam Archaeological Park was 32,694. Wubar Archaeological Site in Thumrait received 12,600 visitors.

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Italian Cuisine Week highlights health benefits and cultural roots of Mediterranean diet

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Italian Embassy in Muscat, in collaboration with Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), held a seminar titled 'The Taste of the Mind: Where Science and Cooking Meet' on Tuesday as part of the ninth edition of the Italian Cuisine Week.

The event, which took place at SQU's College of Nursing, was held under the patronage of H H Sayyida Dr Basma bint Fakhri al Said and focused on the theme 'Mediterranean Diet and Cuisine of the Origins: Health and Tradition'.

The seminar featured a presentation by Vincenzo Russo, a professor of consumer psychology and neuromarketing at IULM University in Milan. Over two hours, Russo shared insights into how human senses influence dietary choices and consumer behaviour, exploring the connection between scientific research and culinary practices.

He highlighted the nutritional benefits of the Mediterranean diet and discussed how Mediterranean foods have deep-rooted historical and cultural significance.

The presentation brought together academics, students and food enthusiasts to discuss how dietary habits influence well-being and preserve cultural traditions.

Following the seminar, Russo expressed his enthusiasm saying, "It was a great honour to participate as a spokesperson for



Vincenzo Russo at the seminar in SQU on Tuesday (Supplied photo)

Through food and science, we can strengthen the bond between our countries. Events like these are about more than just recipes; they're about building friendships and sharing values

H E PIERLUIGI D'ELIA

IULM University and as an ambassador of neuromarketing on this day dedicated to the Mediterranean diet. Representing IULM here in Oman was significant, as it allowed us to explore the role that science and culture can have in teaching healthy and responsible eating."

He thanked SQU, the Italian Embassy in Muscat and Italian Ambassador H E Pierluigi D'Elia for facilitating the programme, adding, "I hope this day opens new perspectives for future collaborations and for greater global awareness of our food culture."

H E D'Elia described Mediterranean diet as a "pillar of Italian culture and one of the healthiest lifestyles globally".

He added, "By sharing it with Oman, we hope to foster a deeper appreciation for its health benefits and culinary richness. It's a beautiful blend of science, tradition and art."

The ambassador also spoke about the deep connections fostered through such exchanges. "Through food and science, we can strengthen the bond between our countries. Events like these are about more than just recipes; they're about building friendships and sharing values."

GCC banks' performance set to remain strong in 2025, S&P says

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The banking sector in the GCC is expected to maintain strong performance in 2025, despite the potential impact of lower interest rates, according to a report from S&P Global Ratings released on Wednesday.

In its GCC Banking Sector Outlook 2025, S&P highlighted that banks across the GCC region are benefiting from strong profitability, robust asset quality, healthy capitalisation, and ample liquidity.

‘We expect this performance will continue in 2025, even though it will likely be modestly affected by lower interest rates,’



the rating agency said.

However, S&P cautioned that an unexpected escalation in geopolitical risks or a sharp drop in oil prices could undermine the sector's creditworthiness. ‘Depending on how the scenario un-

folds, we expect banks will be relatively resilient,’ it added.

S&P expects Brent crude to average \$75 per barrel in the fourth quarter of 2024, and to remain at similar levels through 2025-2027. This price level is

likely to benefit most GCC economies, as per the report.

The ratings agency also pointed to the region's economic diversification efforts, including Saudi Arabia's transformation initiatives, Qatar's expanding gas production, and ongoing reforms in Bahrain and Oman, as further supportive factors for banks. Strong growth in the non-oil sector, particularly in Bahrain and the UAE, is also seen as a positive.

‘Within this context, we think GCC banks will continue to grow their lending books without generating major macroeconomic imbalances. Lending will range from a high 8%-9% in Saudi Arabia and the UAE to a modest 3%-6% in other GCC countries,’

the rating agency said.

Regarding asset quality, S&P forecasts that GCC banks' indicators will remain stable over the next 12-24 months.

In terms of interest rates, S&P predicts the US Federal Reserve will cut rates by 225 basis points by the end of 2025, in addition to the 75-basis point reduction already implemented. The agency expects central banks across the GCC to mirror these cuts to varying degrees.

‘The overall effect of the rate decline on profitability is negative. Yet it could reduce unrealised losses in securities portfolios and the cost of funding for banks that rely heavily on external funding,’ the agency said.

Oman Oil launches first ESG report

Muscat – Oman Oil Marketing Company (OOMCO) on Wednesday announced the release of its first Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) sustainability report for 2023, aimed at enhancing transparency and showcasing the company's commitment to sustainable and responsible practices. The report highlights OOMCO's role in contributing to the national and developmental goals of the sultanate.

The report features key initiatives launched by the company, including energy transition efforts, community development, employee welfare, and environmental protection. It also underscores OOMCO's role in supporting Oman Vision 2040, alongside ongoing efforts to achieve net-zero emissions

goals, aligning with the company's commitment to long-term sustainability.

The statistics in the report shows a significant progress made by OOMCO in reducing carbon emissions over the reporting period, highlights its efforts in renewable energy production and consumption, and demonstrates its dedication to empowering national talent, with OOMCO's Omanisation rate reaching 92%.

In 2023, more than 39% of the company's corporate social responsibility (CSR) budget has been allocated to talent development initiatives, and 34% to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

Several sustainability and R&D-focused projects were revealed in the ESG report.



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Board of Directors’ Report – 30th September 2024

Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to present the financial performance of Oman & Emirates Investment Holding Co SAOG for the nine months period ended 30th September 2024.

Financial Results:

The Company (Group & Parent) recorded Net Profits of RO 567,430 and RO 752,499 respectively during the period, compared to (Group & Parent) Net Profits of RO 4,034 and RO 106,382 respectively during same period in 2023.

Stock Market Indices:

During the period MSM and DFM increased by 4.34% and 10.93% respectively while ADX decreased by 1.59%, compared to MSM and ADX decrease by (3.69%) and (4.17%) respectively and DFM increase by 24.8% during the same period in 2023.

Net Equity, Investments and Borrowing:

The Net Equity of the Group and the Parent Company increased by 2.53% and 3.18% respectively. The Net Equity of the Group increased from RO 22.421 million at 31/12/2023 to RO 22.988 million at 30/9/2024 (RO 22.245 million at 30/09/2023). The Net Equity of the Parent increased from RO 23.650 at 31/12/2023 to RO 24.403 million at 30/9/2024 (RO 23.410 million at 30/9/2023).

The Total Investment Values of the Group and the Parent Company were RO 30.946 million and RO 28.750 Million respectively as at 30.9.2024 (Group RO 32.136 Million and RO 29.678 Million at 30/9/2023).

The total borrowing of the Group and the Parent Company reduced to RO 11.013 Million and RO 7.291 Million respectively as at 30.09.2024 (Group RO 12.952 Million and RO 9.231 Million at 30/09/2023).

Performance of Group Companies:

Fincorp:

The subsidiary recorded a profit of RO 31.35K during the nine-month period ended 30th September 2024 O&E's share of profit is RO 16K. The independent financial consultant appointed to review and assess discrepancies in the brokerage accounts resulted in a provision for claims and an initial impact of RO 107K has been accounted for in O&E's books as at Q3 2024. Substantiating the accuracy of account balances is expected to be completed during this year and based on this, this provision for claims may change. The Board of directors have taken appropriate steps to safeguard the company by appointing a new CEO, an experienced banker and financial expert and are restructuring the company.

Omani Euro Food Industries Company SAOG:

The subsidiary recorded a loss of RO 229K during the period ended 30th September 2024 resulting in RO 186K share of loss on consolidation in the Parent Company books where the investment has been fully impaired. The new Board at the helm of the company is addressing the decline in sales through improved working relationships with the major clients and more focused distribution. Key elements of plant and machinery in the factory are being upgraded along with quality controls, essential for maintain high standards of production. The capital contributions are envisaged by the major shareholders in the form of convertible debt.

Oman Hotels and Tourism Company SAOC

The Associate recorded a profit of RO 52K during the period ended 30th September 2024 resulting in RO 16K share of profit for O&E. With global hotel industry continuing to navigate challenges, the company's core business has not yet picked up momentum, particularly with the Ruwi hotel renovation completion pending financial injections. Its Associate Company, United Finance Company SAOG, is engaged in leasing and financial services and performs steadily contributing to the profit.

Oman Fiber Optics Company SAOC

This Associate Company consistently generates profits and has been one of the highest dividend payers in O&E's investment portfolio for several years. Based on preliminary results, the profit recorded during the period was RO 3.054 million resulting in RO 640K share of profit for O&E. O&E received a dividend of RO 529K during the year from this Associate and a similar payout is expected in the upcoming year.

Acknowledgement:

On behalf of the Board, I take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt gratitude to the Governments of the Sultanate of Oman and United Arab Emirates for their support to our Company, the stock market authorities, banks, shareholders and employees for their guidance, cooperation and efforts.

Mohamed Abdulla Mohamed Al Khonji
Chairman
11th November 2024

Consolidated and separate condensed interim statement of financial position as at 30 September 2024

	30 September 2024 (Un-audited)	Group 30 September 2023 (Un-audited)	31 December 2023 (Audited)	30 September 2024 (Un-audited)	Parent Company 30 September 2023 (Un-audited)	31 December 2023 (Audited)
ASSETS						
Cash and bank balances	2,300,604	1,336,728	1,419,372	778,083	579,128	266,746
Trade and other receivables	1,265,682	1,378,287	1,307,712	64,894	64,683	74,976
Inventories	266,572	498,557	446,409	-	-	-
Investments at fair value through profit or loss	14,357,480	13,993,997	14,731,511	10,142,812	9,533,280	10,375,967
Investment in associates	16,589,346	16,047,501	16,444,544	14,738,809	14,316,868	14,611,372
Investment in subsidiaries	-	-	-	3,868,284	3,733,466	3,852,231
Financial assets at amortised cost	-	2,093,971	-	-	2,093,971	-
Investment property	2,733,300	2,857,500	2,826,450	2,463,300	2,587,500	2,556,450
Property, plant and equipment	1,806,372	2,058,619	1,993,075	276,532	344,526	326,283
Right-of-use assets	372,270	385,565	372,270	-	-	-
Deferred tax assets	61,071	39,272	61,071	-	-	-
TOTAL ASSETS	39,752,697	40,689,997	39,602,414	32,332,714	33,253,422	32,064,025
EQUITY AND RESERVES						
Share capital	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500	12,187,500
Legal reserve	5,062,733	4,991,892	5,062,733	4,062,500	4,062,500	4,062,500
Retained earnings	5,737,919	5,065,431	5,170,489	8,152,540	7,160,089	7,400,041
Total capital and reserves of the Parent Company	22,988,152	22,244,823	22,420,722	24,402,540	23,410,089	23,650,041
Non-controlling interest	3,351,925	3,282,467	3,380,490	-	-	-
TOTAL EQUITY AND RESERVES	26,340,077	25,527,290	25,801,212	24,402,540	23,410,089	23,650,041
LIABILITIES						
Lease liabilities	400,615	399,715	400,615	-	-	-
Bank borrowings	68,608	68,308	94,144	-	-	25,836
Term loan	2,290,930	1,730,762	2,629,917	2,290,930	1,730,762	2,629,917
Trade and other payables	1,999,467	1,810,922	2,023,526	639,244	612,571	758,231
Loan from Government	8,653,000	11,153,000	8,653,000	5,000,000	7,500,000	5,000,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	13,412,620	15,162,707	13,801,202	7,930,174	9,843,333	8,413,984
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES	39,752,697	40,689,997	39,602,414	32,332,714	33,253,422	32,064,025
Net assets per share	0.189	0.183	0.184	0.200	0.192	0.194

Consolidated and separate condensed interim statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income for the nine-month period ended 30 September 2024

	Group				Parent Company			
	Period from 1 January 2024 to 30 Sep 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2023 to 30 Sep 2023 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 April 2024 to 30 Sep 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 April 2023 to 30 Sep 2023 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2024 to 30 Sep 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 January 2023 to 30 Sep 2023 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 April 2024 to 30 Sep 2024 (Un-audited)	Period from 1 April 2023 to 30 Sep 2023 (Un-audited)
Net investment income / (loss)	1,237,153	647,745	228,973	(102,631)	647,693	222,493	(105,770)	(193,554)
Share of profit / (loss) from investment in associates	674,304	551,303	(138,483)	187,458	656,939	387,811	(38,423)	-
Share of profit / (loss) from investment in subsidiaries	-	-	-	-	16,053	137,431	(72,736)	-
Gross profit / (loss) on sale of food products	82,204	174,767	(27,168)	7,037	-	-	-	-
Other income	105,543	40,714	2,685	12,432	68,000	-	-	-
Total income	2,099,204	1,414,529	66,007	104,296	1,388,685	747,735	(216,929)	(193,554)
Expenses								
Staff costs	(565,129)	(547,231)	(188,718)	(181,334)	(240,955)	(225,144)	(75,718)	(72,368)
Administrative expenses	(567,787)	(519,116)	(208,654)	(166,765)	(260,778)	(300,484)	(72,629)	(90,992)
Finance costs	(217,014)	(198,318)	(69,084)	(79,183)	(134,453)	(115,725)	(41,630)	(50,995)
Provision for claims	(210,409)	-	(210,409)	-	-	-	-	-
Total expenses	(1,560,339)	(1,264,665)	(676,865)	(427,282)	(636,186)	(641,353)	(189,977)	(214,355)
Net profit / (loss) before tax for the period	538,865	149,864	(610,858)	(322,986)	752,499	106,382	(406,906)	(407,909)
Income tax	-	(39,093)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Net profit / (loss) after tax and total comprehensive income / (loss) for the period	538,865	110,771	(610,858)	(322,986)	752,499	106,382	(406,906)	(407,909)
Net profit / (loss) after tax attributable to:								
Parent Company	567,430	4,034	(515,733)	(291,642)	752,499	106,382	(406,906)	(216,392)
Non-controlling interest	(28,565)	106,737	(95,125)	(31,344)	-	-	-	-
	538,865	110,771	(610,858)	(322,986)	752,499	106,382	(406,906)	(216,392)
Earnings per share - basic and diluted	0.005	0.000	(0.004)	(0.002)	0.006	0.001	(0.003)	(0.002)

Shell Oman partners with Oneroad Automotive for Win Big Campaign



As a customer-centric company committed to enriching the lives of communities across Oman, Shell Oman Marketing Company (Shell Oman), in partnership with Oneroad Automotive, has announced the final round of winners in its Win Big Campaign.

The 45-day campaign, which ran from September 15, to October 29, rewarded customers with exciting prizes, including two brand-new Forthing T5 EVO ve-

hicles. The draw held on October 3 and November 6 witnessed two lucky winners drive away in Forthing T5 EVO vehicles, along with additional prizes for other fortunate participants.

Suresh Nair, general manager, Mobility at Shell Oman, said, "The Win Big Campaign stands as a reflection of Shell Oman's commitment to delivering exceptional value and experiences that extend well beyond conven-

The Win Big Campaign stands as a reflection of Shell Oman's commitment to delivering exceptional value and experiences that extend well beyond conventional offerings

Suresh Nair

tional offerings. This initiative represents our endeavour to build meaningful relationships with our customers and con-

tribute positively to their journey with us.

"Our partnership with Oneroad Automotive has en-

abled us to enrich this campaign, offering prizes that resonate with the aspirations of our valued customers. We extend our congratulations to all winners and express our sincere appreciation to every participant for their trust and engagement. Their support motivates us to continue advancing our offerings and enhancing the Shell Oman experience in line with the ut-

most standards of quality and innovation."

Commenting on Oneroad Automotive's involvement in the campaign, Huang Wen Hong, general manager of Oneroad Automotive Oman said, "Joining hands with Shell Oman for the Win Big Campaign exemplifies our shared vision to enhance customer engagement. By offering cutting-edge vehicles like the Forthing T5 EVO, our aim was to elevate the customer experience.

DFI floats 'Rooted in Oman' campaign

Dhofar Food and Investments (DFI) announced the launch of its National Day programme - 'Rooted in Oman. Nurturing the Future' - a year-long campaign honouring Oman's 54th National Day.

The campaign highlights DFI's dedication to Oman's heritage, cultural pride, and the nation's continued journey toward growth and prosperity. Through a series of activities over a year, DFI aims to engage communities across Oman, fostering national pride and reinforcing its commitment to a healthy and sustainable future, a press release said.

Each month, DFI will host a unique event or initiative to engage Omani communities, encouraging a closer connection to the land, culture, and sustainable practices that form the backbone of DFI's mission. The year-long programme emphasises national pride and health-focused initiatives that align with DFI's broad range of products - dairy under Asafwah brand, poultry under Dhofar brand.



BankDhofar partners with Dhofar Insurance

BankDhofar acts as an intermediary between insurance companies and customers to facilitate the process of obtaining appropriate insurance which, in turn, contributes to providing convenience and ease to customers by allowing them to manage their bank accounts and insurance services under one roof.

BankDhofar, in partnership with Dhofar Insurance, offers various insurance coverage plans, such as comprehensive and third party motor insurance at attractive premiums, as well as health insurance cover for family members and domestic workers. The health insurance plans are customized based on the requirements, a press release said.

BankDhofar's home insurance plan provides protection of the building; its contents and appli-

ances against potential loss or damage resulting from fire, explosion, civil unrest and natural disasters such as storms, hurricanes, floods, landslides and earthquakes.

BankDhofar's travel insurance is an essential part of trip planning, offering several key benefits like delayed departure, loss of luggage and passport etc that can provide peace of mind during your travels.

Bilal Faiz al Raiisi, AGM Cards and Bancassurance at BankDhofar, said, "The insurance sector in the Sultanate of Oman plays an important role in the economy and is one of the fastest growing sectors as it contributed 1.23% to the GDP indicating that individuals of all segments are interested in insuring their property and life, while Oman is experiencing economic stability."

Amouage releases new 'The Essences'

Inspired by the desire to embrace the transformative power of time - and to recapture its importance in a world that rarely grants it the value it deserves - the esteemed Omani High Perfumery House of Amouage unveils The Essences (three new perfumes formed through a revolutionary creation process).

Conceived by chief creative officer Renaud Salmon, The Essences represent the pinnacle of olfactory artistry, combining centuries-old practices with modern innovation and a truly global perspective, a press release said.

The uniqueness of The Essences lies in an extraordinary



double-infusion process which marks a genuinely exciting development in the art of perfumery. The concentrate for each of The Essences is infused with sandalwood chips obtained from trees growing in ancient groves in Australia's Western Desert. The bioethanol in which the concentrate is eventually diluted - after an astonishing six-month ageing period - is infused in hand-made, artisanal oakwood barrels.

In the first process, the sandalwood lends each perfume a creamy, meditative smoothness. In the second, the oakwood transfers its haunting, burnt personality to the bioethanol.

The St Regis introduces Oman's first Guerlain spa

Ushering in a new era of luxury and wellness in the Sultanate of Oman, the Guerlain Spa is now open at The St Regis Al Mouj Muscat Resort as the brand's debut outpost in Oman.

Fringed by the ocean and a pristine golf course, the Guerlain Spa brings the esteemed French brand's sophistication and innovative therapies, creating a sanctuary of holistic rejuvenation. The first Guerlain Spa in the country will be a place of serenity with eleven treatment rooms including two exclusive couple suites, steam rooms, and saunas, a press re-



lease said.

A dedicated relaxation haven will invite tranquility, while the spa's boutique will present Guerlain's iconic collections of skincare, fragrances and makeup, alongside

a captivating scent bar for sensory exploration. It will also offer bespoke beauty and a wellness

menu inspired by Omani philosophy and traditions, promising a journey of unparalleled immersion.

Guests can experience a plethora of treatments that meticulously follow Guerlain's protocols executed with precision and personalised attention from diagnosis to therapy. Signature treatments include the Imperial Face Sculpt, a high-tech sculpting facial massage bringing firmness, radiance, and youthfulness to the skin, and the Ultimate Black Orchid, a Guerlain masterpiece from the Orchidée Impériale Age Reverse Collection.

Hyundai Oman launches exclusive raffle offer to win iPhone 16s

Hyundai Oman, represented by OTE Group, has launched an exclusive offer on its popular passenger car lineup, available from October 10 to January 31, 2025.

This limited-time offer brings customers an exciting array of benefits and the chance to win one of eight iPhone 16s through a raffle. This offer extends to Hyundai's complete range of passenger vehicles, including the Grand i10, Accent, Elantra, Sonata, Creta, Kona, Tucson,



The offer is valid for Grand i10, Accent, Elantra, Sonata, Creta, Kona, Tucson, Santa Fe, Palisade, and Staria

Santa Fe, Palisade, and Staria.

Comprehensive Ownership Benefits: Enjoy 4 years of unlimited mileage service, first-year insurance and registration, and

a 5-year/100,000km manufacturer warranty.

"Hyundai Oman is delighted to introduce this fantastic offer as we continue our commitment to providing added value, reliability, and excellence to our customers," said a Senior Spokesperson at Hyundai Oman. "Our goal is to enhance the ownership experience by offering top-tier vehicles with comprehensive support and exciting rewards."

Arab Americans urge Donald Trump to demand ceasefire in Palestine, Lebanon

Washington, D.C./Gaza - Arab Americans who voted for Donald Trump in the Muslim-majority US city of Dearborn, Michigan have urged the president-elect to demand an immediate ceasefire in Palestine and Lebanon.

In a letter posted on Instagram, the MENA American Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of Lebanese Americans, congratulated Trump on his return to the White House and said Dearborn 'turned red in this presidential election', referring to the colour designation used by media outlets for Republicans.

"In response to your renowned letter addressed to Lebanese Americans dated October 26th, 2024, and due to the escalation of Israeli attacks subsequent to the US election, we are urging your administration and transition team to apply your political influence in demanding an immediate ceasefire in Lebanon and Palestine," said the letter.

"This aligns to the commitment toward lasting peace which you made in the letter and in person while signing the Peace Plaques," it added.

"The over 3.5mn MENA Americans, some of whom reside in the swing states, are proud to have contributed to your margins of victory, particu-



larly in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Georgia. Your success is a testament to your resonance with the values and concerns of MENA Americans," the letter said.

Democrats' traditional stronghold of Dearborn, Michi-

gan, known as the capital of the Arab American community, delivered a stunning rebuke to the Democratic Party in the US presidential election over its support for Israel's actions in Gaza.

The city, home to North

America's largest mosque and approximately 250,000 Muslim voters, saw a significant shift from 2020, when Democrat Joe Biden won Michigan by roughly 150,000 votes, beating then-President Trump, who was finishing his first term in office.

21 killed in Gaza Strip

At least 21 Palestinians were killed as the Israeli army intensified its bombardment of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, according to medical sources.

A medical source said five people lost their lives and several

others were injured when Israeli forces shelled a group of people outside Kamal Adwan Hospital in northern Gaza.

Eleven people were also killed in a series of strikes targeting several homes in northern Gaza, the source added.

Israeli gunboats also opened fire on the western part of the Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza, leaving two people dead, another medical source said.

A drone strike in Gaza City killed two more people in the Shujaiya neighbourhood east of the city, the source said.

Another Palestinian was killed in drone strike in the southern city of Rafah, he added.

Meanwhile, at least 12 more Palestinians were detained by Israeli forces in military raids in the occupied West Bank, according to prisoners' affairs groups on Wednesday.

A child was among the detainees in the raids that targeted several towns in the occupied territory, including Ramallah, Jenin, Qalqilya, and Nablus, the Commission of Detainees' Affairs and the Palestinian Prisoner Society said in a joint statement.

"The raids were marked by abuse, threats against detainees and their families, and acts of vandalism and destruction on citizens' homes," it added.

The new arrests brought the number of Palestinians detained by the Israeli army in the West Bank since October last year to over 11,700, including those who were released after being arrested, as per Palestinian figures.

Anadolu Agency

Israeli airstrike kills at least 8 people in Mount Lebanon

Beirut, Lebanon - At least eight people were killed in an Israeli airstrike on a residential apartment in Mount Lebanon province, east of Beirut early on Wednesday, Lebanese media said.

Several other people were injured in the attack that targeted Dawhet Aramoun area, the state news agency NNA reported.

Damage was reported to several buildings in the area.

Israeli warplanes also staged a series of airstrikes in southern Beirut targeting the neighbourhoods of Haret Hreik, Bir al-Abed, Laylaki and Ghobeiry.

Israel has escalated its air campaign in Lebanon since late September against what it claims are Hezbollah targets, in an escalation from year-long cross-border warfare since the start of offensive on the Gaza Strip on October 7, 2023. Nearly 3,300 people have been killed, over 14,200 injured and more than one million people displaced by the Israeli attacks since last October, according to Lebanese health authorities.

Besides, Israeli warplanes on



Several other people were injured in the attack that targeted Dawhet Aramoun area

Wednesday morning carried out a series of airstrikes on areas in the southern suburb of Beirut, Lebanon's state news agency NNA reported.

Airstrikes targeted the areas of Haret Hreik, Bir al-Abed, Laylaki and Ghobeiry. The Dar El-Hawraa Medical Centre in Haret Hreik was also struck.

The southern suburb, especially the Haret Hreik neighbour-

hood, has come under regular Israeli attacks since October.

Meanwhile, Lebanese caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and the UN official for peace operations on Tuesday discussed de-escalating tensions with Israel and the importance of fully implementing UN Security Council Resolution 1701, according to local media reports.

Earlier, UN Under-Secretary-

General for Peace Operations Jean-Pierre Lacroix arrived in Lebanon's capital Beirut for a three-day visit, Lebanon's official National News Agency reported.

During his meeting with Mikati, Lacroix reiterated the importance of enforcing Resolution 1701, which calls for a complete cessation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel.

Anadolu Agency

US envoy to Kenya resigns

Nairobi, Kenya - Days after Donald Trump's victory in the US presidential election, the country's ambassador to Kenya has handed in her walking papers.

"Today, I announced to my team at the US embassy that I submitted my resignation to President (Joe) Biden. It has been an honour and privilege to serve the American people through strengthening our partnership with Kenya," Meg Whitman said in a Wednesday statement.

Reflecting on her tenure, which began in 2022, Whitman spoke about her efforts in fostering trade, security, and healthcare collaboration between Kenya and the US.

"My efforts also opened the door for more American companies to do business in Kenya. Trade, jobs, and US investment in Kenya are at historic highs because of our efforts," she said.

Anadolu Agency



Russia launches fresh missile strike on Kyiv

Kyiv, Ukraine - Russia has launched renewed missile attacks on Ukraine, with the president's chief of staff warning that the capital, Kyiv, was also under attack. "(Russian President Vladimir) Putin is launching a missile attack on Kyiv right now," Andriy Yermak said on Telegram.

Ukraine's air force previously warned that a missile had entered the country's airspace and was headed for Kyiv.

Reuters' witnesses reported hearing blasts in the city. "Explosions in the city. Air defence forces are working. Stay in shelters!" the Kyiv city administration said on Telegram.

The attacks involved cruise missiles launched from strategic aircraft as well as ballistic missiles, the Ukrainian military said.

Ukrainian air defences intercepted two incoming cruise missiles and two ballistic missiles from a total of six, and 37 drones from a total of 90 across the country on Wednesday.

Ukraine's military lost track of 47 more drones, while two more left its airspace heading towards Russia and Belarus, and two more remained in the airspace as of Wednesday morning, it said.

No casualties or major damage were reported in Kyiv, which suffered its first Russian missile attack since August, though it has faced almost nightly drone attacks. The combined attack using drones and missiles was the first combined aerial assault on the capital in more than 70 days, authorities said.

DW

Saudi Arabia very important factor for stability in region, says India

New Delhi, India - India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday emphasised that Saudi Arabia plays a key role in maintaining stability in West Asia, highlighting the ongoing situation in the region particularly in Gaza.

In his opening remarks at the second meeting of the Political, Security, Social and Cultural Committee of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council with Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Wednesday, Jaishankar reiterated India's longstanding position on the issue.

The Union Minister emphasised India's commitment to con-

demning acts of terrorism and hostage-taking while expressing deep concern over the continuing deaths of civilians.

"Saudi Arabia, we recognise, is a very important factor of stability in the region. The situation in West Asia is a matter of deep concern for us, particularly the conflict in Gaza. India's position in this regard has been principled and consistent. While we condemn acts of terrorism and hostage-taking, we are deeply pained by the continuing deaths of innocent civilians," he said.

Jaishankar stressed that any response to the conflict must adhere to international humanitarian law, and that India has



India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets Saudi Arabian Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, in New Delhi on Wednesday (ANI)

consistently called for an immediate ceasefire. "Any response must take into account international humanitarian law and we support an early ceasefire. India

Additionally, Jaishankar spoke on other global and regional issues, including the G20, BRICS, and the India-Middle East Economic Corridor (IMEC), high-

G20, the BRICS, the IMEC and other regional and global issues. It is clear from our discussions, which we have so far and expect to continue, that we have a similar interest in preserving the stability of the region and in driving our economies towards greater prosperity," Jaishankar said.

Meanwhile, Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said that coordination between both nations was essential and that both nations would 'continue to align our positions on issues of shared concern, especially as they pertain to international peace, security and economic development'.

ANI

While we condemn acts of terrorism and hostage-taking, we are deeply pained by the continuing deaths of innocent civilians

S JAISHANKAR

has also consistently stood for a resolution of the Palestine issue through a two-state solution, and we have contributed to the building of Palestinian institutions and capacities," he said.

lighting the shared interest between India and Saudi Arabia in preserving regional stability and fostering economic growth.

"Today, we would have an opportunity to also talk about the

Samantha Harvey’s fiction on space wins 2024 Booker Prize

London, UK - A short novel set on the International Space Station by British author Samantha Harvey in the 2024 winner of the prestigious Booker Prize for fiction.

Harvey was awarded the US\$64,000 prize for her 'space pastoral' story *Orbital* that follows the lives of six astronauts on the ISS, as they circle the Earth. The award ceremony was held on Tuesday night at London's Old Billingsgate

The 49-year-old author has according to the awarding organisation become the first woman since 2019 to win the Booker Prize.

"It is an unforgettable year for fiction, a book about a wounded world. Sometimes you encounter a book and cannot work out how this miraculous event has happened. As judges we were determined to find a book that moved us, a book that had capaciousness and resonance, that we are compelled to share. We wanted everything," Edmund de Waal, Chair of judges, said.

The book is a novel that is propelled by the beauty of six-



British author Samantha Harvey

teen sunrises and sixteen sunsets, says De Waal who added that the with her 'language of lyricism and acuity Harvey makes our world strange and new for us'.

The author said that she wrote the book during the COVID induced lockdowns during which she watched many hours of online footage from the ISS.

Incidentally, Harvey has said that she does not own a mobile phone.

She dedicated the prize to 'all the people who speak for and not against the Earth and work for and not against peace'.

She said she questioned herself while writing the book: "Why would anybody want to hear from a woman at her desk in Wiltshire writing about space when people have actually been there?"

"I lost my nerve with it and I thought I didn't have the authority to write it."

In an interview after she was longlisted for the prize, Harvey said that she considered *The Siege of Krishnapur* based on a fictional town in India by J G Far-

rell as one of the best books of the last century.

Born in Kent in 1975, the daughter of a builder, Samantha Harvey studied philosophy at the University of York and University of Sheffield. A writer and sculptor, in the 2000s, she worked at the Herschel Museum of Astronomy in Bath, the site from which the planet Uranus was discovered.

She is now a tutor on the MA course in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University and the author of five novels.

ANI

US: Donald Trump rewards loyal allies with key roles

He has put an emphasis on strongest backers during the 2024 campaign

Washington, D.C., US - US President-elect Donald Trump continued to fill key positions in his second administration on Tuesday.

The new appointments include the US ambassador to Israel and a special envoy for the Middle East. The Republican leader has put an emphasis on close aides and allies who were his strongest backers during the 2024 campaign.

Musk and Ramaswamy

Trump on Tuesday announced that billionaire Elon Musk will lead a new US 'Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE)' tasked with cutting federal waste, alongside former GOP presidential candidate Vivek Ramaswamy. The acronym 'DOGE' is a reference to the cryptocurrency Dogecoin, a Musk favourite.

During the election, Musk spent over US\$100mn promoting himself as a key Trump ally. Musk also boosted Trump on X, formerly Twitter, the social media platform he owns.

"Together, these two wonderful Americans will pave the way for my Administration to dismantle Government Bureaucracy, slash excess regulations, cut wasteful expenditures, and restructure Federal Agencies," Trump said in a statement.

According to the statement, Musk and Ramaswamy will work from outside the government to offer the White House 'advice and guidance'.

John Ratcliffe to head CIA

Trump nominated John Ratcliffe to head up the Central Intelligence



Donald Trump on Tuesday announced that Elon Musk will lead a new US 'Department of Government Efficiency' tasked with cutting federal waste

Trump nominated John Ratcliffe to head up the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Ratcliffe, a former Republican from Texas, led the Director of National Intelligence in the final months of Trump's first term

gence Agency (CIA).

Ratcliffe, a former Republican congressman from Texas, led the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) in the final months of Trump's first term.

"I look forward to John being the first person ever to serve in both of our Nation's highest Intelligence positions," Trump said.

He called Ratcliffe a 'a fearless fighter for the Constitutional Rights of all Americans'.

Ambassador to Israel

Former Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, one of the Republican party's most conservative voices, has been appointed the US' next ambassador to Israel.

Huckabee, a staunch Evangelical conservative, is known for his support for Israel.

He has also voiced his support for the settlements in the West Bank, which considered illegal under international law.

This comes as president-elect Donald Trump has promised to align the US' foreign policy closer to Israel's interests.

In a statement about the nomination, Trump said Huckabee 'will work tirelessly to bring about peace in the Middle East'.

Trump named military veteran and Fox News host Pete Hegseth as his incoming defence secretary, praising him as 'tough, smart, and a true believer in America First'.

"With Pete at the helm, America's enemies are on notice - Our Military will be Great Again, and America will Never Back Down," he said in a statement.

Earlier, Hegseth expressed disdain for 'woke' policies in the Pentagon and has said he left the military in 2021 after being deemed an extremist by the Army.

Additionally, Trump appointed South Dakota Governor Kristi Noem as secretary of homeland security. He highlighted that she was the first governor to deploy National Guard troops to help Texas combat illegal border crossings.

Middle East envoy

As his pick for a special envoy to the Middle East, Trump appointed his old friend and golf partner Steven Witkoff.

Witkoff, a Florida real estate investor, is currently the chair of Trump's inaugural committee.

"Steve will be an unrelenting voice for peace, and make us all proud," Trump said on social media.

DW



The security breach raised concerns over Washington's ability to protect its mostly closely guarded secrets

Pentagon leaker sentenced to 15 years in prison

Washington, D.C., US - A US federal judge sentenced 22-year-old Jack Teixeira, a Massachusetts Air National Guard member, to 15 years in prison on Tuesday for leaking a trove of classified Pentagon documents.

Authorities said Teixeira first typed out classified documents he accessed, and then began sharing photos of files marked as 'Secret' and 'Top Secret', before trying to cover his steps by throwing his electronic devices into the dumpster next to his house. Wearing an orange jumpsuit when brought into court, Teixeira showed no visible reaction as he was sentenced.

Teixeira pleaded guilty earlier this year to six counts of wilful retention and transmission of national defence information under the Espionage Act. "I wanted to say I'm sorry for all the harm that I brought and caused," Teixeira said before the judge.

"I understand all the responsibility and consequences fall upon my shoulders alone and accept whatever that will bring," he added.

'A very heavy price'

The 2023 leak was the most damaging breach in more than a decade, with some of the documents relating to provision of

equipment to Ukraine.

The security breach raised concerns over Washington's ability to protect its mostly closely guarded secrets and forced the Biden administration to scramble in a bid to contain the diplomatic and military fall-

Teixeira typed out classified documents, and then began sharing photos of files marked as 'Secret' and 'Top Secret', before trying to cover his steps by throwing his electronic devices into the dumpster next to his house

out. Speaking at a press conference after the sentencing, acting US Attorney Joshua Levy said Teixeira 'has paid a very heavy price for the laws he broke and the damage he caused'.

"Anyone who wilfully threatens national security by illegally disseminating classified information will face serious repercussions," he added.

DW

Sri Lankans head to snap polls seeking fresh faces, path to recovery

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Millions of Sri Lankans are set to vote on Thursday to elect a new parliament in snap polls called by the country's recently elected president to seek a fresh mandate to continue his economic reforms.

More than 8,800 candidates are vying for 196 seats from 22 electoral districts and 29 national list seats to form a 225-member parliament for a five-year term, according to the country's Election Commission.

Seats are allocated proportionately according to votes polled.

Individual lawmakers get elected based on the preferential votes cast in their favour. Each voter is entitled to mark three individual preferences.

Campaigning for the 10th par-

liamentary elections closed at midnight on Monday, with major political parties and independent candidates making last-ditch pitches to garner support from the 17mn voters.

President Anura Kumara Disanayake, popularly known as AKD, who was elected in September, dissolved parliament a day after he assumed office.

Analysts say the parliamentary election is realistically a continuation of the presidential election.

The snap polls are seen as AKD's bid to 'strengthen his power through parliament, especially if he is to implement his pledges' made ahead of the presidential election, Munza Mushtaq, a journalist based in the capital Colombo, told Anadolu.



President Anura Kumara Disanayake, elected in September, dissolved parliament a day after he assumed office

Entry of new faces

Several veteran politicians, including former Presidents Ranil Wickremesinghe, Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Mahinda Rajapaksa, have stayed away from the polls, paving the way for scores of new faces to enter parliament. Scores of ministers and deputies from the previous governments have also opted out of the race.

AKD wrapped up his campaigning for the crucial election by pledging economic consolidation under his new government.

His National People's Power (NPP) alliance seeks a majority in parliament to carry out its 'anti-corruption' and 'low taxation' agenda.

With Disanayake's win, Mushtaq said, 'the sentiment for change is continuing'.

While Mushtaq said the NPP is expected to 'win the majority of the seats as part of the growing momentum for change', the road to a parliamentary majority is not easy, given the fact that AKD could not secure 50% of the votes in the presidential election. Besides, the island nation is not a single electorate.

Also, the president is not in the race, and most of his candidates are not known to voters.

However, Mushtaq reckoned that the momentum of 'change' has forced politicians from the traditional opposition parties to stay out of race.

Namal Rajapaksa, son of former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, 'decided not to contest the election', said Mushtaq.

Anadolu Agency

India's top court calls demolitions sans due judicial process as illegal

The top court said such demolitions would strike at the basic principle of rule of law

New Delhi, India - India's Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the government cannot order the demolition of property belonging to people accused of crimes without allowing for due judicial process.

In its judgement, the apex court said such demolition of properties 'would strike at the basic principle of rule of law and is not permissible'.

The court ruled that a notice must be issued with at least 15 days for the owner to respond and must provide an opportunity for personal hearing, among other guidelines.

The judgement emphasised that only the judiciary has the authority to determine guilt and any action without proper legal procedures, violates the principles of



The court ruled that a notice must be issued with at least 15 days for the owner to respond and must provide an opportunity for personal hearing

The judgement emphasised that only the judiciary has the authority to determine guilt and any action without proper legal procedures, violates the principles of justice and the rule of law. These demolitions are termed 'bulldozer justice'

justice and the rule of law. Incidentally, these demolitions are colloquially termed 'bulldozer justice'.

Anti-encroachment drive or punishment?
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has been accused by rights groups and critics of levelling properties belonging to Muslims in so-called 'anti-encroachment' drives.

While officials have said the demolitions only targeted illegal buildings, rights groups and crit-

ics say they are an attempt to harass and marginalise religious minorities, pointing to a wave of rising religious tensions under Modi's rule.

In February, London-based rights group Amnesty International said in a report that authorities in the Indian capital, Delhi, along with BJP-ruled states of Assam, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have carried out demolitions as a 'punishment' following communal clashes or protests against discriminatory government policies.

The Supreme Court in its judgement on Wednesday said selective demolitions without addressing similar illegal structures are considered arbitrary and potentially malicious, indicating punitive intent.

The court called it 'an action of penalising the accused without even trying him before the court of law.'

Last year, following communal violence in the northern Haryana state, authorities demolished more than 750 houses and other structures in four days, which came to a stop only after the state's high court ordered a pause.
DW

US, Japan, S Korea launch military exercise

Seoul, South Korea - South Korea, the US and Japan on Wednesday launched their second trilateral multidomain exercise in international waters of the East Asian country, local media reported.

According to KBS World, the three-day exercise is taking place in international waters of South Korea's southern island of Jeju.

This is the second trilateral multidomain military drill on the Korean Peninsula. The first drill Freedom Edge was held in June this year. The drill comes amid increasing rival military activities on the Korean Peninsula where Seoul and Pyongyang are closing alliances with Western powers as well as Russia.

On Tuesday, the US Indo-Pacific Command in a statement said Freedom Edge continues to demonstrate the defensive posture and unbreakable will of Japan, South Korea and the US to promote trilateral multidomain interoperability and to protect freedom for peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, including the Korean Peninsula.

Ships and aircraft are taking part in the drill being held a day after North Korea said its leader Kim Jong Un signed a decree and ratified a major defence pact with Russia, which includes a provision committing both nations to mutual military assistance in the event of an attack on either side.

On Saturday, President Vladimir Putin also signed a law, ratifying the comprehensive strategic partnership treaty between Russia and North Korea.

The US and South Korea claimed that North Korea sent its troops to Russia to fight against Ukraine. A Ukrainian official claimed that 50,000 Russian and North Korea troops are deployed to the Kursk region to fight Ukrainian forces.

Anadolu Agency

Schools shut as Spain braces for fresh floods

Oviedo, Spain - Parts of Spain are bracing for more dangerous flooding on Wednesday as a fresh storm system is set to release huge amounts of rainfall.

The torrential downpours come just 15 days after a storm system triggered catastrophic flooding, killing at least 223 people and devastating the province of Valencia.

Once again, the affected area is under orange alert for heavy rainfall.

In Valencia, dozens of municipalities have cancelled classes.

While the meteorological agency does not predict Valencia will get the worst of this storm, sewage systems are still full of mud from the last floods, which could complicate drainage.

This time, the areas under red



alert are around the Malaga and Tarragona regions.

In Malaga, around 3,000 people have been evacuated from

their homes on the banks of the Guadalhorce River. The same area also experienced flooding two weeks ago.

Residents of the province of Malaga received cell phone alerts on Tuesday night, warning of an 'extreme risk of rainfall' and

advising them to avoid travel.

Schools will not open on Wednesday across all of Malaga and the Granada coast.

Meanwhile, some roads are being blocked, schools are closing, and rail lines are being cancelled in Tarragona, in the south of Catalonia.

The preventative measures on Wednesday stand in contrast to the lack of an early warning in Valencia two weeks ago.

There, despite being on red alert for rainfall, residents were generally not advised to stay home or seek higher ground until the flooding had already reached catastrophic levels.

Both storm systems were caused by a weather phenomenon known as a DANA in Spain or a 'cut-off low'.

These occur when low-pressure areas get cut off from the westerly winds of the jet stream. Since they are isolated from the jet stream, they can move slowly and erratically, releasing huge amounts of rain over small areas.

This storm system began affecting Spain on Tuesday and is expected to last until at least Friday, according to Spain's meteorological agency.

Speaking at COP29 on Tuesday, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez linked the intensity of these weather events to climate change.

"Climate change kills," he said, urging more action to reduce greenhouse gases to prevent future natural disasters.

Anadolu Agency



UN urges global leaders to pay 'climate debt'

Baku, Azerbaijan - UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Tuesday called on world leaders to prioritise climate financing and warned that failing to address the 'climate debt' would result in severe repercussions for humanity.

"COP 29 must tear down the walls of climate finance," Guterres said during his address at the World Leaders Climate Action Summit (WLCAS), held in Baku as part of COP29.

"There is no time to lose. On climate finance, the world must pay up or humanity will pay the price. Climate finance is not charity. It's an investment. Climate action is not optional. It's

an imperative," he said.

With time running out to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, Guterres pointed out that 2024 is on track to become the hottest year on record, following the hottest days and months ever recorded.

"Time is not on our side," he said.

The UN chief highlighted the significant damage inflicted on communities, infrastructure, and children by natural disasters exacerbated by climate change, saying: "All these disasters and more are being supercharged by human-made climate change. And no country is spared."

Guterres underscored the in-

justice of climate change impacts, explaining 'the rich cause the problem, the poor pay the highest price. Oxfam finds the richest billionaires emit more carbon in an hour and a half than the average person does in a lifetime'.

"Unless emissions plummet and adaptation soars, every economy will face far greater fury," he warned.

However, he pointed to recent progress as a sign of hope, noting that investments in renewable energy and grids exceeded fossil fuel investments for the first time last year.

"Almost everywhere, solar and wind are the cheapest

source of new electricity. So doubling down on fossil fuels is absurd," Guterres said.

The secretary-general stressed the need to reduce global emissions by 9% each year and achieve a 43% drop from 2019 levels by 2030.

He also emphasised the G20's responsibility to lead in fighting the climate crisis, while affirming the UN's commitment to provide necessary support.

Meanwhile, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday urged the developed countries to fulfil their financial commitments made during the COP27 and COP 28.

Anadolu Agency

Indonesia: Bali volcanic ash disrupts international flights

Bali, Indonesia - International airlines have had to cancel dozens of flights to and from Indonesia's island of Bali, after a nearby volcano sent a large ash column into the sky.

Bali is Indonesia's top tourist hotspot and is a popular destination for Australian visitors.

Airlines say it's not safe to fly

Activity at the volcano has disrupted flights at Bali's I Gusti Ngurah Rai international airport since eruptions began.

"Due to volcanic ash caused by Mount Lewotobi in Indonesia, it is currently not safe to operate to and from Bali," Australian airline Jetstar said on Wednesday.

"Volcanic ash poses a significant threat to safe operations of the aircraft in the vicinity of volcanic clouds," said AirAsia several cancellations were announced.

On Tuesday, authorities expanded the danger zone to 9km (5.5 miles) as volcanic material,



Multiple eruptions from the volcano in recent weeks have killed nine people and injured dozens more while forcing the evacuation of more than 11,000 people

including smouldering rocks, lava, and hot fragments of gravel and ash were thrown up

to 8km (5 miles) from the crater on Friday.

Active since late 2023

The Lewotobi Laki-Laki volcano, situated on the island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara province - just 500km (360 miles) from Bali - has been active since late 2023.

Multiple eruptions from the 1,703-metre (5,587-foot) volcano in recent weeks have killed nine people and injured dozens more while forcing the evacuation of more than 11,000 people.
DW

MUSIC OF MUSIALA

Germany and Bayern star has been calling the tune for both country and club

Frankfurt, Germany - Germany and Bayern Munich attacking midfielder Jamal Musiala does not spend time reading any of the recent praise for his performances for club and country, he said on Tuesday, instead putting in the work with an eye on the 2026 World Cup.

The 21-year-old Musiala, who scored the winning goal in Bayern's last two matches in all competitions, has already netted five times in the league so far this season and has been arguably the best player for the Bavarians.

"The focus is to get better and keep putting in the work and not look around too much. For me it

he said when asked of recent glowing praise in the media. "I also do not do it when things are not going well. It is important in good times and bad times to have the same routine."

Musiala has been key to Bayern's return to the top of the Bundesliga this season after Bayer Leverkusen's domestic double last season, and Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann is hoping the forward's form will spill over to the national team.

Germany, who have already qualified for the Nations League quarter-finals, are hoping to finish top of Group A3 with their last two matches this month.



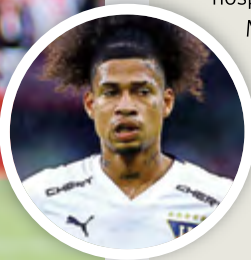
Jamal Musiala has been making rival defences dance to his tune

‘MUSIALA SHOULD STAY AT BAYERN’

Bayern forward Thomas Muller believes that his teammate Musiala will stay with the Bavarians.

"It's quite clear that he should stay at Bayern. That's the clear plan of everyone who supports FC Bayern," said Muller.

"He's hard-working, has quality and the environment to play well. He's very important for our game because he does things that allow us to move forward productively and keeps every defensive line busy. On a scale of 1 to 10? Well he's playing at the #10 position - so, yes, he's close to that (10). The exchange [between Musiala and Bayern] is very good. I think they'll come together," Müller said.



Marco Angulo

Ecuador's Angulo dies a month after car crash

Quito, Ecuador - Ecuador international Marco Angulo has died at the age of 22, a month after suffering critical injuries in a car crash, the Ecuadorean football federation said on Tuesday.

Angulo was involved in a traffic accident on October 7 that also resulted in the death of his former youth team teammate Roberto Cabezas. Angulo sustained head injuries and a lung contusion and died at a hospital in Quito on Monday night after a week in intensive care.

Angulo had been playing for Ecuadorean league champions LDU Quito since March, on loan from MLS side Cincinnati. Angulo made his senior debut for the South American nation in 2022 and had earned two caps.

"Former player of La Tri, who defended our country's colors with talent and dedication at every opportunity. Marco was not only an outstanding player but also a great teammate," the Ecuadorean FA said.

"We are deeply saddened by the loss of Marco — a husband and father, a brother and son, a friend and teammate."

The focus is to get better and keep putting in the work. For me it is important to take steps forward. Last season I did that and maybe the goals and assists were missing a bit.

JAMAL MUSIALA

is important to take steps forward," Musiala told a press conference ahead of Germany's Nations League matches against Bosnia & Herzegovina and Hungary on November 16 and November 19 respectively.

"Last season I did that and maybe the goals and assists were missing a bit. I work on power, to be fit game after game. I want to have as few injuries as possible to make as many matches as possible."

"Over the years I have been looking less and less at that,"

The Germans are eyeing the 2026 World Cup, with a good showing in the Nations League providing a major boost.

The four-time World Cup winners crashed out of the 2022 World Cup in the group stage and did not go past the quarter-finals in this year's Euros on home soil, in Musiala's first two major tournament participations.

"The Euro was not perfect as we all had wanted but we still see the possibilities that are there," Musiala said.

New Zealand coach Bazeley all praise for Forest's Wood

Wellington, New Zealand - Chris Wood's purple patch in front of goal has helped Nottingham Forest climb to fifth in the Premier League and New Zealand coach Darren Bazeley says the striker's form is unlikely to be matched again by a Kiwi at such a high level.

Wood has eight goals in 11 league appearances and was named Premier League player of the month for October after netting four times in three games. Bazeley hopes the 32-year-old will carry that form with New Zealand, who are second in their World Cup qualifying group and face leaders Vanuatu on Friday.

"He's doing amazing," Bazeley told reporters on Wednesday. "What he has done this season - player of the month, eight goals in 11 games, this is something that may not happen again, for a New Zealander to be playing at that level, in that form. It's hard to comprehend here the magnitude of what he is doing."

Wood said the player of the



Nottingham Forest's Chris Wood has scored eight goals in 11 league appearances this season

month award was a nice accolade to have but heaped praise on his teammates for giving him the opportunities to score.

"It's a credit to my teammates supplying me with a lot of good chances, and I'm glad I've been able to finish them off," he said at training in Hamilton on Wednesday.

For Wood, the match

against Vanuatu will also represent a return to where it all began, taking place at the Waikato Stadium where he played for Waikato FC.

"It's (Waikato) where it probably started properly, where it started to take off, where I played my first men's game ... It's nice that I'll be able to go back and play there."

Carsley sticks to his word, calls up Harwood-Bellis to senior side

Burton Upon Trent, England - England's interim boss Lee Carsley often told Taylor Harwood-Bellis, when the centre back was captain of the under-21 team and Carsley was manager, that he would one day make the nation's senior side.

Carsley made good on his word, calling up the Southampton defender for his first senior camp for Group B2 Nations League matches against Greece and Ireland this week.

"To be called up for the first team, it would obviously be a tough ask, with the quality that's in the squad, but he always said if you're playing well at the top level and doing the best you can ... and he stuck to his word and yeah, so I'm really happy," Harwood-Bellis said.

The 22-year-old is already thinking about cementing his spot ahead of permanent manager Thomas Tuchel's Jan. 1 arrival, knowing Tuchel will undoubtedly be watching.

"Think it'd be a big motivation for all the lads, knowing there's a new manager coming in and



Taylor Harwood-Bellis

wanting to keep your spot," Harwood-Bellis said after Tuesday's training session at St. George's Park.

"It's going to be a tough ask to stay in this role and to stay in the senior squad. So that's something that, especially the young lads, will be pushing towards, kind of trying to keep my spot. It's going to be difficult, because

the quality and the experience in some of the lads who aren't here is massive."

Carsley was forced to make wholesale changes to his squad after several key players withdrew due to injury.

Trent Alexander-Arnold, Bukayo Saka, Declan Rice, Phil Foden, Jack Grealish, Levi Colwill, Cole Palmer and goalkeeper

Aaron Ramsdale are all unavailable to face Greece in Athens on Thursday or Ireland at Wembley three days later.

Asked what attributes Harwood-Bellis hopes to show, he said "just being myself, it's the message I've always had, just be yourself, be confident, and just do what you do at your club," he said.

Star of the show: Lineker's legacy beyond football pitch

London, England - Former England captain Gary Lineker's football career was not so shoddy, but it is his activities off the pitch - from his TV punditry to his own growing podcast empire - that have turned him into a truly national figure.

Which is why the news that Lineker's 25-year stint as presenter of Match of the Day - the BBC's flagship soccer highlights show - will come to an end at the conclusion of the current season has been front and back page news across Britain.

"What a Finish" was the banner headline on the front page of The Sun on Tuesday, a phrase often heard during a Lineker's playing career which began at Leicester City and included stops at Everton, Barcelona and Tottenham Hotspur.

Lineker, the archetypal penalty area predator, hung up his boots in 1994 having scored 331 goals in 654 competitive games, including 48 for England which at the time made him the second-highest goal scorer for his country behind Bobby Charlton.

Lineker's 25-year stint as presenter of Match of the Day - the BBC's flagship soccer highlights show - will come to an end at the end of the season

Rather than fade into the shadows, however, Lineker embarked on a media career that

has taken him way beyond the realms of soccer, made him a household name and the BBC's highest-earning presenter.

In an ever-polarised world, he has never been shy of raising his head above the parapet with his observations on issues both in Britain and across the world.

An outspoken voice of the Remain vote during the bruising Brexit times in Britain, Lineker has also voiced support for immigrants and Palestinians - often coming into conflict with the BBC's impartiality rules.

His presenting skills earned him big-money deals with the likes of BT Sport for their Champions League coverage while in 2014 he established his own aptly named Goalhanger production company.

Lineker's path into the media world began as a somewhat wooden radio presenter on BBC Radio Five Live.

Lineker himself describes his early forays into radio were "appalling" and admits to "stumbling" through his early days in front of a TV camera.



Gary Lineker

MIRZA STARS IN OMAN'S WIN

Mendis' men defeat the Netherlands in the first T20I of three-match series

Muscat - Oman's excellent run at home continued as Duleep Mendis' men won the first T20I match against the Netherlands by three wickets for their fifth successive win at the Oman Cricket Academy ground on Wednesday.

Hosts Oman, who recently concluded the Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series with an all-win record (four wins in a row) against the UAE and the Netherlands, won the first of the three-match T20I series against the Dutch side.

In a thrilling low-scoring match, Oman chased down a target of 139 with five balls to spare. Hammad Mirza's composed knock of 62 not out and a disciplined performance from the host bowlers played key roles in the victory, as Oman withstood early setbacks to get over the line.

Oman got off to a rocky start in the chase. Captain and opener Jatinder Singh was dismissed early for 12 off 7 balls by Timm van der Gugten, and Aamir Kaleem followed shortly after, caught behind off Aryan Dutt for just 2 runs. To make matters worse, Wasim Ali was dismissed for 5, leaving Oman struggling at 16-3 after just three overs. The



Hammad Mirza steered Oman to victory with an unbeaten 62

Netherlands' bowlers, particularly van der Gugten and Dutt, kept the pressure on, and Oman appeared to be in danger of falling well short of the target.

However, the arrival of Mirza brought the innings back on track. Mirza, who has been in fine form, played a responsible innings, not only anchoring the chase but also striking some lofty blows with an unbeaten 62 from 42 balls, which included five boundaries and three sixes.

He found valuable support from Ashish Odedara (14) and Sufyan Mehmood (37), who put together a crucial 76-run stand for the fifth wicket. Mehmood's knock featured three sixes and

lands were put on the back foot by some sharp bowling from Oman. The Dutch openers were dismissed cheaply, and the top order collapsed under pressure. Teja Nidamanuru was dismissed for 9 off 7 balls by Muzahir Raza in the opening over, and Vikramjit Singh fell for just 6, bowled by Raza, leaving the Netherlands at 19-2 after 3 overs.

Scott Edwards, the Netherlands' captain, was trapped lbw for 6 by Raza in the fourth over, further deepening the visitors' woes. Max O'Dowd and Colin Ackermann attempted a rebuild, with O'Dowd contributing 14 runs before falling to Aamir Kaleem. Ackermann, however,

Hosts Oman, who recently concluded the Cricket World Cup League 2 tri-series with an all-win record against the UAE and the Netherlands, won the first of the three-match T20I series

helped steady the chase after Oman had slipped to 40-4.

As the target neared, the wickets continued to fall around Mirza. Odedara was dismissed for 14, and Mehmood was dismissed for 37 in the 17th over, leaving Oman needing 23 from 18 balls. However, with the steady hand of Mirza guiding the chase, Oman managed to cross the line. Despite losing Mehran Khan (4) and Siddharth Bukkapatnam (0) in the final overs, Oman finished on 139/7 in 19.1 overs, with Mirza remaining not out at the end.

Earlier in the day, the Netherlands fought valiantly and scored 34 off 31 balls, helping his side reach 50 by the 7th over. His dismissal to Kaleem in the 17th over, at 107/6, left the Dutch with little room to recover.

Bas de Leede was caught by Mehmood off Mehran Khan for 16, and the lower order could not offer much resistance. Timm van der Gugten contributed 14 runs, while Roelof van der Merwe was dismissed for just 1. The Netherlands finished their innings on 138/7 after 20 overs, with Noah Croes remaining unbeaten on 33 off 20 balls, providing the only late flourish for the visitors.



Reece Topley

England's Topley fined for smashing chair in frustration

Bridgetown, Barbados - England pacer Reece Topley has been docked 15% of his match fee for smashing a chair in frustration after picking up an injury in the first Twenty20 International against West Indies.

The left-arm quick suffered his latest injury setback on Saturday when he jarred his knee while bowling. He eventually left the field due to the injury and missed the second match.

As he walked up the steps of the pavilion at the Kensington Oval in Bridgetown, Topley picked up a chair and smashed it on the staircase handrail.

The governing International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Wednesday that Tokely had breached the code of conduct article relating to "abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground equipment or fixtures and fittings".

In addition to the fine Topley also incurred one demerit point. Four or more demerit points within a 24-month period are converted into suspension points and a player is banned under the ICC's code of conduct.

England lead the five-match series 2-0 with the third T20 scheduled for Thursday.

Russia's Medvedev calls for ATP calendar rescheduling

Turin, Italy - World number four Daniil Medvedev said the ATP Tour calendar needs to be refocused around the Grand Slams and Masters 1000 events with the lower-tier ATP 250 tournaments moved to an optional slot later in the year.

Several players have voiced concerns over the calendar, with four-times Grand Slam winner Carlos Alcaraz saying the tight schedule makes it difficult to stay motivated throughout the year and increases the risk of injuries.

From next season, seven of the nine ATP Masters 1000 events will be held across 12 days, a decision which was criticised by Stefanos Tsitsipas last week.

"This year I only tried to play big tournaments," Medvedev told reporters after his win over Alex De Minaur at the ATP Finals on



Daniil Medvedev

Tuesday.

"I think there should be more bigger, important tournaments, which should be like, 'Okay, these are the tournaments where we define who is going to be top 10, like Masters 1000.'"

"You play good in them, you will be there. The schedule should somehow be around them."

Medvedev suggested staging the top tournaments earlier in the year, adding: "Then you put all the 250s after for people that want to continue playing."

"If you're good enough, you finish the season in whatever, October, play in Masters. Doesn't matter. Don't count the tournaments after. If you still feel like you need more points for Australian Open or more matches, you do it after."

F1 race director Wittich steps down

London, England - Formula One race director Niels Wittich has stepped down with immediate effect and Rui Marques will take over the role from next week's Las Vegas Grand Prix, the governing FIA said on Tuesday.

The FIA said Wittich, a German who has carried out the role since 2022 after Australian Michael Masi was removed from the position, had left "to pursue new opportunities".

"Niels has fulfilled his numerous responsibilities as race director with professionalism and dedication," it added in a statement.

"We thank him for his commitment and we wish him the best for the future."

Marques, a Portuguese, has previously served as an interna-



Niels Wittich

tional steward and race director for the Formula Two and Formula Three championships.

The Formula One championship has three rounds remaining with both titles still to be decided. Red Bull's Max Verstappen could win his fourth successive drivers' crown in Las Vegas.

Niels (Wittich) has fulfilled his numerous responsibilities as race director with professionalism and dedication

FIA

Fallows leaves Aston Martin

Dan Fallows is leaving his role as Aston Martin technical director this month but will stay within the group, the Silverstone-based Formula One team said on Tuesday. Fallows joined from Red Bull, where he was in charge of aerodynamics, in 2022 but Aston

Martin have his former boss Adrian Newey, 65, joining next March as managing technical partner. Former Mercedes engine head Andy Cowell recently joined as chief executive officer with former Ferrari technical director Enrico Cardile also recruited and due to start next year.

"It is time for me to pass on the baton, but I look forward to watching the team's future success, which I am sure will come soon," Fallows said in a statement, without details of what he would be doing next.

Aston Martin had a strong 2023 season, securing five podiums in the first six races with Fernando Alonso, but have lost their way this year and are fifth in the standings with a best result of fifth.



Jannik Sinner

Sinner battles past Fritz in Turin

Turin, Italy - World number one Jannik Sinner made it two wins out of two at the ATP Finals as he fought off Taylor Fritz in a high-octane clash inside the Inalpi Arena on Tuesday.

In a repeat of September's U.S. Open final, home favourite Sinner delighted a raucous crowd with a 6-4 6-4 victory in the best match of the tournament so far.

American world number five Fritz went toe-to-toe with Sinner throughout a contest ultimately decided by slender margins with one break of serve in each set.

Sinner made the decisive break in the opening set when Fritz served at 4-5, bringing up a set point with a disguised drop shot and then converting at the first opportunity.

Fritz refused to go away in the second set and had a glimpse of a chance at 3-3 when Sinner fell 0-30 down on serve. Sinner averted that danger though with some fearless tennis and then exerted the pressure when Fritz served to stay in the match, clinching victory in one hour 40 minutes.

Sinner, bidding to become the first Italian to win the prestigious year-ending tournament having reached the final last year, tops the Ilie Nastase Group with two straight sets wins and looks odds on to reach the semi-finals.



Danny Jordaan

South Africa FA president Danny Jordaan arrested on fraud charges

Johannesburg, South Africa - South African Football Association (SAFA) President Danny Jordaan was arrested on Wednesday over allegations he used the organisation's money for his own purposes, according to local media reports.

Jordaan, who was a leading figure in bringing the 2010 World Cup to South Africa, had tried to interdict his imminent arrest on Tuesday, but the Johannesburg High Court is only scheduled to hear his submission on Thursday.

The arrest stems from a raid by police on the SAFA offices in March, after which police spokesperson Katlego Mogale said the allegations are that "between 2014 and 2018, the president of SAFA used the organisation's resources for his personal gain, including hiring a private security company for his personal protection and a public relations company, without authorisation from the SAFA board."

OMAN EYE COMEBACK

Rashid Jaber's side take on Palestine at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Thursday

Muscat - Oman will be desperate to reignite their AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 26 Group B campaign when they host Palestine at the Sultan Qaboos Sports Complex on Thursday.

Head coach Rashid Jaber's side find themselves in a precarious position, sitting fourth in the group with three points after a challenging start.

With only one win against three defeats, Jaber's squad must walk away with three points against a Palestine side also in desperate need to revive their campaign.

Oman will be missing injured midfielder Yazed al Maashani and will rely on Muhsen al Ghasani and Abdul Rahman al Mushaifri, who scored twice in the 4-0 win over Kuwait on Matchday Three, to lead the charge.

Palestine must secure maximum points to keep their 2026 FIFA World Cup dreams alive.

Two draws and two losses have left them at the bottom of the table, as head coach Makram Daboub seeks to reignite their form.

Daboub will be counting on his side to display the same



Oman will be keen to take all three points against Palestine on Thursday

tenacity that earned them a hard-fought 2-2 draw against Kuwait on Matchday Four.

Meanwhile, Iraq and Jordan are set for a thrilling encounter when they meet at the Basra International Stadium on Thursday.

With the teams tied on seven points, a victory for either side

will be crucial in their bid to secure one of the top two automatic spots to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

Jesus Casas' Iraq will be confident of their chances, having beaten Oman and Palestine and drawn with Kuwait. Their only blemish was the 3-2 loss to South Korea on Matchday Four.

Ayman Hussein will be heavily relied upon to deliver the goals, having found the net in every match except the draw against Kuwait.

Thursday's encounter will be the first meeting between the two sides since Jordan's 3-2 victory in the Round of 16 at the 2023 Asian Cup in Qatar, with

Iraq sure to have revenge on their minds.

Jordan's 4-0 win against Oman on Matchday Four revived their fortunes and the Asian Cup runners-up will be determined to maintain their momentum.

Leading goalscorer Yazan al Naimat, with four goals in the third round, will spearhead

their attack and the return of Mousa Tamari will add confidence to a side aiming to qualify for the World Cup for the first time.

In another match, Kuwait will face a huge challenge when they take on group leaders South Korea at Jaber Al Ahmad International Stadium.

Australia wary of Saudi Arabia's Renard factor

Melbourne, Australia - Australia will hope the much-travelled Herve Renard will not wield his old magic on his return to the Saudi Arabia dugout when the teams clash in a crunch World Cup qualifier at Melbourne Rectangular Stadium on Thursday.

While Renard was the man in charge during the Saudis' stunning win over eventual champions Argentina at the 2022 World Cup, he is viewed darkly in Australia for torpedoing the Socceroos' hopes of automatic qualification for Qatar.

A 0-0 draw in Sydney in 2021 and a 1-0 home win over Australia the following year sent Graham Arnold's team down the perilous playoffs route to earn their ticket to Qatar.

Australian soccer had a measure of revenge last year when the Matildas knocked Renard's France out of the Women's World Cup quarter-finals via a penalty shootout.

With Australia second in Group C, locked on five points with the Saudis and Bahrain but ahead of both on goal difference, Thursday's match could go a



Herve Renard

Given the Green Falcons' mostly poor record on the road and their recent scoring woes, Renard and his players will likely be content to eke out a draw against Australia before heading to Indonesia next Tuesday.

long way to deciding which teams qualify directly for the 2026 finals in North America.

Japan are five points clear at the top and in the box seat to

claim one of the group's two automatic tickets to the global showpiece.

Australia have enjoyed their own "new coach bounce" under

Tony Popovic, who put the Socceroos' qualifying campaign back on track with a 3-1 win over China and a gutsy 1-1 draw in Japan in the last window.

Prior to that, Australia had suffered a rare home loss to Bahrain and were held 0-0 by Indonesia, prompting Arnold to quit after a storm of criticism.

Saudi Arabia, meanwhile, are looking to right the ship after parting ways with Italian Roberto Mancini following a 2-0 defeat by Japan and 0-0 draw with Bahrain.

Renard will be familiar with much of the squad he has inherited and can hope for better relations with senior players following reports of discord under Mancini.

Given the Green Falcons' mostly poor record on the road and their recent scoring woes, Renard and his players will likely be content to eke out a draw against Australia before heading to Indonesia next Tuesday.

Australia defender Cameron Burgess told reporters on Wednesday they were preparing for the unexpected.



Qatar players during a training session

Qatar's World Cup hopes hanging by a thread

Doha, Qatar - Qatar know that defeat to Uzbekistan in Group A of the AFC Asian Qualifiers - Road to 26 on Thursday will be catastrophic to their hopes of securing automatic qualification to the FIFA World Cup 2026.

The two-time AFC Asian Cup champions are on four points, six behind Iran and Uzbekistan, with the qualifying campaign reaching the halfway stage.

Head coach Marquez Lopez will expect a reaction from his Qatar side following their stunning 4-1 defeat to Iran on Matchday Four.

The loss was a bitter pill to swallow as Almoez Ali had given Qatar the lead but their defensive frailties cost them dearly as Iran turned on the power to grab all three points.

Lopez, who led Qatar to the AFC Asian Cup 2023 title on home soil in February, has recalled Mohammed Muntari, who makes a return after a long injury layoff, with Akram Afif and Ali are also part of a squad who desperately need a win to keep their hopes of qualifying for the FIFA

World Cup on merit for the first time alive.

Uzbekistan, however, will be extremely tough opponents as they have been thriving in the AFC Asian Qualifiers with only Iran being able to take points off them so far.

their campaign.

Trailing group leaders Islamic Republic of Iran and Uzbekistan by six points, anything less than a win will have dire consequences on UAE's hopes of a second appearance at the global stage.

Paulo Bento's side kicked off their campaign with a stunning 3-1 defeat of Qatar but have since gone on a winless run with just a draw against DPR Korea adding to their haul.

Edged 1-0 by both Iran and Uzbekistan, UAE have been competitive but that is not enough to take them through and need maximum points against Kyrgyz Republic.

The Central Asia side, making their debut at this stage of FIFA World Cup qualifying, have also been competitive but have lacked the killer instinct required at this level.

The 1-0 win over DPR Korea on Matchday Four, however, would have boosted confidence and they will travel to Abu Dhabi with a spring in their step and hoping to add points to their campaign.

McIlroy chases sixth Race to Dubai title

Abu Dhabi, UAE - World number three Rory McIlroy is taking plenty of positives from his performances this year despite falling short at the U.S. Open, as he bids to win a sixth Race to Dubai title.

The 35-year-old Northern Irishman has won three trophies across the PGA and European Tours in 2024, including the Dubai Desert Classic, the Zurich Classic of New Orleans alongside Shane Lowry and the Wells Fargo Championship.

McIlroy was on the verge of victory at the U.S. Open in June, but was unable to end a decade-



Rory McIlroy

long hunt for his fifth major as he lost to Bryson DeChambeau by one stroke.

"Incredibly consistent again. I've been really proud of that over the last few years, but then at the same time, thinking about the ones that got away," McIlroy said on Wednesday. "I could be sitting up here with a fifth major title and I am not. So that stings and that's something that I have to come to terms with, but at the same time, I've got plenty more opportunities in the future."

"But I really just tried to focus on the positives this year of consistently performing at the high-

est level. Still having three wins with an opportunity to get a fourth here this week, to win another Race to Dubai title."

McIlroy, who is 1,785.02 points ahead of second-placed South African Thriston Lawrence, can win the Race to Dubai title if he finishes in the top 10 at the DP World Tour Championship.

The late Seve Ballesteros won the European Tour's season-long Race to Dubai crown, previously named the Order of Merit, six times between 1976-91. Only Colin Montgomerie of Scotland has more, with a record eight titles.

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As winter sets in, it's time for heartwarming hearty dinners

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ENTERTAINMENT
A peek into tinsel town, in Hollywood and Bollywood

TEEN OMANI INNOVATOR

Laudable lad

Young Omani innovator, **Rashid bin Khalid al Kalbani** designs a cutting-edge wireless aircraft

Mohammed Taha

Fifteen-year-old Rashid bin Khalid al Kalbani has made a significant stride in the aviation sector by successfully designing an innovative wireless aircraft, showcasing exceptional skills in programming and 3D aircraft engineering.

In addition to his achievements in aircraft design, Rashid has also excelled in paragliding, a passion he has enjoyed since early childhood. He is a member of the Al Dhahirah amateur team at Ibri Club, which organises numerous events for paragliding, drone operation, and remote-controlled cars, while also fostering other interests like photography.

In 2021, Rashid joined the Al Dhahirah amateur team, becoming the youngest glider pilot in the Arab world.

In an interview with Muscat Daily, Rashid discussed his wireless aircraft, aptly named 'A Small World Flying High'. This modern creation is classified as a 'fixed

wing' aircraft, reflecting significant technological advancements that have transformed what were once hobbyist toys into versatile tools with a wide range of applications.

Rashid attributes his fascination with aviation to his father, who instilled a love of flying in him from an early age. Growing up around various gliders and wireless flying devices inspired Rashid to delve deeper into aviation and expand his knowledge.

He detailed the components of his innovative aircraft, noting that its structure is made from lightweight materials like cork and fibre. Powered by two engines and batteries, the aircraft features a control system that receives wireless signals, along with a GPS system for accurate location tracking.

Rashid's design boasts a unique medium-sized profile with a

three-dimensional character, capable of reaching speeds of up to 60km/h while weighing just 6kg. It is equipped with one engine and one propeller, with control managed wirelessly via remote.

Despite facing challenges, Rashid successfully manufactured the aircraft over approximately two weeks, conducting its first test flight in a designated area. In the third attempt, the aircraft took off successfully, following two crash landings.

Transformative experience

Regarding paragliding, Rashid said, "Paragliding offers a transformative experience that boosts self-confidence by helping individuals confront their fears and achieve the thrill of flight. This exhilarating activity not only provides a unique sense of freedom, liberating participants from stress and anxiety, but also grants breathtaking views of the landscape, fostering a deeper appreciation for the beauty of nature. Overall, paragliding is a powerful

way to enhance self-esteem and embrace new challenges."

He added that the paragliding club's concerted efforts to encourage youth to develop skills in flying gliders, paragliding, and drone control, as well as hobbies like photography, have made Ibri a center for paragliding enthusiasts and adventure tourists visiting Oman.

Looking ahead, Rashid expressed his ambition to learn more about the tools and equipment necessary for building aircraft, and seeking practical experience in engineering and manufacturing. He aims to embark on larger projects and participate in competitions to evaluate his innovative skills.

With aspirations of establishing a commercial venture, Rashid plans to align his efforts with future academic pursuits. He envisions creating an educational workshop focused on building wireless aircraft, ultimately aiming to establish a commercial institution dedicated to gliding and wireless aviation.

Paragliding is a powerful way to enhance self-esteem and embrace new challenges

RASHID AL KALBANI

cook-up

BEEF RECIPES

Hearty dinner

As winter sets in, it's time to consider hearty recipes that warm you up from within and without. And what better choice than beef, the most hearty protein for a hearty dinner

Beef Rendang

Ingredients

For rendang paste

- 25 dried chillies
- 6 lemongrass (white part only) - sliced
- 2 inch galangal - sliced
- 2 inch ginger - sliced
- 6 garlic cloves
- 1 onion, cubed

Spices

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 1 star anise
- 4 cloves
- 4 cardamom pods
- 1 lemongrass, bruised

Main

- 1 kg beef chuck - cut into cubes
- 10 kaffir lime leaves - thinly sliced
- 2tbsp coconut sugar
- 2tsp salt
- 1tbsp tamarind paste
- 1 can (400 ml) coconut milk

Method

First, prepare the chillies - Cut the dried chillies into small pieces to remove the seeds. Soak in a bowl with some boiling water for 30 minutes until softened. Drain. In a small processor, blend softened chillies, lemongrass, galangal, ginger, garlic, and onion into a fine paste. Add a splash of water to help the process.

Heat some oil on medium heat and add in cinnamon stick, star anise, cloves, cardamom pods, bruised lemongrass, and beef rendang paste. Cook for 10-15 minutes or until the paste thickened or the wetness has reduced significantly. Add in the beef pieces and coat them evenly with the paste. Stir in kaffir lime leaves, coconut sugar, salt, tamarind, and coconut milk. Simmer with the lid on for 1 hour or until the meat is soft but not falling apart.

Remove the lid and continue cooking for 30-40 minutes until the sauce reduces (or when the oil separates) and the meat is super tender. At this stage, stir frequently but gently. If the meat is already super tender but there's still lots of sauce, remove the meat onto a plate. Continue cooking until the sauce is reduced and then gently stir in the meat. Enjoy with steamed rice.

Ingredients

- 2kg beef tenderloin
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ cup beef base boullion
- ¼ cup chopped garlic
- 2tbsp salt (to taste)
- 3tsp pepper (to taste)
- 2tbsp seasoning salt
- 1tbsp onion salt
- ½ cup steak seasoning

Method

Take the tenderloin out of the refrigerator about 30-45 minutes before you're going to put it in the oven. Use a cookie sheet or a large cutting board to place the meat

on. Pat the beef dry with paper towels. If one end of the tenderloin is smaller than the other, tuck the thinner end underneath and tie it up with butcher's twine. This helps to cook the roast more evenly. Heat the oven to 200°C. Use a roasting pan with a roasting rack. You will also want to prepare the tenderloin and remove the silver skin if it's still on there.

Pour the ¼ cup olive oil over the beef and rub it on all sides with your hands. Then, take the ½ cup beef base boullion, warm it up in the microwave for 30 seconds, and rub it on all sides of the meat. Then, mix up the dry seasoning ingredients in a bowl and then add in the ¼ cup

chopped garlic and coat it in the seasonings. Then rub it all over the meat on both sides.

Put the tenderloin in the oven uncovered and roast at 200° C. The cooking time is approximately 50 minutes but can vary depending on the size of the tenderloin. Remove from the oven and set aside to rest for 15 minutes. (55° for medium rare, 65° for medium, 75° medium well and 80° for well done) The temperature of the meat will actually rise 5-8 degrees when it comes out of the oven.

Slice the beef tenderloin into slices, serve on a nice platter, and garnish with parsley or herbs of your liking.



Bannu Beef Pulao

Ingredients

- 1kg beef
- 5 green chillies
- 3tsp salt
- 2tbsp black peppercorns
- 1tbsp cumin seeds
- 1 medium sized onion
- 10 cloves
- 4 black cardamom pods
- 8 green cardamoms
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 pod garlic
- 1tbsp fennel seeds
- 3 star anise
- 2ltr water

For the rice

- 11kg basmati rice – soaked for 1 hour
- 1 cup oil / ghee
- 2 onions - sliced
- 1tbsp ginger-garlic paste
- 3 tomatoes
- 2tsp coriander powder
- 1tsp turmeric powder
- 1tsp black pepper
- 1tsp red chilli powder
- 1tsp cumin powder
- 1tsp whole spices powder
- ½ tsp nutmeg powder
- ½ tsp mace powder
- 4 cups beef stock

Method

First, in a piece of muslin cloth, add whole black peppercorn, cumin seeds, clove, black cardamom pods, green cardamom, cinnamon sticks, fennel seeds, star anise and wrap it to make a pouch.

In a pressure cooker, add beef, whole garlic, onion, salt, bay leaf, green chillies, and the spice pouch, and pressure cook for 30 minutes until meat is tender. Cool and open cooker, discard spice pouch, garlic pod and bay leaf. Separate the beef pieces and drain the stock.

In a large pot, heat oil and fry sliced onion until browned. Add ginger garlic paste and mix it well. Then add tomatoes, coriander powder, turmeric powder, red chilli powder, cumin powder, salt, whole spices powder and cook until oil separates and tomatoes soften. Then add the cooked meat and cook for 5 minutes. Add mace, nutmeg, black pepper and mix it, followed by beef stock, 4 cups water, and boil it. Then add rice in it. Cook on high flame until water reduces, then reduce to simmer and cook covered on low flame. Bannu Beef Pulao is now ready to serve.

Roasted Beef Tenderloin



CLASSIFIEDS

SITUATION WANTED

Senior accountant, Indian, male, 18 years' experience in Oman. Immediate joining. Contact: 91172545

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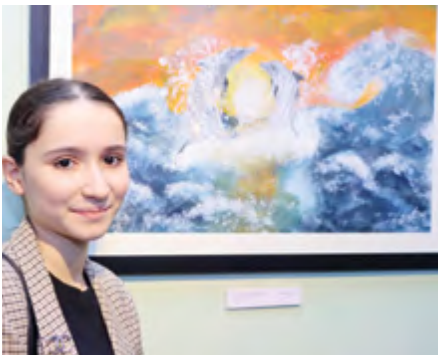
take a break

IN TOWN

Children’s exhibition



A children’s exhibition – The Emotions of the Oceans - jointly hosted by Matti Sirvio Art Galleria and the Green Life Art Centre opened last weekend



Funkar concert



The Funkar Melody Group held its eighth annual karaoke singing concert in Muscat recently



BOGGLER

K	R	E	N
V	S	O	S
A	O	E	T
U	E	Y	T

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

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

DO YOU SUDOKU?

LEVEL EASY:

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

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

TRIVIA QUIZ - FOR TEENS

- Donald Trump was first sworn in as which President of the United States in 2017?
A. 44th
B. 45th
C. 47th
D. 50th
- Besides sheep, wool is also obtained from which of these animals?
A. Dogs
B. Deer
C. Bison
D. Rabbits
- The giant Baobab tree of Oman exists in which Wilayat of Dhofar region?



- A. Dhalkut
B. Rakhyut
C. Mirbat
D. Taqah

Answers
1. B
2. D
3. A

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE



ARIES MARCH 21-APRIL 19

You're ready to work hard for your money today. In fact, you might do some serious practical planning, perhaps with the help of a boss, parent or an authority figure. Ignore an early morning irritation with your kids or a romantic partner - let it go. This way, you will be in a better frame of mind all day. Avoid unwanted arguments at all costs.



TAURUS APRIL 20-MAY 20

Today the Moon is in your sign, which makes you more emotional. Don't take the bait this morning with a family member. Keep your cool. Later in the day, someone older or more experienced might have excellent advice for you. It will be a smart move to keep things practical and orderly so that it affects your mindset as well as overall output.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUNE 21

Early this morning, you might be grumpy. Fortunately, this is short-lived. In fact, it's an excellent day for research of any kind because you'll enjoy coming up with answers. Quite likely, you'll impress someone - a boss or a parent. Gifts and favours might come your way today be prepared to welcome them.



CANCER JUNE 22-JULY 22

Ignore some silly squabbles this morning about money or possessions. Later in the day, travel plans might look doable. You might also explore school schedules and opportunities in publishing, medicine and the law. Enjoy schmoozing with friends today because you feel sociable and will not be able to resist the urge to splurge.



LEO JULY 23-AUGUST 22

Don't get your belly in a rash today, especially dealing with parents and bosses in the early morning. Move on. You will impress others today with your willingness to accept your duties. You also have practical suggestions. You might look heroic because you're prepared to go that extra step. (It's your style.) And you know that very well, even if others do not acknowledge it.



VIRGO AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

Avoid controversial subjects early in the morning because they will frustrate you. Instead, travel plans and chances to explore avenues in medicine, the law and higher education will please you. Make plans to see people from other countries or different backgrounds. (You might learn something today which will be beneficial to you in the long run.)



LIBRA SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

Do what you can to keep the peace with a friend or a group this morning, especially dealing with shared responsibilities. In fact, you're willing to forgo your own comfort to fulfil your obligations to someone, which is admirable. Your reward might be a pleasant day at home - aren't you looking forward to it?



SCORPIO OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

Avoid morning squabbles with bosses and parents. Don't waste your time. Instead, make practical plans about vacations, the arts or your kids. You might be involved in sports in a vigorous way today. Meanwhile, you'll impress others with your charm and diplomacy as you always do. Only, don't get carried off.



SAGITTARIUS NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

Avoid controversial discussions this morning because they might be nasty. Actually, this can be a great day for you. Financial negotiations will go well; plus, you're prepared to work hard to get practical results, especially at home or helping a family member. It is also the right time to lend a helping hand to those who need it.



CAPRICORN DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

Be patient with your kids this morning. (How a morning begins can affect one's entire day.) The fact is that fair Venus is in your sign making this a wonderful day to schmooze with others. Accept invitations to socialise. You might also work out vigorously in sports or the arts but be wary of minor irritants.



AQUARIUS JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Avoid family squabbles this morning or difficulties with a partner. Instead, focus on practical matters because you can accomplish a lot today. You feel confident and happy about how something is unfolding. To get the results you want, you're willing to be inconvenienced, and you need to do it without cringing as it will only add to your comfort level.



PISCES FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

This morning you might find yourself at odds with someone at work or even a neighbour, colleague or sibling. Don't waste your energy on this. Instead, focus on relations with friends and groups, which will be positive. Today you're willing to undergo some hardship to accomplish something. But given your strict personality, you need to do it with caution.

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

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

entertainment

Lee Dong Wook celebrates birthday

KRRSH

Nisha's

Calling all Wookies! Daddy Lee Dong Wook celebrated his birthday on November 6, and gave us Wookies, the best surprise ever!

He came Live for his birthday party with fans but also released his very own light stick after previously launching an adorable teddy bear character Wookdong! It's so cute I could just eat them both up!

The light stick has a super stylish design that we fans are loving, and the teddy bear is just too cute to handle. Fans all over the world are going wild, sharing photos and messages, and celebrating his birthday together online. What an awesome way to celebrate!



Christopher Nolan gets Nyong'o onboard

Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o has joined the cast of filmmaker Christopher Nolan's new feature film. The untitled project is Nolan's next offering following the success of the multiple award-winning *Oppenheimer*, which earned him his first Best Director Academy Award.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, plot details are being kept under wraps, but sources say the setting is not contemporary. It is also unclear whether the currently untitled movie is set in the past or future.

The 41-year-old actor will star alongside Matt Damon, Tom Holland, Zendaya and Anne Hathaway in Nolan's film. Nolan wrote the script and is directing the film, which will be distributed by Universal Pictures.

Subhash Ghai confirms Aitraaz 2

As *Aitraaz* clocks in 20 years, producer Subhash Ghai confirms that *Aitraaz 2* is in the works with another bold story that is written by *OMG 2* director Amit Rai.

Subhash Ghai had produced the 2004 film, which was directed by the duo Abbas-Mustan, and for part 2, the producer has brought on board director Amit Rai. He shares, "I've heard a fantastic script from Amit Rai, the writer-director of *Oh My God 2*, which has been written as *Aitraaz 2* now. We are getting so many calls from various studios that they are interested in making the film.

Bollywood personalities back voting for Maharashtra polls

With only five days remaining for the voting for Maharashtra assembly polls, the Election Commission (EC) has intensified its voter awareness drive. On Friday, the EC launched a special campaign to promote voter education and participation in which Bollywood celebrities, sportspersons and several other public figures participated as goodwill ambassadors.

EC also released a campaign song 'Yeh Pudhe, Matdaan Kar' (Come Forward and Vote). The goodwill ambassadors included Director Rohit Shetty, actors like Ananya Pandey, Varsha Usgaonkar, Manoj Joshi, Sonali Khare, Ali Asgar, comedian Bharti Singh, cricketer Ajinkya Rahane, singers like Rahul Saxena, Milind Ingle, social activist Gauri Sawant and others.

WHAT'S ON

KANGUVA

Epic Saga of *Kanguva* where ancient valour meets modern day courage. A tribal warrior's fierce struggle to save his people a millennium ago is mysteriously linked to a shadow cop's perilous quest in the present. This gripping emotional tale of heroism across time promises heart pounding action and a mystery that defies the ages.

Genre: Action
Starring: Disha Patani, Surya, Bobby Deol
Language: Tamil

JUHI CHAWLA'S RICHEST BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS

Recently, a shocking report came out, which stated that Juhi Chawla is the richest Indian actress of the present time. This news was shocking as she has not been able to give any hit film at the box office for a long time. Despite this, her wealth is far more than today's leading actresses like Deepika Padukone, Alia Bhatt and Priyanka Chopra. Juhi Chawla's net worth is currently estimated to be around Rs46bn. In the 90s, when the film industry was changing and actors were being paid Rs10mn for a film, Juhi Chawla ventured into advertising and other business deals. It was during this period that she built her wealth, which continues to this day.



SELENA GOMEZ, BENNY BLANCO ENJOY LIFE AND CAREERS

Selena Gomez and Benny Blanco knew each other for years before falling in love. Now that they're together, though, fans can't get enough of their relationship. And while the *Only Murders in the Building* actress has shared some of their best moments to social media, we've rounded up a few more.

From red carpet events to casual date nights, the low-key pair have made it a point to make time for each other while also balancing their busy careers.

Spooky cookies and more

BOLLYWOOD MOVIE REVIEW:
BHOOL BHULAIYAA 3
Genre: Comedy Starring: Kartik Aryan, Madhuri Dixit, Vidya Balan

If you didn't head out to the cinemas for this Diwali release, you surely had your senses in place. In fact, you can still sit tight and await this movie on the small screen sooner or later.

But, if there's nothing better to do, after marinating your chicken and folding the weekend laundry, you may take this stress-buster for some mental overhauling. After all, who else would want to see yesteryear actors like Madhuri Dixit and Vidya Balan blaze the silver screens with what they think could keep them in the reckoning in their 50s (ahem!).

The divas return to star alongside chocolate boy Kartik Aryan in this tale of a fake ghostbuster summoned to a West Bengal castle haunted by a royal dancer. All in all, the plus point is the fact that *Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3* is quite unpredictable compared to the earlier two installments.

The franchise had started with the 1993 Malayalam film *Manichitrathazhu*, remade in Hindi in 2007. Both versions were well received, and in each, the real culprit causing the leading lady



to turn into Manjulika, the unhinged spirit of a royal dancer, was eventually identified as dissociative identity disorder.

When director Anees Bazmee took over the reins with the re-

boot, the horror, however, became real. Black magic, spirits, screams and Shreya Ghoshal's magical rendition of 'Ami Je Tomar' all contributed to the jam-boree with subtle humour.

In this edition, Aaryan plays Ruhaan (Rooh Baba), a fraudulent ghostbuster who makes money by exploiting people's fear of the supernatural. He is summoned to a castle somewhere in West Bengal where, oddly, the locals seem to recognise him. And there begins a tale that includes the cliched reincarnation but the shadow of Manjulika no longer pines for her murdered lover.

Bazmee retains the elements

of the first two editions - the mansion in which one room has been locked for years because it's believed that a specter resides there, royal family secrets, mysterious dancing of Manjulika. But Dixit, with all her spooky gestures and gyrations, can still stroll into your heart, not scare the hell out of you.

Two romantic songs are thrown in for effect, and if Aryan was needed to shake a leg or two for teenaged audiences who'd rather skip this flick, Triptii Dimri, too, was added to just light up the screen - what else!

Rating ★★★★★



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