

HIS MAJESTY, PRINCE SALMAN REVIEW FIRM FRATERNAL TIES



Muscat - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik received Prince Mohammed bin Salman al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), at Al Barakah Palace on Monday.

Prince Salman is on a private visit to the Sultanate of Oman.

At the beginning of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan welcomed the guest, wishing him and his accompanying delegation a pleasant stay in Oman.

During the meeting, Prince Salman conveyed greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud of KSA and best wishes of good health and happiness to His Majesty the Sultan, and further progress and prosperity to the Omani people.

His Majesty the Sultan asked the guest to convey his greetings and best wishes of good health and happiness to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, and further progress and welfare to the brotherly Saudi people.

His Majesty the Sultan and Prince Salman reviewed the historic, firm and fraternal ties between the two countries. They also reiterated their determination to further promote aspects of existing bilateral cooperation in all spheres in a manner that meets aspirations of the Omani and Saudi peoples.

From the Omani side, the meeting was attended by Sayyid Shihab bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Sayyid Theyazin bin Haitham al Said, Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth, and Sayyid Bilarab bin Haitham al Said.

From the Saudi side, the meeting was attended by Prince Abdullah bin Bandar bin Abdulaziz al Saud, Minister of National Guard, Prince Khalid bin Salman bin Abdulaziz al Saud, Minister of Defence, and Prince Badr bin Abdullah bin Farhan al Saud, Minister of Culture. ONA

Oman, KSA share exemplary relations: Sayyid Badr

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Prince Mohammed bin Salman al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), arrived on a private visit to the Sultanate of Oman on Monday.

During the visit, he met His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

Prince Salman held talks with His Majesty the Sultan that covered regional and international developments, bilateral relations and ways of boosting economic cooperation between the two countries.



In an interview to the Pan-Arab newspaper *Asharq al Awsat*, Sayyid Badr Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, said the kingdom and the sultanate share "exemplary fraternal relations".

Oman and Saudi Arabia have made significant strides since the establishment of the Omani-

We are working to support Oman Vision 2040 and Saudi Vision 2030 by exploring and developing opportunities and integrating projects between them

SAYYID BADR HAMAD AL BUSAIDI

Saudi Coordination Council, he added.

The council has played a pivotal role in framing and deepening cooperation between the two countries across various spheres, including political, economic and security.

Sayyid Badr emphasised that

Saudi Arabia was the first destination for His Majesty the Sultan's official foreign visit in 2021.

He also highlighted the fact that "both the Sultanate of Oman and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia converge in two ambitious future visions, as we have Oman Vision

2040 and the Kingdom has Saudi Vision 2030".

He added, "We are working to support these visions by exploring and developing opportunities and integrating projects between them, especially in vital sectors such as logistics, renewable energy, food security and water resources."

According to Sayyid Badr, the volume of trade exchange between Saudi Arabia and Oman is growing, and cooperation is growing because the two countries believe in this. One of the vital projects with a direct impact on social and economic relations between the two countries is the

Empty Quarter port project.

Trade exchange through the Empty Quarter port accounted for RO323.8mn in 2022, while total trade exchange amounted to RO2.7bn, an increase of 123% over 2021.

"Omani exports to the kingdom was about RO922mn, while Saudi non-oil exports to Oman amounted to about RO1.779.4bn."

He informed that maritime transport witnessed the biggest logistics growth between the two countries; 72% of the total goods transported from Oman to Saudi Arabia went via sea, 27.6% by land and 0.4% by air.

The Foreign Ministry, in coordination with Oman Investment Authority, has appointed the first economic attache for Oman's Embassy in Riyadh.

"The economic attache is following up on activating the movement of investors between the two countries, facilitating contacts, transferring expertise and attracting investments in cooperation with competent authorities in the kingdom. This represents a practical indication of the integration of roles and coordination between the investment agencies between the two countries to maximise common benefits," Sayyid Badr said.

Oman seeks grade 'A' status in human rights

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The sultanate, through Oman Human Rights Commission (OHRC), has completed its application for Category 'A' status within the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI).

The International Accreditation Commission will review the application in October, with a decision expected by March 2024.

Sharing the prerequisites for this classification with ONA, Sheikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of OHRC, informed that a key requirement is Oman's adherence to fundamental agreements and the Paris Principles, which set standards for national institutions dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights.

Hosni emphasised a recent Royal Decree that gave OHRC enhanced power and authority. This, he noted, significantly bolsters Oman's bid for an 'A' rating.



Sheikh Abdullah al Hosni

The decree ensures full autonomy in selecting its president and vice-president. Additionally, government representatives in the committee no longer have voting rights on its decisions.

Oman has ratified seven international human rights conventions. This not only amplifies the role of OHRC in its pursuit of Category A status within GANHRI, but also underscores Oman's dedication to upholding international human rights conventions and treaties.

As of April 2023, GANHRI's membership included 120 institutions: 88 with 'A' status and 32 with 'B'.

See also page [Page 02](#)

OMAN CONDOLES LIBYA; AT LEAST 2,300 KILLED IN FLOODS



At least 2,300 people were killed in Libya and thousands more reported missing following catastrophic flash floods. Gushing waters broke river dams and tore through the eastern coastal city of Derna (pictured), about 290km east of Benghazi, devastating entire neighbourhoods. Oman extended its condolences and sympathies to the government and people of Libya, as well as to the families of those killed in the flooding caused by Storm Daniel. In a statement, the Foreign Ministry expressed its best wishes for a speedy recovery to those injured (AFP)

See also page [Page 07](#)

Egypt ban on face veil in schools sparks debate

Cairo, Egypt - A ban on wearing the face veil in Egyptian schools announced by the government this week sparked debate on social media on Tuesday with critics condemning it as "tyrannical".

Announced on Monday, the decision applies to both state and independent schools. It bans the niqab, an all-encompassing black garment that leaves only the eyes visible and is worn by a small minority of Egyptian women. The decision leaves optional the hijab, the headscarf worn by a much larger number of women.

The choice must be made according to the "wishes of the pupil, without pressure or coercion from any party except her legal guardian, who must be informed of the choice," the decree said.

Critics took to social media to lambast the move, accusing the government of meddling in private matters.

AFP

Oman revs up GCC human rights movement

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman Human Rights Commission, in collaboration with the Secretariat General of Gulf Co-operation Council, opened an event called Human Rights Institutions Forum on Tuesday.

The two-day forum was inaugurated by Sheikh Ghosn bin Hilal al Alawi, Head of State Financial and Administrative Audit Institution.

Sheikh Abdullah bin Shuwain al Hosni, Chairman of Oman Human Rights Commission, highlighted the forum's objective of fostering collaboration and setting shared goals among GCC human rights institutions and the Secretariat General and added that this aligns with the broader ambition of improving mechanisms and methods to enhance human rights.

The forum, Hosni noted, is testament to the commitment to uphold the United Nations goals, the Paris Principles and global human rights conven-



(Supplied photos)



Human rights and sustainable development of countries are interlinked pursuits

MOHAMMED AL SUWAIDI

tions. Cooperation between government and community institutions is pivotal in this context.

Emphasising the significance of such gatherings, Hosni noted that these provide a platform for experts and human rights advo-



Mohammed Ensour

cates to share knowledge, raise awareness and champion these rights.

Mohammed bin Rashid al

Suwaidi, Human Rights Advisor at the Secretariat General of GCC, lauded the role of national human rights institutions in the member states. "These institutions represent a progressive shift across the Gulf nations, echoing the leaderships' dedication to fortifying rights and freedoms in their societies."

He described human rights and sustainable development as interlinked pursuits. National institutions play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable development goals, aiding in aligning legislation and policies, addressing challenges, and collaborating with stakeholders, Suwaidi informed.

He urged GCC human rights institutions to examine emerging issues impacting rights, like the influence of artificial intelligence on privacy, employment and social aspects, while stressing the need for regional, national and global legal frameworks to balance protection of rights with technological advancement.

Expats arrested for human trafficking in Buraimi: ROP

Muscat - Royal Oman Police (ROP) arrested a group of Asians on charges of human trafficking on Tuesday.

In a statement, ROP said, 'The Buraimi Governorate Police Command arrested a group of expatriates of Asian nationality on charges of human trafficking who lured a number of victims and coerced them to perform acts in violation of public morals.'

Legal measures have been taken against them, it added.

In his address, Mohammed Ensour, Head of UN Human Rights Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa, praised the strides made by the GCC in crafting a unified human rights strategy. He expressed optimism about an impending memorandum of understanding between the Secretariat General and the regional office.

Ensour also highlighted the pivotal role of national institutions in bridging government agencies and civil society, and in ensuring nations adhere to international human rights laws. Additionally, Jaber Saleh al

Marri, Chairman of Arab Human Rights Committee, welcomed Oman's recent accession to the Arab Charter on Human Rights. He emphasised that human rights protection is a shared responsibility, with national institutions playing a crucial role in fostering awareness, overseeing the human rights landscape, handling related grievances, and advising governments.

The forum seeks to amplify cooperative mechanisms within GCC human rights institutions, aiming for broader collaboration regionally and globally.



(Supplied photo)

CPA seizes over 13,000 unfit goods during khareef

Our Correspondent
Salalah

Consumer Protection Authority (CPA) seized over 13,000 unfit goods from shops during khareef in Dhofar governorate, the authority sated.

'Besides 13,262 unfit goods, CPA recovered RO34,349 in favour of consumers during the khareef season. The authority also conducted 11,914 inspection campaigns and received 635 complaints,' a statement said.

The authority is monitoring activities at various markets and commercial centres in the governorate with the objective of maintaining price stability and ensuring that suppliers comply with the Consumer Protection Law and its regulations, it added.

The authority has booked several people representing different commercial establishments for various types of violations.

Violators were arrested and released following application of legal measures.

Recall

Recall Date: 13th September 2023

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
NEW RANGE ROVER	2023	71

Recall consequence

Inoperative HeadLamps

Recall Action

JLR owners will be contacted. After inspection if required, the defective part(s) will be replaced for the concerning vehicles listed under the campaign

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Inma Fund boosts SMEs with RO9mn investments in H1 '23

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Fund - Inma has allocated RO9mn to support 75 SME projects across diverse sectors in the first six months of 2023, the chief of the fund said.

These sectors span transportation, logistics, infrastructure, oil and gas, trade, industry and tourism.

Saleh Hilal al Maawali, CEO of Inma Fund, detailed the distribution of funds by December 2022, of which 26% went to the industrial sector, 17% to services, 15% to logistics and transportation, 14% to infrastructure, and 11% supported both trade and tourism.

In 2022, Inma funded 144 SME initiatives with a total of RO20mn. Out of these, 123 projects, valued at RO16mn, re-



Inma Fund offers a financing range from RO50,000 to RO500,000, extending up to RO1mn for larger projects

ceived support through Inma's main office in Muscat.

In contrast, the Sohar and Salalah offices financed projects worth RO3mn and RO1mn, respectively.

Maawali emphasised Inma's commitment to bolstering financing for sectors this year. The objective is to magnify SMEs' influence on Oman's

GDP and fortify the national economy. Thanks to Inma's funding, many SMEs have expanded their offerings, introducing an array of products and services to Oman's local market, stimulating economic activity and enhancing cash circulation.

Inma has also introduced more flexible repayment terms for its financing products. SMEs

now benefit from an extended repayment duration of up to eight years. This applies to various financing avenues such as asset financing, project financing, invoice discounting, and working capital financing.

The fund offers a financing range from RO50,000 to RO500,000, extending up to RO1mn for larger projects.

British documents shed light on Musandam's importance

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Cultural Club in Khasab, Musandam, organised a seminar on Tuesday to explore the uniqueness of Musandam as documented by the British.

'Musandam in British Documents' seminar - held under Sheikh Abdullah bin Salem al Farsi, Governor of Khasab, as president - focused on the significance of Musandam in Oman's history.

At the seminar, Dr Bahia Saeed, a senior history supervisor from the Directorate General of Education in North Sharqiyah, presented a paper on 'Military Oman in British Documents: Musandam as a Model' to dissect the strategic importance of the Musandam governorate, as reflected in British records.

Dr Bahia also explored



Britain's collaboration with Sultan Said bin Taimur, specifically addressing the British military presence on Umm al-Ghanam Island. Another enlightening paper was presented by Dr Amal Saif from the Directorate General of Education in North Batinah.

Through her paper 'Historical Illuminations of Musandam in the 19th and 20th Centuries in Light of British Documents', Dr Amal shed light on Musandam's depiction in the accounts of various English travellers.

She also scrutinised key doc-

uments and correspondences housed in the British archives, delving into Musandam's economic and social dynamics.

Historian Dr Huda Abdul Rahman al Zadjali said, "Our objective is to underscore Musandam governorate's pivotal role across various facets - be it strategic, cultural, or economic - spanning modern and contemporary history. By examining these British documents, we aim to enrich the Omani society's understanding of the governorate's past."

Forum to boost governance of strategic projects

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Labour (MoL) on Tuesday hosted a forum on 'Managing Strategic Projects with the Concept of Good Governance' in Salalah under the patronage of Sheikh Salem bin Mustahil al Maashani, Advisor to the Diwan of Royal Court.

The two-day forum, being held in partnership with the Reference Centre for Organising Conferences and Seminars, will probe the integral role human resources play in bolstering the management of strategic proj-



ects under the umbrella of good governance, officials said.

A special focus has been accorded on current practices in the sultanate, drawing insights from global experiences, officials added.

The event underscores the necessity of clearly outlining good governance requirements, defining roles, and responsibilities in the context of Oman's strategic projects. The ultimate goal is to pave the way for sustainable development. Attendees will also explore strategies to invigorate these governance models, ensuring progress towards this development.

Sessions at the conference will delve into the governance framework for strategic projects, shedding light on relevant legislative and regulatory parameters with key topics being

implementation mechanisms, the challenges faced, and potential solutions.

According to officials, a comprehensive coverage of several subjects and issues, with insights from a diverse array of experts, researchers, and stakeholders, both local and international is expected during each deliberation. The forum aims to highlight the latest advancements in research related to strategic project management and good governance through a mix of papers, visual displays, panel debates, and hands-on experiences.

Information ministry launches ONA app

Our Correspondent
Muscat

The Ministry of Information launched an app for Oman News Agency (ONA) on Tuesday, keeping pace with modern technical developments in disseminating news content.

Ibrahim Saif al Azri, Editor-in-Chief and Director-General of ONA, said that the launch of the application adds a new service for ONA followers, both in Oman and abroad.

Azri pointed out that, through the app, readers are constantly and immediately informed of local and international developments and events. Readers can access ONA news under different categories, including Royal News, Oman Today, and Governorates, in addition to Economy and international news which include 'Policy and Miscellaneous' news.

He added that the app was designed to be compatible with various smart phones and tablet devices and it can add news up-



Ibrahim Saif al Azri

dates round-the-clock.

"The app boasts a simplified and clear-cut user interface that serves timely news browsing and smooth navigation. The night mode eases eye strain when one is reading news in dark settings. The app also gives prompt notifications as soon as it receives updates," Azri explained.

ONA app is also empowered with an advanced news searching feature that support visual news, audio news and news photos. It displays news content in high quality and allows reader reactions through personal comments, news sharing and offline reading of news in Arabic and English.

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Recall

Recall Date: 13th September 2023

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
NEW RANGE ROVER	2023 - 2022	138

Recall consequence

Inoperative Rear Lamps

Recall Action

JLR owners will be contacted. After inspection if required, the defective part(s) will be replaced for the concerning vehicles listed under the campaign

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www.pacp.gov.om

خط المستهلك
Consumer line
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80077997

ACERE

MARKET WATCH

MSX304,695.65
Sensex67,221.13

FOREX RATES

(RO1 equals)

Indian	215.40
Pakistan	778.33
Bangladesh	285.14
Philippines	147.05
Sri Lanka	839.83

*Rates as on September 12
Source: xe.com

BRIEFS

Putin sees no ‘problems’ in ruble fall

President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday downplayed the weakening of the Russian ruble, as Moscow shoulders the economic fallout of its dragging offensive in Ukraine and rising inflation.

“This issue requires its own painstaking research by the central bank and the Russian government and financial authorities,” Putin said at Russia’s Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

“But in general I do not think that there are any completely insurmountable problems or difficulties here,” he added.

Putin has sought to downplay the effects of unprecedented Western sanctions on Moscow’s economy since deploying his army to Ukraine last year.

The ruble has shed around 30 percent of its value against the dollar since the start of the year, as Moscow grapples with falling export revenues and higher military spending.

Oman's financial wealth set to reach \$141bn by 2027: Report

Our Correspondent
Muscat

Oman's financial wealth is projected to grow at a strong compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 4.7%, reaching \$141bn by 2027, according to a new report by Boston Consulting Group (BCG).

The report titled 'Global Wealth Report 2023: Resetting the Course' reveals that Oman's financial wealth represents 1.5% of the region's total.

Over the period from 2017 to 2022, Oman's financial wealth experienced a growth rate of 7.2% per annum, reaching a total of \$112bn in 2022. This significant increase highlights the nation's positive economic trajectory and solidifies its position within the regional financial landscape, the report said.

In a press statement, Markus Massi, managing director and senior partner at BCG, said, "Oman's economic trajectory signals entrepreneurial spirit coupled with calculated risk. This impressive growth reflects the resilience and strength of Oman's economy despite global market challenges."

Role of high-net-worth individuals

Turning to individual wealth distribution, the report indicates that in 2022, a significant portion of

Over 2017-2022 period, Oman's financial wealth experienced a growth rate of 7.2% per annum, reaching a total of \$112bn in 2022

A significant portion of Oman's wealth, about 23%, originated from the ultra high-net-worth individuals worth more than \$100mn



Oman's wealth, about 23%, originated from ultra high-net-worth individuals worth more than \$100mn. Their contribution is expected to increase to 24% by 2027.

Furthermore, individuals with wealth between \$1mn and \$20mn held 23% of Oman's wealth in 2022, with this per-

centage expected to remain the same by 2027. Individuals with wealth below \$250,000 held 34% of the wealth, a proportion anticipated to decrease to 33% by 2027.

Farouk el Hosni, BCG principal, commented, "The success of Oman in retaining high-net-worth individuals contributes to

its growing economic prowess. Not only are they accelerating investment in the region, but they also ensure its sustained growth."

Real assets and liabilities

The BCG report also highlights the growth of real assets in Oman. Oman's real assets repre-

sented 0.9% of the region's total. However, there has been a decline in real assets from 2017 to 2022 at an annual rate of 3%, resulting in a total of \$104bn.

Despite this decline, there is optimism for the future as real assets are expected to experience growth at a rate of 4% per annum, reaching \$127bn by

2027.

Additionally, Oman's liabilities sector declined slightly by 0.2% per annum from 2017 to 2022, but it is anticipated to grow by 2.5% annually to \$9.1bn by 2027. This balanced growth demonstrates Oman's confidence in taking calculated risks, enhancing its overall growth narrative.

When it comes to wealth management, the report provides valuable insights and recommendations for wealth managers to achieve sustainable profitability.

Massi emphasised the importance of initiatives such as scalable client acquisition, distinctive private-market offerings, and the integration of new technologies in financial advice to spur revenue generation. Additionally, focusing on reviews, decisions, and tech-based solutions can lead to strategic cost management, streamlining operations, and effectively meeting various client needs.

"To ensure long-term profitability in wealth management, the strategic adoption of initiatives like scalable client acquisition, distinctive private-market offerings, and the integration of technical solutions in financial advice can spur revenue generation. By redesigning wealth management with these insights, we can unlock a future of growth, efficiency, and scalability," Massi added.

ahlibank's rights issue oversubscribed 1.4 times

Our Correspondent
Muscat

ahlibank announced the resounding success of its recent rights issue. The rights issue of an additional 400mn ordinary shares at 126zb per share, which included issue expenses of 1bz per share, was oversubscribed by 1.44 times.

This reflects the strong confidence and support of the bank's valued shareholders, the bank said in a press release on Tuesday.

Subsequently, the issuance led to an RO50mn increase in ahlibank's paid-up capital from RO194.9mn to RO244.9mn, accompanied by enhancements in CET-1 ratio and capital adequacy. The additional share capital equips ahlibank with sufficient room to pursue its growth objectives with an increased net worth, therefore strengthening its market position.

Commenting on the rights issue, Said Abdullah al Hatmi,



CEO of ahlibank remarked, "This year has been filled with many significant developments for ahlibank and we are immensely gratified with the trust and confidence placed in us by our shareholders. We would like to thank them for their valued participation in the rights issue."

"The successful rights issue provides the bank with the necessary impetus to pursue its ob-

jectives and we look forward to executing the next phase of our growth plans," Hatmi added.

As of June 30, 2023, ahlibank's total assets recorded a 4.5% growth, reaching RO3.2bn. Customer deposits increased by 9.0%, reaching RO2.4bn, while net loans and financing grew by 6.8%, reaching RO2.7bn compared to the same period in 2022,

Conference on hydraulic fracturing technology kicks off in Muscat

Muscat - The SPE International Hydraulic Fracturing Technology Conference and Exhibition kicked off at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre on Tuesday.

The three days event, from September 12-14, is organised by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Minerals and Petroleum Development Oman (PDO).

The conference is themed 'Fracturing - Growth Engine for Developing Global Oil and Gas Resources'. It aims at enabling the growth of the oil and gas energy resource base while discovering how hydraulic fracturing can contribute to achieving more cost and carbon resilient energy development.

During the opening ceremony, Mohsin Hamad al Hadhrami, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals said, "This conference serves as an extended platform for sharing knowledge, fostering collabora-



tion, and harnessing innovative solutions that will continue to propel hydraulic fracturing's contributions to our world."

"The insights of leading experts, visionary researchers, and industry trailblazers who participated in the conference and who are charting the course for the future of hydraulic fracturing technologies will illuminate the strides we've made and the chal-

lenges we must surmount to ensure the responsible and sustainable development of our oil and gas resources".

Moreover, the conference's programme features an executive plenary session including senior executives from Carbo Ceramics, Occidental of Oman, Petroleum Development Oman, Petronas, NESR and SLB. There will be three panel sessions

where panelists will discuss fracturing growth and development, new technologies, digitisation, and sustainability.

Over 50 well-experienced industry professionals are presenting their experiences, research and case studies of projects progressing the energy landscape through 14 technical sessions.

ONA

OPEC's oil supply rises in August on positive demand outlook

Vienna, Austria - Total crude oil production from the 13 members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) increased by 113,000 barrels per day (bpd) month-on-month in August.

According to OPEC's monthly oil market report released on Tuesday, total OPEC crude oil production averaged 27.45mn bpd in August.

Crude oil output increased mainly in Iran, Nigeria and Iraq, while production in Saudi Arabia, Angola, and Venezuela decreased.

Iran increased production by

143,000 bpd, followed by Nigeria with 98,000 bpd and Iraq with 38,000 bpd. Output fell by 88,000 bpd in Saudi Arabia last month, by 60,000 bpd in Angola and by 42,000 bpd in Venezuela.

The share of OPEC crude oil in total global production increased by 0.1 percentage points to stand at 27.2% in August.

Meanwhile, global oil production remained broadly unchanged, averaging 100.7mn bpd compared with the previous month.

Non-OPEC production in August declined by around



100,000 bpd to an average of 73.3mn bpd, marking a year-on-year rise of 2.3mn bpd.

Other Eurasia and China were

mainly responsible for the production rises, which more than offset any output drops in Russia.

Meanwhile, the global rig

count totalled 1,860 in August, a decrease of 34 from July, with OPEC countries accounting for 436 rigs.

A total of 40 drilling rigs were closed in non-OPEC countries, and six new rigs were engaged for production in OPEC countries.

On the other hand, global oil demand forecasts for 2023 remained broadly unchanged from the previous month's estimate.

According to the latest OPEC oil market report, global oil demand is anticipated to rise by 2.4mn bpd to average 102.1mn bpd in 2023.

Demand in the OECD region is expected to rise by 120,000 bpd to average 46.1 million bpd. Led by the US, demand in the OECD Americas is expected to witness the largest regional rise.

In the non-OECD region, total oil demand is forecast to rise by about 2.3mn bpd to an average of 55.9mn bpd in 2023.

"A steady increase in transportation and industrial fuel demand, supported by a recovery in China's activity, as well as in other non-OECD regions, is projected to boost demand in the region in 2023," the report said.

OPEC also predicted that solid

global economic growth, amid continued improvements in China, would further boost oil consumption next year.

In 2024, global oil demand is expected to grow by 'a healthy' 2.2mn bpd year on year to reach 104.3mn bpd.

The non-OECD region is set to drive this growth, increasing by about 2mn bpd, with China, India, the Middle East and Other Asia contributing the most.

The OECD is expected to grow by about 0.3mn bpd, with OECD Americas contributing the largest increase.

Anadolu Agency

IEA sees 'beginning of end' of fossil fuel era

Paris, France – For the first time, world demand for oil, gas and coal is forecast to peak this decade due to the "spectacular" growth of cleaner energy technologies and electric cars, the International Energy Agency's chief said Tuesday.

The IEA's annual World Energy Outlook, due out next month, will show that "the world is on the cusp of a historic turning point", executive director Fatih Birol wrote in a column in the Financial Times.

The shift will have implications for the battle against climate change as it will bring forward the peak in greenhouse gas emissions, Birol said.

"Fossil fuels will be with us for many years to come – but looking at our numbers, we may be witnessing the beginning of the end of the fossil fuel era," Birol said in separate comments released by the IEA.

Birol said the change is mostly driven by the "spectacular growth" of clean energy technologies and electric vehicles, along with structural changes in the Chinese economy and the fallout from the energy crisis.

Birol warned, however, that the projected declines in oil, gas and coal demand are "nowhere near steep enough to put the world on a path to limiting global warming" to 1.5 degrees Celsius – the preferred target under the Paris Agreement.

Meeting this goal "will require significantly stronger and faster policy action by governments", he added.



Fatih Birol, executive director of International Energy Agency (AFP)

IEA chief said the change is mostly driven by "spectacular growth" of clean energy technologies and electric vehicles, along with structural changes in Chinese economy and fallout from energy crisis

UN warning

The fate of fossil fuels will be at the heart of the debates at the UN's COP28 climate summit in Dubai, a major oil producer, between November 30 and December 12.

In a progress report on Friday, the United Nations warned that the world was "not on track" to meet the long-term goals of the Paris Agreement. Global greenhouse gas emissions must peak by 2025 and drop sharply thereafter to keep the 1.5C target in view, the report said.

Phasing out fossil fuels whose emissions cannot be captured or compensated is also required to achieve the goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, the UN said.

The IEA already predicted in a report in June that a peak global oil demand was "in sight" before the end of the decade, but it is the first time that it makes such an assessment for coal and gas.

"Our latest projections show that the growth of electric vehicles around the world, especially in China, means oil demand is on

course to peak before 2030," Birol said Tuesday.

After staying "stubbornly high" for the past decade, coal demand is set to peak "in the next few years", he said. And the "Golden Age of Gas" – first called by the IEA in 2011 – "is now nearing an end", with demand set to fall in advanced economies later this decade, Birol added.

"This is the result of renewables increasingly outmatching gas for producing electricity, the rise of heat pumps and Europe's accelerated shift away from gas following Russia's invasion of Ukraine," he said.

Simone Tagliapietra, a climate expert and senior fellow at the Bruegel think tank in Brussels, said that the IEA's new projections "illustrate that while still to slow, the global energy transition is firmly advancing".

"As technologies like wind and solar are now cost competitive, the transition moves from being policy-driven to being technology-driven," he said.

"This is a key feature, as it protects the process from political headwinds." Analysts at Royal Bank of Canada said in a note that the IEA's new projections highlight the "success in pro-renewables legislation".

"Despite this, there is still scope for policymakers to do more to accelerate the energy transition and the phase-out of fossil fuels, with debates continuing across major economies in areas such as renewable returns and affordability," the RBC analysts said.

AFP

WTO warns of 'first signs' of trade de-globalisation

Geneva, Switzerland – The deglobalisation of international trade is far from being a reality, but "the first signs of fragmentation" are appearing, the WTO warned Tuesday, concerned of the effects of the phenomenon on growth and development.

The idea of "de-globalisation" has gained traction since the war in Ukraine and pandemic-related lockdowns in China prompted significant disruption to global supply chains.

In its annual report on international trade, economists with the World Trade Organization (WTO) argued in favour of "reglobalisation" as "the first signs of trade fragmentation threaten to slow growth and development".

For several decades, the expansion of global trade has surpassed global economic growth, but the trend "kind of stopped around the global financial crisis of 2008-2009,



and since then, it's been kind of stagnating", WTO chief economist Ralph Ossa told AFP.

After this phase of slowing globalisation, the question is "whether we are moving towards a phase of deglobalisation", he said, as the report shows geopolitical tensions are beginning to have an impact on trade flows around the world.

"We're quite far away from deglobalising, but at the same time, you start seeing... the first cracks in the system," said

Ossa, pointing out trade fragmentation tends to follow geopolitical divisions, particularly since the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The WTO calculated trade between two geopolitical blocs that were split according to how they vote at the UN General Assembly.

It did not identify countries by name but tensions have risen between the West and Russia and China in recent years.

AFP

Russia's oil revenues drop 38% in eight months of 2023

Moscow, Russia – Russia's oil and natural gas revenues declined by 38% to 4.8tn Russian rubles (\$50bn) during the first eight months of the year due to lower prices and sale volumes, the Russian Ministry of Finance reported.

The country's oil and gas rev-

enues in August also fell by almost 20% month on month to average 642.7bn rubles (\$6.6bn), the ministry said.

EU member states agreed last December to impose a cap price of \$60 per barrel on oil delivered by sea from Russia. On February 5, a similar ban was imposed on

refined petroleum products, with a price cap of \$60 per barrel.

Russia, however, announced that it would stop oil shipments to countries imposing a price cap and instead direct its exports to Asian markets, particularly China and India, at huge discounts.

Anadolu Agency

TENDERS ADVERTISEMENT

Oman Electricity Transmission Company (OETC) Announce the following Tenders:

Sr.No	Tender No.	Tender Name	Last date for obtaining the documents	Bid Submission Date	Requirements from participators	Tender Document's Fees (Including VAT) (RO)
1	78/2023	Construction of Al Sebekhi 400kV Grid Station and associated works.	27/09/2023	24/10/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration & OETC Registration Certificate	2,625/-
2	79/2023	Consultancy Services for Design and Supervision of 400/33 kV Al Jazzier Grid Station along with associated 400kV LULO from Duqm Industrial GS to Shaleem GS.	27/09/2023	24/10/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	105/-
3	81/2023	Establishment and Implementation a Continuous On-line Condition Monitoring (OLCM) System for OETC's Network Assets - Phase 2.	27/09/2023	24/10/2023	Local Companies with Experience in Same Field, Have A Valid Commercial Registration	525/-

Participation:	Interested Companies may obtain Tender Document with the necessity Apply on E-tendering
Buying the Tender:	By E-Tendering System.
Fees:	Against non-refundable payment as mentioned above against each set of document. (Payment Through Bank Transfer) , SMEs are exempted from tender's fees.
The deadline for clarification:	Before (21) Days from bid submission date.
Submission:	The submission of hard copy will be only for Bid Bond & other documents by E-Tendering
Terms and conditions:	- No other writing or any reference thereto should be mentioned on the envelope. - The bid should be valid for not less than (90) days from bid submission date. - The Tenderer should enclose a bank guarantee issued by any bank in the Sultanate of Oman for the value of 1% of the bid value and should be valid for (90) days from bid submission date, addressed to Oman Electricity Transmission Company (SAOC). Small & Medium Enterprises are exempted from the submission of 1% of the bid bond. - Any bid not comply with the required guarantee, will not be accepted. - OETC is not bound to accept the lowest or any other offers.
Offer:	The bid bond should be submitted in Tender Box No. (1) at the company's building before 11:00 am on the assigned date for submission of the Tenders.
Company Address:	Muscat - Al Mawaleh Road No: 2153 - Building No. 423 0 Block No: 321 - Contact Details: 93515198, 91777378, 99105413
Email	tenders@omangrid.com
Website:	www.omangrid.com / link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



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Tel: +968 2428 3000 | Fax: +968 2230 9046
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إعلان طرح مناقصات

تعلن الشركة العُمانية لنقل الكهرباء عن طرح المناقصات التالية :

م	رقم المناقصة	عنوان المناقصة	آخر موعد للحصول على مستندات المناقصة	آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات	الدرجة	لمن الوثيقة (شامل ضريبة القيمة المضافة) (ر.ع.)
١	٢٠٢٣/٧٨	إنشاء محطة كهرباء الصبيحي جهد 400 ك.ف والأعمال المصاحبة لها	٢٠٢٣/٩/٢٧	٢٠٢٣/١٠/٢٤	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل جاري ساري المفعول. وشهادة تسجيل في الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء	٢,٦٢٥/-
٢	٢٠٢٣/٧٩	الخدمات الاستشارية لإنشاء محطة محولات كهرباء الجازر جهد 33 / 400 ك.ف وخطوط الكهرباء المصاحبة لها جهد 400 ك.ف. بين محطتي كهرباء القديم الصناعية و تسليم	٢٠٢٣/٩/٢٧	٢٠٢٣/١٠/٢٤	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل جاري ساري المفعول	١٠٥/-
٣	٢٠٢٣/٨١	إنشاء وتنفيذ نظام المراقبة المستمر حالة الأصول التابعة للشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء.	٢٠٢٣/٩/٢٧	٢٠٢٣/١٠/٢٤	الشركات المحلية العاملة في هذا المجال ولديها سجل جاري ساري المفعول	٥٢٥/-

الاشتراك الإلكتروني:	يمكن للشركات والمؤسسات المتخصصة الحصول على مستندات المناقصة بعد تقديم الطلب عن طريق نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
طريقة الشراء:	من خلال نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
الرسوم:	مقابل دفع المبلغ المحدد أعلاه للنسخة الواحدة - لا ترد - الدفع عن طريق التحويل البنكي) - تعفى المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة من دفع ثمن الوثيقة.
آخر موعد للاستفسارات:	قبل (٢١) يوم من تاريخ آخر موعد لتقديم العطاءات
تقديم العروض:	يتم تسليم النسخة الأصلية فقط من الضمان البنكي للعطاء في الصندوق. أما العرض فيتم تسليمه من خلال نظام المناقص الإلكتروني.
الشروط و الضمانات:	- عدم تحديد اسم صاحب العطاء أو ما يشير إليه على المظروف. - أن تكون العروض سارية المفعول لمدة لا تقل عن (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء. - إرفاق تأميناً في صورة ضمان مصرفي من أحد البنوك العاملة في البلاد قدره (٪١) من قيمة العطاء ساري لمدة (٩٠) يوماً من تاريخ تقديم العطاء. ومعنواً باسم الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء - تعفى المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة من تسليم الضمان المصرفي. - كل عطاء لا يستوفي التأمين المطلوب لن ينظر فيه. - الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء غير مقيدة بقبول أقل العروض أو أي عطاء آخر.
العرض المقدم:	يجب وضع الضمان البنكي للعطاء فقط في صندوق المناقصات رقم (١) بمبنى الشركة قبل الساعة ١١ صباحاً من التاريخ المحدد لتقديم العطاءات
عنوان الشركة:	عنوان الشركة: محافظة مسقط - الموالج رقم السكدة ٢١٥٣ - مبنى رقم ٤٢٣٠ - تفاصيل التواصل: ٩٣٥١٥١٩٨, ٩٣٥١٥١٩٨, ٩٩١٠٥٤١٣
البريد الإلكتروني:	tenders@omangrid.com
الموقع الإلكتروني:	www.omangrid.com link of E-Tendering System https://www.omangrid.com/en/Pages/Services.aspx



الشركة العمانية لنقل الكهرباء ش.م.ع.م
ص.ب. : ١٣٨٩. الخوض. الرمز البريدي : ١٣٢. سلطنة عمان
الهاتف : ٩١٨٢٤٢٨٣٠٠ / الفاكس : ٩١٨٢٢٣٠٩٠٤٦
الموقع الإلكتروني : www.omangrid.com



Adhering to ISO standards a transformative step towards success: Oman Broadband CEO

Oman Broadband company has obtained international recognition from International Organization for Standardization (ISO) by receiving three ISO certifications, through which it approves the accomplishment of a comprehensive management system.

The QHSE team in the Division of Enterprise Performance made that achievement, and it enhances the core values of the institution represented in reliability, efficiency, cooperation, responsibility, and innovation.

The company has received ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System Certification, ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety, and ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System.

This international recognition reflects the commitment of Oman Broadband to international standards and demonstrates its excellence, sustainability, and stakeholder confidence.

Obtaining these prestigious certifications accentuates the company's firm commitment to provide outstanding service and maintaining a safe, healthy, and sustainable work environment,



and loyalty, as these certifications will guarantee adherence to the sector's legal requirements and regulations. Wahaibi mentioned that the certifications not only reduce the risks of legal cases, but also illustrate to stakeholders that we are a trustworthy and reliable partner.

Wahaibi said that adherence to ISO standards is not just a mere operational change, but a transformative step towards long-term success as well.

"By incorporating these standards into our daily work, we ensure that every part of our organisation, from administrators to frontline staff, works in line with internationally recognized best practices."

and is also another notable achievement that boosts Oman Broadband's position in ITHCA Group and the ICT sector.

Obtaining ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System Certification is an acknowledgment to the company's commitment to a customer-centered, quality assurance and continuous improvement approach. This

certification is also evidence of the continuous pursuit of efficiency and reliability in all business operations.

Attaining ISO 45001:2018 Occupational Health and Safety is a global standard for health management systems and occupational safety, demonstrating the company's commitment to providing a safer and healthier

work environment. It also emphasizes responsibility towards employees, stakeholders and society overall. ISO 14001:2015 certification for the environmental management system, confirms the dedication to managing environmental responsibilities effectively, in line with the company's commitment to sustainability.

In this respect, Sultan bin Ahmed al Wahaibi, CEO of Oman Broadband, assures the numerous implications of these achievements, as it enhances the company's reputation and prioritizes quality, health, safety, and environment.

Such achievements can distinguish us in a vital and competitive sector and would lead to

improving operational efficiency, through the alignment of our operation with ISO standards, Wahaibi added.

He noted that the company can also identify areas of improvement and implement strategies to reduce costs and enhance productivity. The operational efficiency would probably enhance customer satisfaction

NLGIC, Ahlia creates 'Liva Insurance' brand on integration

National Life & General Insurance Company SAOG (NLGIC) and Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance (Middle East) BSC (c), along with their Omani subsidiary Al Ahlia Insurance Company SAOC (Al Ahlia), joined forces with the vision of creating a fully integrated multi-line insurance powerhouse in the region.

The two entities came together to form a fully integrated multi-line insurance company in the region which now has a new brand identity - 'Liva'.

Following the integration, all existing NLGIC and Al Ahlia insurance policies will soon be serviced under the new brand Liva Insurance SAOC with no change to the terms and conditions of the policies. This will take place after obtaining all necessary regulatory approvals which is expected to

be completed swiftly within the coming few weeks. In this transition to the new brand Liva, both NLGIC and Al Ahlia will ensure the maintenance and continuity of services across all the product ranges.

"We are delighted to share the union of NLGIC and Al Ahlia Insurance, now united under the banner of Liva Insurance. With the combined experience and technical expertise of NLGIC and Al Ahlia insurance, we are confident that we will enhance the insurance experience of our customers and stakeholders, we look forward to a new chapter of excellence and innovation," said Hanaa al Hinai, CEO of Al Ahlia Insurance, which will become Liva Insurance SAOC.

The integration will make Liva Insurance SAOC a multi-line insurer, a release stated.

KR Eshraqa completes projects in Dima Wa Tayeen

Reaching another milestone in uplifting communities and making a positive impact, the Khimji Ramdas (KR) Eshraqa Foundation has announced the completion of its social development projects in the wilayat of Dima Wa Tayeen, taking the tally of the number of wilayats that Eshraqa has supported to six.

To mark the initiative's completion, the Eshraqa team visited wilayat Dima Wa Tayeen, where they met H E Sayyid Tariq bin Mahmood al Busaidi, Wali of Dima Wa Tayeen, and had the opportunity to tour various government institutions that have been supported through their initiatives.

These included schools, hospitals, and the Al Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities.

Sharing his thoughts on the successful completion of the project, Nailesh Khimji, Director, Khimji Ramdas mentioned, "Our commitment to the welfare of the communities we serve is unwavering. The KR Eshraqa Foundation believes in creating lasting



change and empowering individuals to lead better lives, in line with the statutes set by Oman's Vision 2040.

"The completion of our projects in Dima Wa Tayeen is a testament to our dedication, and we are pleased with the positive impact they are having on the community. As we now move onto the next Wilayat, we are deter-

mined to keep this momentum going; extending our efforts to deserving communities across the nation."

H E Sayyid Tariq bin Mahmood al Busaidi appreciated the KR Eshraqa Foundation for their contribution towards the enhancement of educational, healthcare, and social infrastructure in Dima Wa Tayeen.

He made a special mentioned about the foundation's support to the Al Wafa Center for the Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities, who have received sensory room equipment to enhance the care provided to children with special needs.

"We commend their commitment to advancing our nation's socio-economic progress; and

hope to see more private sector companies emulate them in making meaningful societal contributions."

In 2022, the KR Eshraqa Foundation concentrated its efforts on Wilayat Dima Wa Tayeen, implementing various social projects targeting the key sectors of education, healthcare, and community wellbeing. These initiatives have left a lasting impact on the region.

Education: Support for 16 government schools, including the provision of CCTVs, Smart Boards, Smart TVs, sewing machines, and desktops with tables. **Health:** Assistance to one government hospital and three health centers through the donation of essential medical equipment, including electronic beds, electronic weighing scales, dental ultrasonic scalers, vital signs monitors, and cardiac monitors. **Community Wellbeing:** Al Wafa Centre for the Rehabilitation of Children with Disabilities received sensory room equipment to enhance the care provided to children with special needs.

Al Imtiaz Private School opens in Muscat

ABQ Education Group's first private school, Al Imtiaz Private School, opened for the first time at the end of August.

This milestone represents a significant step towards enhancing educational opportunities in the region, catering to students from Kindergarten to Grade 4 with confirmed plans for expansion up to Grade 12. The school offers a world-class international curriculum delivered by highly qualified teachers from all over the world.

"We are immensely proud to introduce Al Imtiaz Private School to the vibrant community of Bawshar and surrounds. Our commitment to providing exceptional education with an international perspective to a wider community is reflected in this purpose-built campus," said ABQ Education Group Chief Executive Officer Humayun Kabir.

Al Imtiaz Private School opened its doors to nearly 150 enthusiastic students this academic year and is ready for tremendous growth in the years



ahead. "We are dedicated to nurturing young minds, fostering a love for learning, and shaping the leaders of tomorrow," added Hanane Feggadi, the principal of the school.

Feggadi brings a wealth of experience to her role, having previously served at two of ABQ's premium international schools. Her deep understanding of both the cultural context and academic excellence makes her the ideal leader for this new school.

Situated on a purpose-built campus that was formerly home to one of ABQ's renowned inter-

national schools, Al Imtiaz boasts excellent facilities. The school is equipped with modern classrooms, several play areas, an IT lab, an art room, an indoor gym, a swimming pool and basketball and football facilities to support a well-rounded educational experience.

"We believe in providing students with the tools and environment necessary for holistic growth and development. Al Imtiaz is well-equipped to foster academic excellence, creativity, and physical well-being," emphasised Kabir

Al Mouj Marina prepares for 'Whale Shark Season'

Oman's natural wonders are set to take center stage once again as the eagerly anticipated Whale Shark Season approaches.

From September to November, Al Mouj Marina invites both locals and global travellers to witness the grandeur of these magnificent creatures in their natural habitat.

Whale sharks, the largest living fish species, grace Oman's waters during this season, captivating all who are fortunate enough to encounter them. Contrary to their name, these gentle giants are known for their peaceful disposition, allowing for an up-close experience that leaves an indelible mark on visitors.

With an average length of 6 to 10 metres and a record-breaking 18.8 metres, the sheer size of these creatures is awe-inspiring. What's more remarkable is their diet - despite their immense size, they sustain themselves by feeding on some of the smallest inhabitants of the ocean, underscoring nature's intricate balance.



For those seeking a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, Al Mouj Marina serves as the ultimate gateway to this extraordinary experience. Nestled near the captivating Daymaniyat Islands, the marina collaborates with esteemed operators to offer guided whale shark tours. This unique opportunity allows visitors to immerse themselves in the mesmerising underwater world and witness these majestic beings.

Diving enthusiasts and nature lovers alike will be enchanted by the opportunity to swim alongside these graceful creatures in

the crystal-clear waters. The experience is bound to evoke wonder and awe as the enormity and elegance of the whale sharks come into view, creating memories that will forever be etched in the minds of participants.

Central to Al Mouj Marina's ethos is its commitment to responsible tourism and environmental conservation. The operators adhere to strict guidelines that prioritize the well-being of the whale sharks and the preservation of their habitat. By engaging in this remarkable encounter, visitors become active

participants in the ongoing efforts to protect and conserve these magnificent animals.

Whether you're a marine enthusiast, a seeker of adventure, or simply someone looking to connect with the natural world, Oman's Whale Shark Season promises an experience like no other. Al Mouj Marina welcomes you to join them on a transformative journey, delving deep into the enchanting world of these majestic creatures.

Opened in 2011, Al Mouj Marina was the first in the region to be awarded International Clean Marina and 5 Gold Anchor accreditation, and it will ultimately provide 400 berths to make it one of the largest marinas in the Middle East.

Located in Al Mouj Muscat, Oman's first Integrated Tourism Complex, the thriving lifestyle community is now home to 8,000 people from 85 countries, and attracts over 4.9mn annual visitors to its boulevard style, world-class retail, dining and leisure experiences.

At least 2,300 people killed in ‘epic’ Libya floods, thousands more missing

Benghazi, Libya - At least 2,300 people were killed in Libya and thousands more were reported missing after catastrophic flash floods broke river dams and tore through an eastern coastal city, devastating entire neighbourhoods.

As global concern spread, multiple nations offered to urgently send aid and rescue teams to help the war-scarred country that has been overwhelmed by what one UN official labelled ‘a calamity of epic proportions’.

Massive destruction shattered the Mediterranean coastal city of Derna, home to 100,000 people, where multi-storey buildings on the river banks collapsed and houses and cars vanished in the raging waters.

Libyan emergency services on the ground reported an initial death toll of more than 2,300 in Derna alone and said more than 5,000 people remained missing while about 7,000 were injured.

“The situation in Derna is shocking and very dramatic,” said Osama Ali of the Tripoli-based Rescue and Emergency Service. “We need more support to save lives because there are people still under the rubble and every minute counts.”

The floods were caused by torrential rains from Storm Daniel, which made landfall in Libya on Sunday after earlier lashing Greece, Bulgaria and



This handout picture shows a view of vehicles piled up along the side of a coastal road in the eastern city of Derna, about 290 kilometres east of Benghazi (AFP)

Turkey. Derna, 250km (150 miles) west of Benghazi, is ringed by hills and bisected by what is normally a dry riverbed in summer, but which has turned into a raging torrent of mud-brown

water that also swept away several major bridges.

The number of dead given by the Libyan service roughly matched the grim early estimates provided by the Red

Cross and by local authorities in the eastern region, who have warned the death toll may yet rise further. “The death toll is huge and might reach thousands,” Tamer Ramadan of the

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies earlier told reporters.

“We confirm from our independent sources of information that the number of missing peo-

ple is hitting 10,000 persons so far,” Ramadan said via video link from Tunisia, which borders Libya.

Footage on Libyan TV showed dozens of bodies, wrapped in

We confirm from our independent sources of information that the number of missing people is hitting 10,000 persons so far

TAMER RAMADAN

blankets or sheets, on Derna’s main square, awaiting identification and burial, and more bodies in Martouba, a village about 30km to the southeast.

More than 300 victims were buried on Monday, many in mass graves - but vastly greater numbers of people were feared lost in the waters of the river that empties into the Mediterranean Sea.

Libya, an oil-rich country in north Africa, is still recovering from the years of war and chaos that followed the 2011 NATO-backed popular uprising which toppled and killed longtime dictator Muammar Gaddafi.

The country is now divided between two rival governments - the UN-brokered, internationally recognised administration based in the capital Tripoli in the west, and a separate administration in the eastern region impacted by the flood disaster.

AFP

US signs off on transfer of frozen funds to Iran in prisoner deal

Washington, US - The United States confirmed on Monday it had signed off on the transfer of US\$6bn in frozen Iranian funds from South Korea, paving the way for five US citizens to leave Tehran.

The archenemies announced last month, after protracted negotiations, a deal in which the US citizens were freed from prison and put under house arrest, with the expectation they will fly out of Iran once the funds are moved to an account in Qatar.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken notified Congress that he had gone ahead on a key part of the agreement, signing a waiver that will shield banks involved in the transfer from US sanctions.

The money transfer is ‘a critical step in securing the release of these five US citizens’, a State Department spokesperson said.

President Joe Biden’s administration has insisted that Iran will only be allowed to use the money to buy food, medicine and other humanitarian goods, a point contested by Iran’s clerical state, a nemesis of Washington since the 1979 Islamic Revolution overthrew the pro-Western shah.

“We have not lifted any of our sanctions on Iran, and Iran is not receiving any sanctions relief,” the State Department spokesperson said on customary condition of anonymity.

AFP

US police warn escaped Brazilian killer is armed

Washington, US - US police hunting escaped killer Danelo Cavalcante warned early on Tuesday that he was armed as they searched for him in a township northwest of Philadelphia.

The 34-year-old Brazilian national scaled the wall of Chester County Prison in Pennsylvania on August 31 and for nearly two weeks has evaded a massive manhunt by hundreds of law enforcement officers with helicopters, drones and search dogs.

Cavalcante’s jailbreak came a week after he was sentenced to life for stabbing his girlfriend to death in front of her children in 2021.

According to police, he is also wanted for homicide in Brazil.

Pennsylvania State Police said early on Tuesday they were pursuing the fugitive in South Coventry Township, Chester County, 30 miles (50km) northwest of Philadelphia. “Cavalcante is armed with a weapon. Residents in the area are asked continue to lock all external doors and windows, secure vehicles, and remain indoors,” the state police said in a Facebook post.



Escaped convicted murderer Danelo Souza Cavalcante (AFP)

Police also upped the reward for information on Cavalcante’s whereabouts, from US\$20,000 to US\$25,000. They asked residents to check their surveillance cameras and contact the police if they saw anything suspicious, while warning them not to approach Cavalcante.

South Coventry is nine miles northwest of the town of Phoenixville, where he was spotted at the weekend. Police said Cavalcante had changed his appearance, shaving off the dark beard and mustache seen on his original ‘wanted’ poster.

AFP

Israel top court hears petitions against divisive judicial reform

Jerusalem - A leading pro-government lawmaker called on Israel’s Supreme Court to dismiss petitions against a key plank of the government’s controversial judicial reforms, saying Tuesday’s hearing was harming ‘the soul of Israel’s democracy’.

A full 15-judge panel of the top court convened to hear petitions to strike down amendment of the so-called ‘reasonableness doctrine’ that the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu passed through parliament as a basic law in July.

Since the judicial overhaul was first unveiled in January, Israel has been rocked by mass street protests that have divided the nation.

The amendment limits the powers of the court to review and sometimes overturn government decisions, which opponents say paves the way to authoritarian rule.

Dozens of noisy demonstrators gathered outside the court building on Tuesday, banging drums, blowing whistles, chanting and waving Israeli flags.



President of the Israeli Supreme Court Esther Hayut and all judges assemble to hear petitions against the ‘reasonableness clause’ at the court premises in Jerusalem, on Tuesday (AFP)

Chief Justice Esther Hayut said there were eight petitions filed against the legislation limiting the ‘reasonableness doctrine’.

“It’s clear you think that the duty to act reasonably applies to the government and its ministers,” Hayut said, addressing a lawyer representing parliament.

“But who makes sure they indeed do so?”

Pro-government lawmaker

Simcha Rothman, who as head of the Constitution, Law and Justice Committee proposed the amendment in parliament, told the court the hearing was ‘a failure’ in itself.

“Why do we even need a legal procedure or ruling that will harm the soul of democracy?” he asked.

“For years, in a gradual process of sophisticated legal ar-

guments, the Israeli court gave itself unprecedented authorities,” he said, arguing there was no ‘justification’ for the court to rule on a government’s functioning.

Lawyer Ilan Bombach, who is representing the government, told reporters that if the court intervened in ‘basic laws’ then ‘we won’t be the same democratic country we used to be’.

AFP

Oslo Accords promise turned into ‘destroyed dreams’ in Gaza

Gaza City, Palestinian Territories - Three decades after a historic handshake on the White House lawn that capped months of secret Israeli-Palestinian talks, disillusioned young Gazans face the consequences and failed promises of the once-celebrated Oslo Accords.

The agreements inked in the early 1990s were meant to lead to an independent Palestinian state, but years of stalled negotiations and bloody violence have left any peaceful resolution of the ongoing conflict a distant dream.

In the blockaded Gaza Strip, ‘the Oslo Accords... destroyed



A view of Gaza City during a dust wave on Tuesday (AFP)

our dreams, future and ambitions’, said 20-year-old student Iman Hassouna. She was not born when Palestine Liberation

Organization (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat returned to Gaza from exile months after the September 13, 1993 signing cere-

mony in Washington.

The interim accords granted the nascent Palestinian Authority some level of self-government but never expanded into a lasting solution, which ‘has had a negative effect on the future of my generation’, according to 22-year-old Adham Abdullah.

Fellow student Ahmed al-Abadila, 20, said what remains of the accords is ‘nothing but ink on paper’.

Mustafa al-Sununu arrived in Gaza alongside Arafat in July 1994 and was subsequently named captain of the Palestinian presidential guard.

“We thought the country would become like Singapore: open roads, work opportunities for our children, a government, an airport, a port and a passport,” Sununu, now 47, told AFP.

“We thought the state was within reach.”

‘Prison’

Gaza, a narrow coastal enclave, is now home to some 2.3mn people, according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

Daily struggles in the impoverished territory have been exacerbated by a crippling Israeli-led blockade since Hamas Islamists

took control in 2007, two years after Israel withdrew troops and settlers.

Unemployment is rife with about 70 per cent of young people without a job in Gaza, where residents regularly suffer power cuts and inadequate access to clean water.

“All countries have airports, border posts, ports... while our airport was destroyed and our borders have been closed,” said Israa Murad. “We’re in prison,” according to the 21-year-old who studies journalism at Gaza City’s Al-Aqsa University.

AFP

Kim in Russia for Putin talks as US warns on arms deal

Experts say Moscow will likely seek artillery shells and antitank missiles from North Korea

Moscow, Russia - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un arrived in Russia on Tuesday ahead of a meeting with President Vladimir Putin that the United States has warned could see an arms deal to support Moscow's assault on Ukraine.

Making a rare foreign trip and his first since the pandemic, an unsmiling Kim waved from the doorway of his heavily armoured private train as it departed Pyongyang on Sunday evening, according to images published by North Korean state media.

Kim will meet Putin at an unspecified location in Russia's Far East region later this week, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. Putin is currently attending the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok, the Far East city closest to the North Korean border, though there has been no indication that the pair would hold their talks there.

Experts say Moscow will likely seek artillery shells and antitank missiles from North Korea, which wants advanced satellite and nuclear-powered submarine technology in return. The White



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un waving as he departs by train from Pyongyang for a visit to Russia on Sunday (AFP)

Kim Jong Un will meet the Russian president at an unspecified location in Russia's Far East region later this week, according to Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov

House warned last week that North Korea would 'pay a price' if it supplies Russia with weaponry for the conflict in Ukraine.

Defying the warnings, Kim left North Korea for Russia on Sunday, according to the official Ko-

rean Central News Agency (KCNA). He was accompanied by top North Korean military officials, including officials in charge of weapons production and space technology, it added. Peskov said the two leaders

would 'cooperate on sensitive areas that should not be the subject of public disclosure and announcements'. KCNA images showed Kim's being given a 'warm send-off' complete with red carpet and honour guard at Pyongyang station at around 18h38 (0938 GMT).

On Tuesday, Russian state news agency Ria Novosti said Kim had crossed the border, with images showing the train with dark green carriages being pulled along a track by a Russian Rail-

ways locomotive.

Steadfast allies

Kim is travelling to Russia with his top military officials including Korean People's Army Marshal Pak Jong Chon and Munitions Industry Department Director Jo Chun Ryong, analysts said. This indicates a Putin-Kim summit 'is likely to heavily focus on Russia and North Korea's possible military cooperation', Yang Moo-jin, president of University of North Korean Studies in Seoul, said.

Moscow sent Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu to Pyongyang in July. He has recently mooted bilateral joint naval drills. Kim has been steadfast in his support for Moscow's Ukraine invasion, including, Washington says, supplying rockets and missiles.

But both Moscow and Pyongyang have denied North Korea has or will supply arms to Russia, which has eaten into its vast stockpiles of munitions fighting since it launched its assault on Ukraine early last year.

Kim has not travelled outside North Korea since the start of the coronavirus pandemic. His last proper overseas trip was in 2019, also to Russia to meet Putin.

"North Korea has the crude ammunition that Putin needs for his illegal war in Ukraine, while Moscow has submarine, ballistic, and satellite technologies that could help Pyongyang leapfrog engineering challenges it suffers under economic sanctions," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

AFP



Australia's former minister for Home Affairs Karen Andrews (AFP)

Former Australian minister 'harassed in parliament'

Sydney, Australia - Australia's former home affairs minister said on Tuesday a male colleague used to breathe down her neck as she spoke in parliament, becoming the latest woman to question the country's political culture.

Karen Andrews, now a senior conservative politician, said when she raised the unnamed man's behaviour with others she was asked: "Can't you take a joke?"

The macho nature of Australian politics was highlighted in late 2021 when a scathing review found the country's halls of power rife with heavy drinking, bullying, and sexual harassment.

Similar criticism flared again earlier this year, when two politicians from different sides of the aisle accused the same conservative senator of sexual assault.

Andrews, who will retire at the next election, added her voice to the chorus of condemnation in an interview with Australian broadcaster ABC.

"I did have one of my male colleagues who used to breathe on

I did have one of my male colleagues who used to breathe on the back of my neck in question time

KAREN ANDREWS

the back of my neck in question time," Andrews said when asked if she had experienced harassment in parliament.

"I'd just be sitting there minding my own business and I would have the back of my neck breathed on. And if I asked a question, it would be: 'That was a great question, thrusting and probing'... that sort of stuff."

A broad review published in November 2021 found that one in three people working inside Australia's Parliament House had experienced some form of sexual harassment.

AFP

Detective Brand recovers stolen Van Gogh painting

The Hague, Netherlands - A Dutch art detective has recovered a precious Vincent van Gogh painting that was stolen from a museum in a daring midnight heist during the coronavirus lockdown three-and-a-half years ago, police said on Tuesday.

Arthur Brand took possession of the missing painting, the 1884 *Parsonage Garden at Nuenen in Spring*, worth between three and six million euros (US\$3.2mn), at his Amsterdam home on Monday, stuffed in a blue IKEA bag, dubbed the 'Indiana Jones of the Art World' for tracing a series of high-profile lost artworks, told AFP that confirming the painting was the stolen Van Gogh was 'one of the greatest moments of my life'.

"Arthur Brand, in cooperation with the Dutch police, has

solved this matter," Richard Bronswijk of the Dutch police arts crime unit confirmed to AFP. "This is definitely the real one, there's no doubt about it."

Brand told AFP that frequent calls by him and the Dutch police to hand back the stolen artwork finally paid off when a man, whose identity was not revealed for his own safety, handed Brand the painting in a blue IKEA bag, covered with bubble-wrap and stuffed in a pillow casing.

A video clip supplied by Brand showed him unpacking the painting in his lounge and gasping in astonishment when he realised what it was.

"I couldn't believe it," he said.

The painting was burgled from the Singer Laren Museum near Amsterdam on March 30, 2020 in a heist that made headlines around the world.

Dutch police released video images shortly after the burglary showing a thief smashing through a glass door in the middle of the night, before running out with the painting tucked under his right arm.

In April 2021, police arrested a man named in Dutch media as Nils M for the theft. He was later convicted and sentenced to eight years behind bars.

M was also convicted for stealing another masterpiece by Frans Hals called *Two Laughing Boys* in a separate heist.

'After a few months I heard from a source in the criminal world who had bought the Van Gogh', from Nils M, said Brand, who has gained fame for his remarkable recoveries of stolen art, including the 'Hitler's Horses' bronze statues and a Picasso painting.

AFP

Philippine Nobel winner Maria Ressa acquitted of tax evasion

Manila, Philippines - Philippine Nobel laureate Maria Ressa was cleared on Tuesday of tax evasion following a five-year legal battle, hailing the verdict as a win for press freedom and voicing hope she will be cleared of other charges she insists are politically motivated.

The 59-year-old, who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 2021, has been fighting multiple charges filed during former president Rodrigo Duterte's administration.

Despite the acquittal, Ressa and Rappler, the news website she co-founded in 2012, face an uncertain future as they contest another two court cases.

A vocal critic of Duterte and his deadly drug war, Ressa has long maintained that the charges against her and Rappler were politically motivated.

"You gotta have faith," a visibly relieved Ressa told reporters outside the court after the acquittal.



Maria Ressa reacts outside the Pasig Regional Trial Court in Pasig, Metro Manila on Tuesday (AFP)

"Guys, it's up to us. We hold the line, and this proved that we can hold the line."

Ressa and Rappler had faced five government charges of tax evasion stemming from the 2015 issue of Philippine depository re-

ceipts, used by companies to raise money from foreign investors.

A court acquitted them on four charges in January. The fifth was heard by a different court, which cleared her and Rappler of wrong-

doing on Tuesday.

"Today, we celebrate the triumph of facts over politics," Rappler said in a statement.

"We thank the court for this just decision."

AFP

US explorer rescued after nine days in narrow tunnels of Turkish cave

Istanbul, Turkey - An international team of rescuers on Tuesday pulled to safety a US explorer who spent nine days trapped deep in the narrow tunnels of a Turkish cave with internal bleeding.

"Mark Dickey was removed from the last exit of the cave," the Turkish Caving Federation said, adding that the 'cave rescue part of the operation has ended successfully'.

The 40-year-old explorer developed stomach problems while examining the depths of the Morca Cave, a remote com-

plex of twisting underground passageways in southern Turkey's Taurus Mountains.

The cave, Turkey's third-deepest, reaches nearly 1.3km (0.8 miles) below ground at its lowest point.

Dickey fell ill at a depth of 1,120 metres (3,695 feet), sparking what organisers said was one of the largest and most complicated underground rescue operations ever mounted.

An international team of 200 rescuers, fellow explorers and medics began to cautiously pull Dickey to safety after first giving



US caver Mark Dickey speaks to the camera while standing at a camp in the Morca Cave of the Taurus Mountains in southern Turkey (AFP)

him infusions of blood.

They first strapped him to a stretcher, which sometimes needed to be lifted vertically by rope through particularly narrow passageways.

The teams pulling the ropes would occasionally take breaks, climbing back up to the surface before returning underground.

"We congratulate all those who contributed," the Turkish Caving Federation said.

'Saved my life'

Officials said Dickey's health has been steadily improving for a

few days.

"He is in good health in general. He continues to be fed with liquids," Cenk Yildiz, the head of the local branch of Turkey's emergency response service, told reporters late on Sunday.

"We have resolved his stomach bleeding issues with plasma and serum support."

In a video recorded on Wednesday, Dickey thanked the Turkish government for its help.

"The quick response of the Turkish government to get the medical supplies that I needed, in my opinion saved my life,"

Dickey said.

The European Cave Rescue Association (ECRA) called Dickey an experienced explorer with a medical background.

The New York state native is a 'well-known figure in the international speleological community, a highly trained caver, and a cave rescuer himself,' the ECRA said. "In addition to his activities as a speleologist, he is also the secretary of the ECRA medical committee and an instructor for cave rescue organisations in the USA."

AFP

Race against time to find survivors 4 days after Morocco earthquake

Marrakesh, Morocco - Hopes dimmed on Tuesday in Morocco's search for survivors, four days after a powerful earthquake killed more than 2,900 people, most of them in remote villages of the High Atlas Mountains.

Search-and-rescue teams from the kingdom and from abroad kept digging through the rubble of broken mud-brick homes, hoping for signs of life in a race against time following the 6.8-magnitude quake late on Friday. The Red Cross appealed for more than US\$100mn in aid to meet the 'most pressing needs', including water, shelter, health and sanitation services.

"We need to make sure we avoid a second wave of disaster," said Caroline Holt, global director of operations at the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In the tourist hub of Marrakesh, whose UNESCO-listed historic centre suffered cracks and other major damage, many families still slept out in the open, huddled in blankets on public squares for fear of aftershocks.

But the need was most desperate in remote and poor mountain villages, many only reachable via winding dirt roads, where traditional adobe homes crumbled to rubble and dust and inhabitants have searched by hand for missing relatives.

Dozens of quake survivors crowded around the open back doors of a truck in Amizmiz waiting for the packages of food aid being handed out by volunteers



A volunteer reacts amid the rubble of destroyed houses in the village of Douzrou on Tuesday following a 6.8-magnitude quake (AFP)

on Tuesday. "We have nothing. We lost everything. We're here just to get some food to eat," said 39-year-old Fatima Benhamoud, who received a box with beans, canned food and crackers.

Her home in Azmizmiz collapsed in the quake and her children barely managed to escape with their lives. "But what are we

going to do when people stop helping us?" she asked.

Rescuers, aid trucks and private volunteers kept travelling to stricken villages in the barren foothills of the High Atlas, many accessible only via dusty dirt roads affected by rockfalls.

In the village of Asni, in the worst-hit province of Al-Haouz,

the army set up a field hospital with medical tents where more than 300 patients had been treated by Monday, Colonel Youssef Qamouss told AFP.

"The hospital was deployed 48 hours ago," he said, adding that it has an X-ray unit, pharmacy and other facilities. "It started operating this morning

and we're already at more or less 300 patients."

Many Moroccan citizens have rushed to help quake victims with food, water, blankets and other aid or by donating blood to help treat the injured, an effort joined by the national football team. The quake was Morocco's strongest on record and the

deadliest to hit the North African country since a 1960 earthquake destroyed Agadir on the Atlantic coast, killing between 12,000 and 15,000 people.

Overall, at least 2,901 people have died and 5,530 been injured in the latest tragedy, according to an official toll issued on Tuesday. AFP

India: Two deaths in Kerala due to Nipah virus

New Delhi, India - Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday confirmed that the two deaths in Kerala's Kozhikode district have been caused by the Nipah virus.

The Union Health Minister added that currently four patients suspected to be infected with Nipah virus are under surveillance and their samples have been sent for testing.

A Central team has been sent to Kerala to take stock of the situation and assist the state government in Nipah virus management, Mandaviya said in a press conference here.

"I have spoken to the Health Minister of Kerala, there have been reports of this virus several times this season. Cases are coming up, this virus is spread by bats. A guideline has been prepared by the Health Ministry regarding this so that we can take precautions," Mandaviya said.

The first death took place on August 30 and the second death on September 11.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Tuesday said that the State government is viewing the two 'unnatural deaths' reported from Kozhikode very seriously and that the health department has issued an alert in the district.

ANI

Putin: Trump legal cases 'politically motivated'

Moscow, Russia - Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday described legal proceedings against former US president Donald Trump as 'politically motivated persecution'.

The Kremlin has repeatedly spoken out in defence of the former president, who is facing a series of charges linked to election interference.

"As for the persecution of Trump, for us, in the current environment, it's good because it shows the rottenness of the American system," Putin said at an economic forum in the far eastern city of Vladivostok.

"It is a politically motivated persecution of one's competitor," Putin, who served in the So-



Russia's President Vladimir Putin addresses the audience during the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok on Tuesday (AFP)

viet security services, added: "And this shows who we are fighting ... As they said in Soviet times: 'the bestial face of American imperialism'." Relations be-

tween Washington and Moscow have hit new lows since the Kremlin launched large-scale hostilities in Ukraine last year. AFP

Indian police arrest cow vigilante leader

New Delhi, India - Indian police arrested on Tuesday the leader of a vigilante group devoted to protecting cows who had been accused of inciting deadly religious riots near New Delhi in July.

Monu Manesar leads a chapter of the radical Hindu right-wing group Bajrang Dal and is a suspect in the mob lynching in February of two Muslim men accused of cow smuggling.

Cows are considered sacred by Hindus and their slaughter is illegal in many Indian states.

Manesar remained free and continued to post inflammatory anti-Muslim content regularly on Facebook and Instagram for months after authorities linked him to the murders.

Monu Manesar leads a chapter of Bajrang Dal and is a suspect in the mob lynching in February of two men

He announced in July plans to attend a Hindu procession in Nuh, a largely Muslim district near the capital.

At least six people were killed and dozens more injured in the resulting unrest, which continued for days and spilled over to Delhi's outskirts.

Nuh district police officer Shubhjeet Singh confirmed Manesar's arrest on charges of spreading hateful content on social media.

Singh said Manesar would

be handed over to police in Rajasthan state, where charges have been registered against him over the February double-murder. Manesar ultimately did not attend the July procession in Nuh, which saw cars set alight and stones hurled at participants.

The violence soon spread to nearby Gurugram, a key business centre and satellite of Delhi where Nokia, Samsung and other multinationals have their Indian headquarters.

In one neighbourhood, a mob of around 200 people armed with sticks and stones looted several Muslim-owned meat shops and set fire to a restaurant while chanting Hindu religious slogans.

Manesar regularly posted videos celebrating attacks on Muslims accused of transporting or killing cows.

India has seen numerous outbreaks of sectarian violence between majority Hindus and its 200mn-strong Muslim minority since Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi took office in 2014.

Critics have accused his government of turning a blind eye to vigilante campaigns. AFP

WFP: Cuts could push 24mn to brink of famine

Geneva, Switzerland - The World Food Programme said on Tuesday that shrinking funding was forcing it to drastically slash rations in many operations, warning that 24mn more people risked being pushed to the brink of starvation.

The United Nations agency said it had been struggling to meet growing global needs for food assistance while facing a funding shortfall of over 60 per cent this year - the highest in its history.

"For the first time ever, WFP has seen contributions decreasing while needs steadily increase," it said in a statement.

This could have dire consequences, with WFP experts estimating that for every one per cent cut in food assistance, more than 400,000 people risk falling into emergency levels of hunger.

Given the dramatic cuts it is



If we don't receive the support we need to avert the catastrophe, the world will see more conflict, more unrest, and more hunger

CINDY MCCAIN

being forced to make, WFP cautioned in a statement that 'an additional 24 mn people could slip into emergency hunger over the next 12 months - a 50 per cent increase on the current level'.

WFP chief Cindy McCain said more funding was essential.

"If we don't receive the support we need to avert further catastrophe, the world will undoubtedly see more conflict,

more unrest, and more hunger," she said in a statement.

"Either we fan the flames of global instability, or we work quickly to put out the fire."

'Vital lifeline'

WFP estimates that 345mn people worldwide are facing acute food insecurity, at level three or higher on the UN's five-scale food insecurity classification,

known as IPC.

A full 40mn of them are currently considered to be in emergency levels of hunger, or IPC level 4, meaning they are forced to take desperate measures to survive and are at risk of dying from malnutrition.

"WFP's food assistance is a vital lifeline, often the only thing separating them from starvation," it said.

And yet the agency said it had already been forced to make massive reductions in nearly half of its operations, including in hotspots like Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Haiti and Syria.

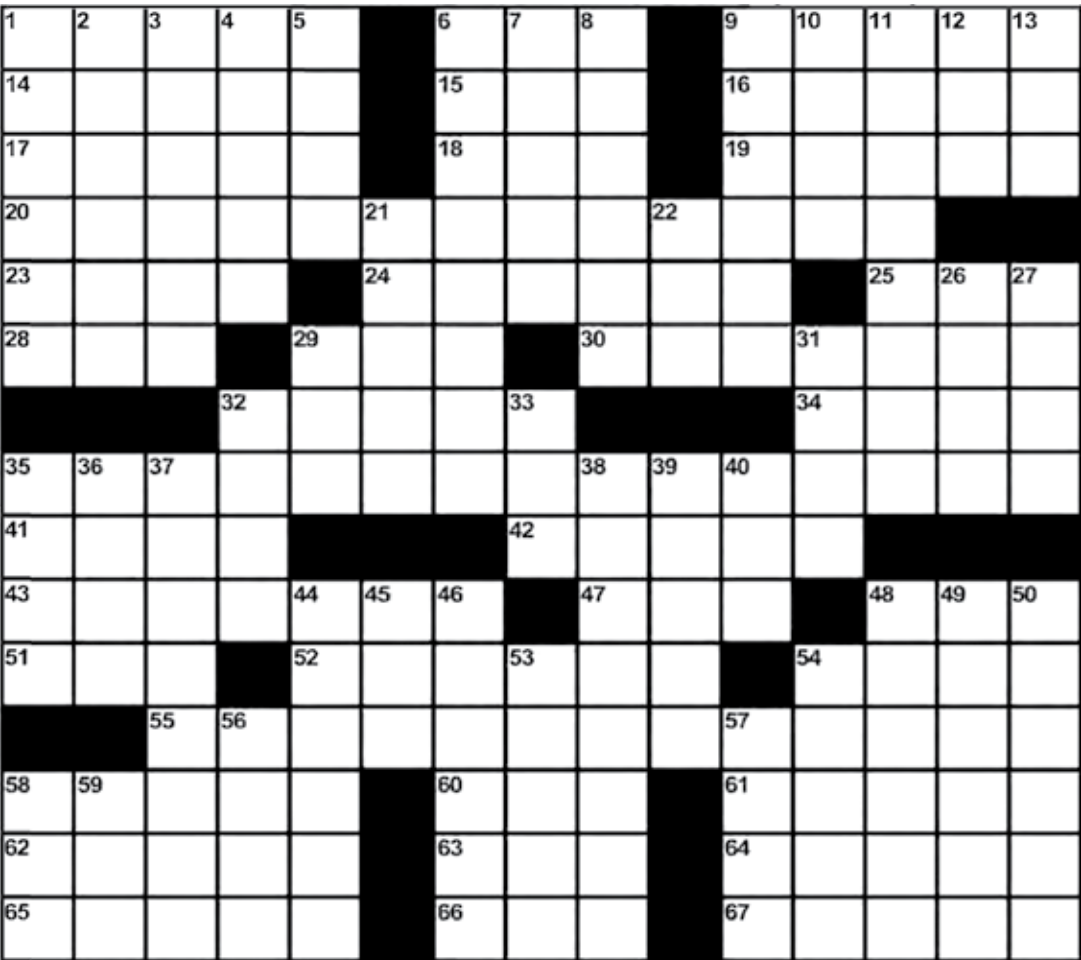
In Afghanistan, where half the population is acutely food insecure, WFP was for instance forced in May to cut its caseload by 66 per cent, meaning some eight million people in need are no longer receiving food aid. AFP

PANCHA DAAN FESTIVAL IN NEPAL



Devotees walk aside a priest dressed as the 'Dipankar Buddha' during a procession on the occasion of 'Pancha Daan' festival in Bhaktapur on the outskirts of Kathmandu, Nepal, on Tuesday (AFP)

DAILY CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1) Lawn invaders
6) More, to a senior
9) Old Indian honorific
14) Dullsville's atmosphere
15) Weary traveler's stopover
16) China piece
17) Pelted on Oct. 31
18) Calypso offshoot
19) Reason to nitpick?
20) Subtle bits of intimidation
23) Societal woes
24) Flight parts
25) "Ten Most Wanted" org.
28) "Acid" used in some trips
29) Conway or Allen
30) Dry as the desert
32) Baltimore griddier
34) Back muscles, for short
35) Had a ready-made excuse
41) "Bone" anagram
42) Emulates an angry bull
43) At volume 10, often
47) "I do," in weddings
48) Numbers person

51) "Just a..." ("Hold on!")
52) Took a peek
54) Beaming look
55) Thing in some dreams
58) Overly pounded?
60) It stops if you raise your hand
61) Goes on a verbal tirade
62) Tree knots
63) Street sign abbr., sometimes
64) Specialized vocabulary
65) Atlas feature
66) "As to"
67) "God...you" (sneeze response)

DOWN

1) Cotton pest
2) Marx's manifesto co-author
3) Decorate with gold.A leaf
4) One-on-one fights
5) One of two in a game
6) Clocked incorrectly
7) Looped crosses
8) Well-beaten instruments
9) Enter a pool
10) What little things mean?

11) Munich soccer mom
12) "... a Small World"
13) Hive builder
21) Control a car
22) Pitching stat
26) Sheet of matted cotton
27) Research facility (Abbr.)
29) Road coverage
31) Priests' robes
32) Tear apart
33) Christmas quaff
35) Animation sheets
36) Double reed instrument
37) Discount providers
38) Nervous time for turkeys
39) Gradually deteriorate
40) Do a seamy thing?
44) Like one's firstborn
45) Grassy layer
46) Work boot reinforcement
48) Shrink in fear
49) Painted ponies
50) Feelings of anxiety
53) Deceitful person
54) Twisted knot

56) Ireland, the Emerald _
57) Typical Kuwaiti

58) _-Wan Kenobi
59) Bakery item

NOTE PAD

UNCAP YIPS ODES
SALLE OLLA VIVA
SPOONFUL OF SUGAR
REPEAL VEILING
LUCRE TENSE
HEMP HERB
ISOLATED ALSACE
SAWED OFF SHOTGUN
SUNBOW LETTERED
SCAR MASS
MUSER AGENT
UNCLASP OUTBID
STATE OF SOBRIETY
KILO MUON BELLE
SEEN ELSE ORALS

YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE

 **ARIES** MARCH 21-APRIL 19

The actions of other people could be unpredictable today, so be prepared for anything. And while this day might test your flexibility and patience, it should still be quite enjoyable. You like it when things are interesting, and unpredictability is part of the price you pay for "interesting." One of your friends could have an interesting social opportunity for you, but you need them to explain things in more detail before you say yes.

 **LEO** JULY 23-AUGUST 22

It's time to get social! You put lots of effort into your professional life, now you need to put just as much toward your personal life. Your mission is to accept any and all invitations you get without hesitation, no matter how unexciting they might sound at first. You're a celebrity in your social circle right now, so you should take advantage of the spotlight while you have it. Have fun with your people and relax for a while.

 **SAGITTARIUS** NOVEMBER 22-DECEMBER 21

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

 **TAURUS** APRIL 20-MAY 20

You're on a somewhat more solid footing right now regarding money, though it wouldn't hurt to have a few more coins in your account! Put a little more effort into conserving your funds. The easiest way to do that is to cut out the extra treats. Get a plain cup of joe instead of a fancy concoction that takes longer to order than it takes to drink. And try to use cash. The more you do, the better you'll understand how much you're actually spending.

 **VIRGO** AUGUST 23-SEPTEMBER 22

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

 **CAPRICORN** DECEMBER 22-JANUARY 19

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

 **GEMINI** MAY 21-JUNE 21

There are some pretty fascinating people around you now, so it might be tempting to just sit back and watch others around you do their thing. But why not figure out a way to get involved? You might not know as much as everyone else, but who says you have to be a pro to have fun? Your brain could use a little puzzle to solve anyway, and a steep learning curve might be exactly what you need. Obstacles can be fun, so don't be afraid to climb over them!

 **LIBRA** SEPTEMBER 23-OCTOBER 22

You could feel a magnetic pull toward a person you've never met before. Resist the urge to follow this person wherever they go, but do keep an eye on them. There's a reason that they interest you, and if you can't figure out what it is, you should get more information in order to do so. You've been waiting for someone to show you a better way of being with people. Could this be that someone? It might take some time to determine this, but you should look for the answer.

 **AQUARIUS** JANUARY 20-FEBRUARY 18

Are you getting bored? The best cure for an uninteresting day is to take a few risks! Today, try to put yourself in a situation where you could be rejected or at least come out with less than you put in. You shouldn't do anything dangerous or silly, like spending your life savings on lottery tickets, but you can do something a little risky. Maybe it's time to ask that certain someone out, try a new look, or make something you've never made before.

 **CANCER** JUNE 22-JULY 22

No one sees things quite the way you do, and more people are starting to enjoy your take on the world. Some of your ideas could leak out today in an unconscious act on your part, and it might make you nervous. But even if you aren't quite ready for people to know about them, you'll be pleasantly surprised by the fact that they really dig your ideas. Get used to more attention, because what starts today won't end any time soon.

 **SCORPIO** OCTOBER 23-NOVEMBER 21

There's no sense in hurrying to get things done today. It will only result in you wasting your energy. Sometimes it's easy to confuse being busy with getting things accomplished, but you should keep your focus on what needs to happen today, not on what you'd like to have happen tomorrow. Let that take care of itself. Try to work on the social aspect of your life a little bit more intensely. There are goals there that you haven't reached yet.

 **PISCES** FEBRUARY 19-MARCH 20

Try to use a form of communication that's a little bit out of the ordinary today. Phones, letters,, emails, DMs are just so old school! You'll get your message across, whatever it is, a lot more effectively if you use some creativity, especially if you're trying to get your feelings across to a potential new sweetie. Use beautiful words in a poetic sense to let them see what's in your heart. Whether you write an actual poem or not is up to you. Just make sure they know how you feel.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

01. What is it about maple wood that makes it so popular for making musical instruments?

A. It carries sound waves well
B. Its attractive grain
C. Its colour
D. It weathers well

02. Which Winter Olympic Games was the last to have an outdoor speed skating rink?

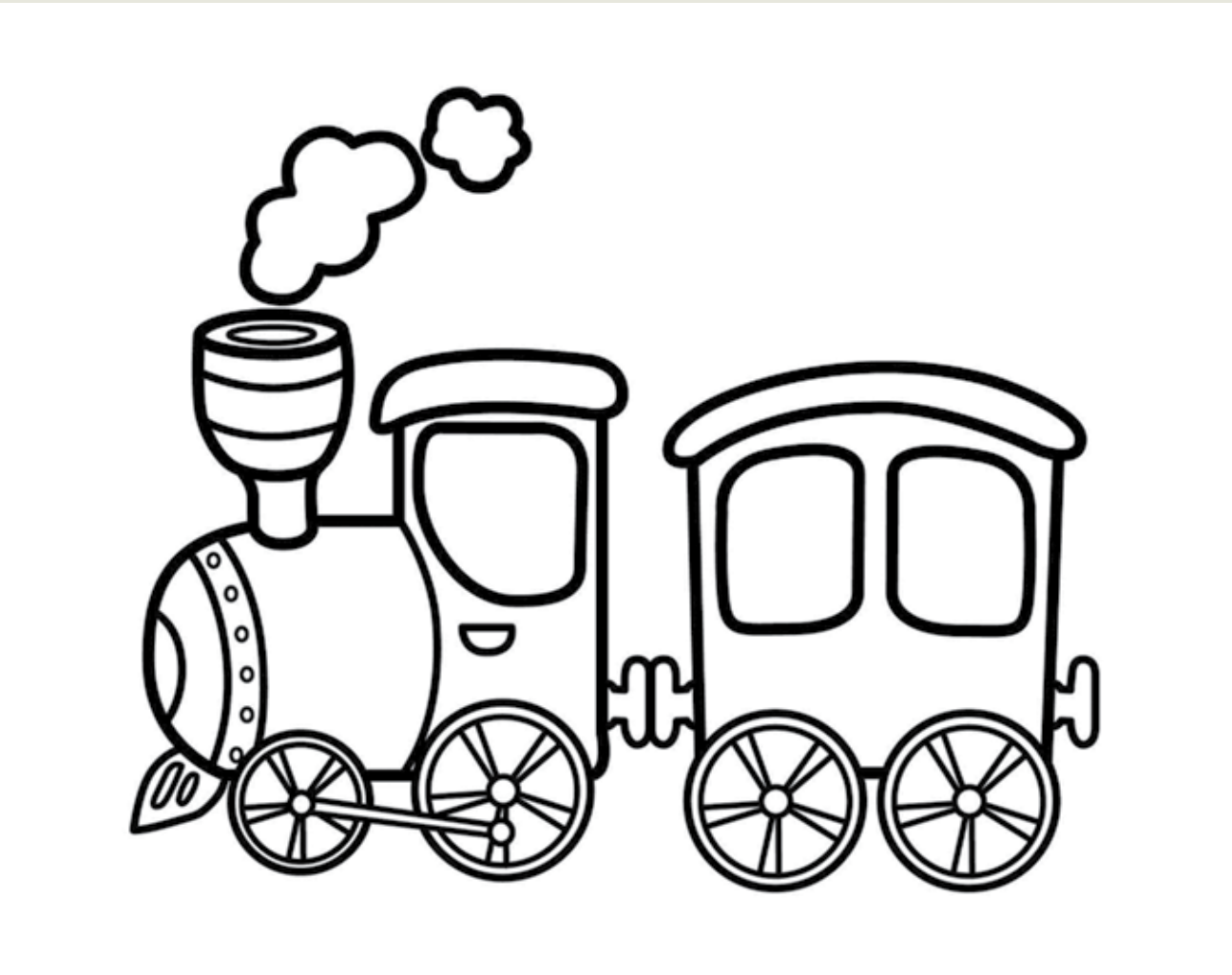
A. 1960 in Squaw Valley, California
B. 1992 in Albertville
C. 2018 in Pyeongchang
D. 1972 in Sapporo

03. Loki and Baldur, or Baldr, are names from what?

A. Russian folk tales
B. Greyhound breeding
C. Norse mythology
D. Shoe styles

Answers: 1. A 2. B 3. C

KIDS COLOURING



BOGGLER

G	B	D	L
E	N	E	I
L	T	A	D
S	I	O	Qu

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

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

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

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

KULDEEP AGAIN

Spinner takes four wickets as India reach final with win over Sri Lanka

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Kuldeep Yadav starred as India overcame a brilliant all-round effort from Sri Lanka's Dunieth Wellalage to win a tense Asia Cup clash by 41 runs on Tuesday and book a place in the final.

Kuldeep took four wickets including the final two as India defended 213, bowling out Sri Lanka for 172 to silence a large home crowd at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium.

India recorded their second straight Super Four win in the 50-over tournament, a prelude to the upcoming ODI World Cup, and ended Sri Lanka's 13-match winning streak in ODIs.

Wellalage, who claimed his maiden ODI five-wicket haul, remained unbeaten on 42 when he ran out of partners as left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep wrapped up the opposition tail in 41.3 overs.

It was India's third straight day on the field after they crushed Pakistan by 228 runs on Monday in a match that was played across two days due to rain.

The next Super Four match between Sri Lanka and Pakistan on Thursday will decide the second finalists between the two teams.

India skipper Rohit Sharma scored 53 to hand his team a brisk start but Wellalage hit back.

The 20-year-old returned figures of 5-40 including the key wickets of Rohit and Virat Kohli with strong support from part-time spinner Charith Asalanka, who claimed four victims for 18



India's Kuldeep Yadav (R) celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Sri Lanka's Charith Asalanka on Tuesday (AFP)

runs. Rohit entered an elite list of players with over 10,000 ODI runs and hit his second successive fifty.

Wellalage struck with his first ball of the match when he bowled Shubman Gill for 19 and there was no looking back for the young spinner.

He made the home fans erupt with the wicket of Kohli who fell

for three a day after an unbeaten 122 against Pakistan at the same venue.

Rohit was also bowled by Wellalage who snared his third scalp in three overs.

Ishan Kishan, who made 33, and previous-match centurion KL Rahul attempted to rebuild the innings with a stand of 63.

Wellalage ended that partner-

ship when he got Rahul caught and bowled for 39 and then took his fifth.

Asalanka kept chipping away from the other end and was on a hat-trick with India on 186-9, but Axar Patel took the total past 200 after a nearly 45-minute rain break and hit 26.

India hit back with regular wickets and Jasprit Bumrah

struck twice.

Asalanka attempted to increase the run-rate but became Kuldeep's second wicket.

Dhananjaya de Silva fought back along with Wellalage in a threatening seventh-wicket stand of 63 but Ravindra Jadeja broke the partnership with the wicket of De Silva for 41.

AFP



India's Kuldeep Yadav (L) celebrates with Virat Kohli after their win against Pakistan in the Asia Cup super four match on Monday

Five-for haul against Pakistan memorable, says Kuldeep

Colombo, Sri Lanka - India spinner Kuldeep Yadav on Monday said his match-winning five-wicket haul against Pakistan in the Asia Cup will remain a spell to "remember" even after retirement.

Kuldeep, a left-arm wrist spinner, returned figures of 5-25 to help bowl out Pakistan for 128 while chasing 357 for victory in the rain-hit Super Four clash in Colombo.

The 50-over contest carried over into a reserve day set aside by the tournament, which remains a tune-up to the upcoming ODI World Cup in India.

"I am feeling very happy," Kuldeep told reporters. "To take five wickets against a good team will always be remembered. When I stop cricket and retire, I will always remember that I took five wickets against Pakistan."

He further added, "Because

a side that plays spin well in the sub-continent, to play well against them really motivates you."

Kuldeep, 28, overcame a threatening knee injury to return to the international game last year and since performed well in the Indian Premier League and for the national team.

"After my surgery, I was out of the game for about five months," he said. "There were a lot of people who suggested a lot of things, but I did not want to lose my zip, nip or drift. After my three-month rehab post-surgery, my physio - Ashish Koushik at the NCA - suggested that I must do something [to my action] to reduce load on my knee.

"I worked on making my rhythm faster, bowled it in a practice game in Kanpur and found that the batsmen found it difficult [to face]."



Haris Rauf

Pakistan call up back ups for Rauf, Naseem in Asia Cup

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Pakistan has called up reserves for injured fast bowlers Haris Rauf and Naseem Shah after the pair did not turn out to bat in the team's loss to India in the Asia Cup.

Pakistan suffered a crushing 228-run defeat on Monday's reserve day of the rain-hit Super Four clash in Colombo and soon named Shah Nawaz Dahani and Zaman Khan as backups.

The Pakistan Cricket Board late Monday said Rauf and Naseem "picked up niggles".

India bowled out Pakistan for 128 (128-8) while chasing 357 for victory to register their biggest ODI win over their arch-rivals. Rauf suffered a strain on Sunday and did not take field when play resumed on day two. Later in the match fellow quick Naseem walked off with some discomfort to his hand.

"This is only a precautionary measure keeping in mind the fitness and well-being of the players ahead of the World Cup next month," the PCB said.

Pakistan coach Bradburn 'grateful' for India wake-up call ahead of World Cup

Colombo, Sri Lanka - Pakistan's heavy defeat to India in the Asia Cup was a "timely reminder" for the team to get their act together before next month's World Cup, head coach Grant Bradburn said.

Babar Azam's men suffered a crushing 228-run loss to India on Monday in a rain-hit Super Four clash of the 50-over tournament, a prelude to next month's World Cup in India.

India posted 356-2 in Colombo after rain forced the match into a reserve day and then bowled out Pakistan for 128 in 32 overs to register their biggest ODI victory over their arch-rivals.

"My gut feeling is that we are grateful for the gift that has been this last two days," Bradburn told reporters after the drubbing.

"We don't get to play some of the best players in the world very often," he added.

"We haven't lost a game of cricket for the last three months,



Pakistan's captain Babar Azam (R) and coach Grant Bradburn (2R) talk with umpires

so it's a timely reminder that we need to turn up every day, put in our best on the park, and it's actually a gift in the last two days we haven't done that."

Pakistan elected to bowl after Azam won the toss but the team soon lost their grip after a 121-run opening stand between skipper Rohit Sharma and Shubman Gill.

Virat Kohli and KL Rahul hit 122 and 111 respectively to extend India's domination in an unbeaten stand of 233.

"We lost at all facets of the

game," Bradburn said. "No excuses, we weren't good enough in the last two days."

Pakistan's bowling, led by Shaheen Shah Afridi, had rattled India's top order last week in an Asia Cup group game, bowling them out for 266 before the match was abandoned because of rain.

But Rohit, Gill, Rahul and Kohli came roaring back in the Super Four contest to take the attack to the bowlers.

Bradburn, a former New Zealand international who played seven Tests and 11 ODIs, said Pakistan will learn from the batting assault.

"Certainly wasn't a surprise. Everyone's seen how lethal our bowling attack is and good teams will counteract that," he said.

Azam started the tournament with 151 against minnows Nepal but Bradburn said Pakistan's batting still lacked firepower.

AFP

Topley looks to put injury history behind him ahead of World Cup

Southampton, United Kingdom - Reece Topley is taking nothing for granted regarding his involvement in the defence of England's World Cup title in India following an injury-blighted career.

The 29-year-old left-arm quick has suffered four separate stress fractures in his back.

But having overcome those injuries, he seemed all set to feature in last year's Twenty20 World Cup in Australia only to be ruled out by a freak trip over a boundary cushion ahead of England's final warm-up match.

The ensuing ankle ligament damage meant he was reduced to the role of a long-distance



Reece Topley

spectator as England added the T20 global title to their 50-over crown.

Having regained fitness, the

than a month away, Topley admitted: "You could say I have a bit of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) about getting on

As you get older, the injuries get a bit harder to come back from - just the nature of just being years older. It's not like you won't ever come back from it, it's just always a bit trickier

REECE TOPLEY

6ft 7in (2.01 metres) paceman dislocated his shoulder at the Indian Premier League in April.

And with the start of the 50-over World Cup in India now less

the plane again because it was pretty emotional coming back from the last (World Cup) injured. "But injuries happen in sport. You can only do so much

to prevent them. I don't really think about it too much. It's just the nature of it: you get good days and bad days at the minute.

"As you get older, the injuries do get a bit harder to come back from - just the nature of just being years older. It's not like you won't ever come back from it, it's just always a bit trickier."

Topley has been included in England's provisional World Cup squad following a fine home season last year.

But having gone wicketless in four one-day internationals, he starred with 3-27 in the 2nd ODI against New Zealand at The Oval.

AFP

FERNANDES SHINES IN RONALDO'S ABSENCE

Manchester United playmaker runs the show as Portugal lash Luxembourg in record 9-0 win

Barcelona, Spain - Bruno Fernandes ran the show for Portugal as they romped to a record 9-0 win over Luxembourg on Monday without suspended talisman and all-time top goalscorer Cristiano Ronaldo.

Roberto Martinez's side have now won all six of their qualifying games, without conceding a single goal and scoring 24 themselves, with this the country's largest ever victory.

Portugal lead the Group J standings, five points clear of Slovakia in second place, whom they beat in Bratislava on Friday. Luxembourg are third, three points behind Slovakia.

Manchester United playmaker Fernandes, who scored Portugal's winner against Slovakia, laid on three goals as the Selecao filled their boots and scored one himself.

Goncalo Ramos, Diogo Jota and Goncalo Inacio struck two goals each, while Ricardo Horta and Joao Felix also scored.

Martinez, who replaced Fernando Santos after the Qatar World Cup, has a 100 per cent record at the helm to date.

"We are still at the beginning of a new era with a new coach



Portugal's Diogo Jota celebrates with Bruno Fernandes (L) after scoring against Luxembourg in their EURO 2024 qualifying match on Monday (AFP)

We are still at the beginning of a new era with a new coach and we are still taking on board the coach's ideas. Today we set a reference point match (to look at in) the future

DIOGO JOTA



and we are still taking on board the coach's ideas," said Jota.

"Today we set a reference point match (to look at in) the future."

Sporting Lisbon defender Inacio sent the hosts ahead in the 12th minute with a header from Fernandes' exquisite cross with

the outside of his foot.

Paris Saint-Germain striker Ramos drilled home the second five minutes later after Fernandes pressed high to win the ball back. The 22-year-old striker then grabbed another goal in the 33rd minute with a clever turn and clinical finish for his sixth

goal in eight appearances for his country. Liverpool striker Jota hit the crossbar as Portugal dominated at the Algarve stadium near the country's south coast.

Inacio headed home his second goal from another Fernandes cross on the stroke of half-time and Jota struck early in the second half for the fifth, set up by the Red Devils midfielder again.

Portugal thrashed Luxembourg 6-0 in their first clash in the Grand Duchy and Horta rifled home from the edge of the box for their sixth of the night to match the haul.

AFP



Gareth Southgate

Southgate reveals Scotland soft spot as 'great rivalry' turns 150

Glasgow, United Kingdom - England manager Gareth Southgate revealed on Monday he once supported Scotland at the 1978 World Cup as the old rivals prepare to do battle in a friendly to mark the 150th anniversary of their first meeting.

Scotland have not beaten the Three Lions since 1999, but go into Tuesday's clash in front of a home crowd at Glasgow's Hampden Park full of confidence as they close in on qualification for next year's European Championship.

Steve Clarke's men have won all five of their Euro 2024 qualifiers, including at home to Spain and away to Erling Haaland's Norway. Clarke believes the test of facing England is a "benchmark" of how far his side have progressed.

And Southgate is looking forward to savouring the hos-

tile atmosphere at Hampden, despite having once had a soft spot for Scotland himself.

"This is horrendous, what I'm going to say here ahead of tomorrow, but I was supporting Scotland in 1978 because we hadn't qualified," said the England boss. "Then we were back in in 1982 and all of a sudden for me then onwards it was all about England."

"Great fixtures, I've met so many of the former players over the years, worked with some of them, played with some of them. It's a fabulous game. I know it's a rivalry and people will be wary of it crossing a boundary, but it's a brilliant sporting rivalry and a great game to be involved in."

Scotland's place at Euro 2024 could even be sealed while they are in action should Norway and Georgia draw in Oslo.

Peru shamans 'neutralise' Neymar in World Cup qualifier ritual

Lima, Peru - Dressed in colorful ponchos, a group of Peruvian shamans tie up an effigy of Neymar as they seek to "neutralise" him ahead of Tuesday's World Cup qualifying match against Brazil.

The group of traditional healers from the jungle, mountains, and coastal areas, called on "Tayta Inti" (Father Sun) to help Peru in its match against five-time World Cup winners Brazil.

"We have neutralized Neymar by tying his feet. We tied him up so that he is not in good shape, and doesn't run and play well," said shaman Felix Rondan.

The shamans blew into a conch shell as they carried out the ritual outside the national stadium, where they have erected a colorful altar with swords, amulets, flags, and photos of players from both teams.

Earlier, they took ayuahasca -



Neymar

the powerful hallucinogenic concoction said to open the door to the spirit world.

Shaman Walter Alarcon said the ritual was aimed at clouding

Neymar's mind so that he can not "achieve what he is looking for, which are goals."

Alarcon predicts a tie, saying the match will be difficult.

Teen hits winner in Guinea-Bissau's best AFCON campaign

Johannesburg, South Africa - Teenager Franculino Dju scored the winner as Guinea-Bissau completed their most successful Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) qualifying campaign on Monday with a 2-1 home victory over Sierra Leone.

Denmark-based Dju struck after 48 minutes of the Group A match in vBissau, holding off several opponents to fire the ball across goalkeeper Mohamed Kamara into the far corner of the net.

Amadou Bakayoko, who plays for Scottish Premiership club Dundee, nodded Sierra

Denmark-based Dju struck after 48 minutes of the Group A match in vBissau

Leone in front from a corner after six minutes in the west African port city.

Slow to settle, Guinea-Bissau levelled after 35 minutes when a powerful header from Fernando 'Nito' Gomes after a free-kick gave Camara

no chance.

Only pride was at stake as Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau had already filled the two qualifying places at the expense of Sierra Leone and Sao Tome e Principe.

Guinea-Bissau, popularly known as the Wild Dogs, will be appearing at a fourth consecutive Cup of Nations in an amazing turnaround after having an extremely weak national team for decades.

Sierra Leone took their group points total to 13 - three more than in their previous best campaign.



David Brooks

Cancer survivor Brooks scores as Wales ease pressure on Page

Riga, Latvia - David Brooks scored his first international goal since returning from a cancer diagnosis as Wales kept their chances of reaching Euro 2024 with a 2-0 win away to Latvia on Monday.

Bournemouth winger Brooks was diagnosed with stage-two Hodgkin lymphoma in October 2021.

He returned to playing at club level in March and helped secure a vital three points for manager Rob Page in stoppage time in Riga.

Page's future was in doubt after a run of one win in 13 games. Aaron Ramsey's 100th career goal from the penalty spot midway through the first half put the visitors in front.

But the lack of a clinical goalscorer since Gareth Bale's retirement from international football was evident as Wales' inability to add to their advan-

tage until the 96th minute led to a nervy finale.

Janis Ikaunieks' deflected shot hit the side netting late on to deny the side ranked 134th in the world a first point in qualifying.

Instead, Brooks produced a classy finish to dink the ball over Roberts Ozols on the counter-attack to finally double Wales' lead.

Victory keeps Wales in the mix to reach a third consecutive Euro.

Page's men go level on points with Armenia and three behind Turkey in the battle for the second automatic qualifying spot in Group D, with all three nations having three games remaining.

Croatia moved to the top of the group, with a game in hand, after winning 1-0 in Armenia earlier on Monday.

AFP

PAUL OF GLOOM

Troubled Pogba sinks to new low after doping revelation

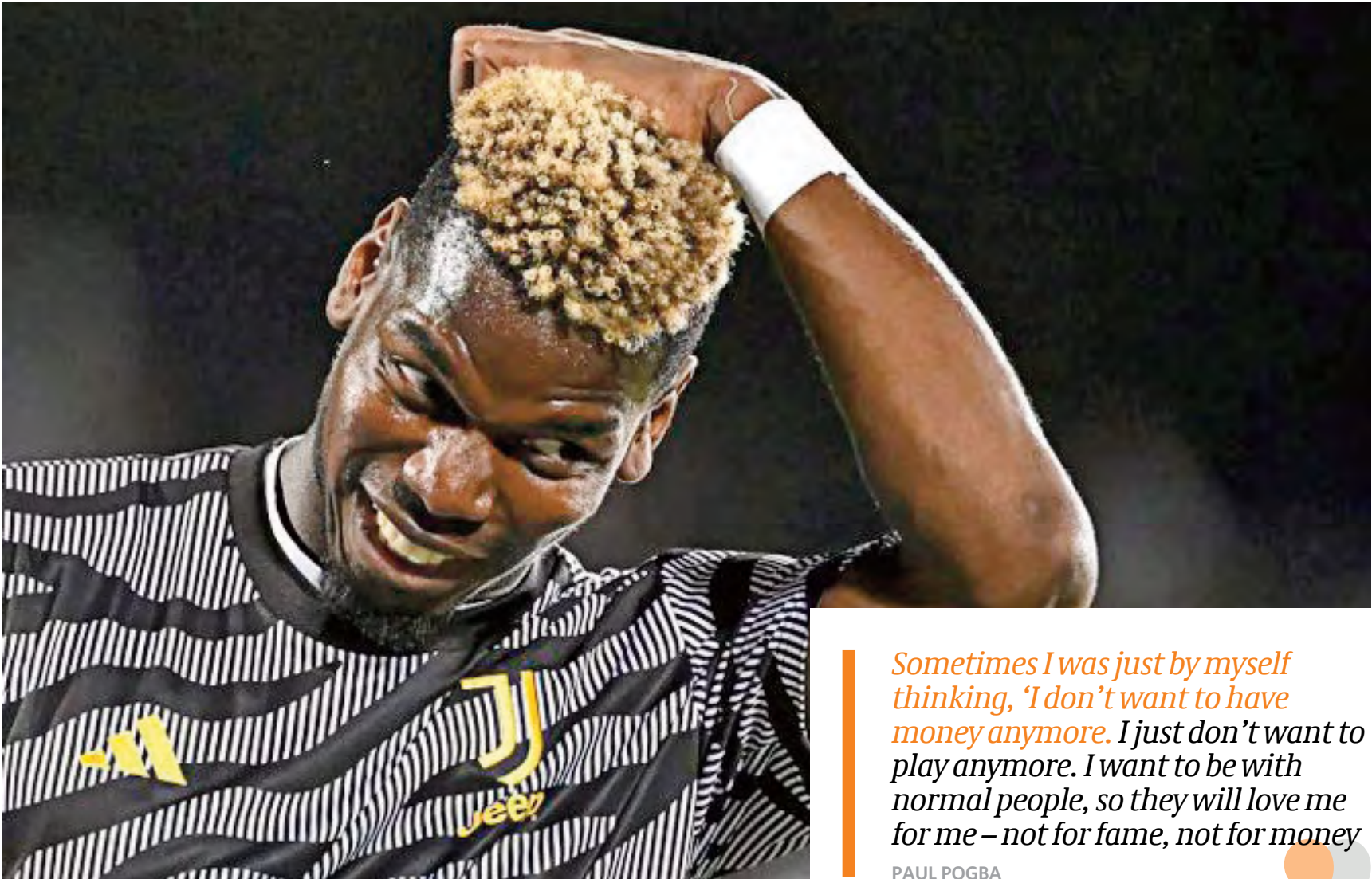
Milan, Italy - Once the most expensive footballer in the world, France star Paul Pogba has sunk to a new low after being provisionally suspended for a doping violation.

Injuries and a bizarre blackmail plot involving his own brother have dominated his second spell at Juventus, and the latest revelations came just as the midfielder looked ready to get back to his best.

Italy's anti-doping authority NADO revealed on Monday that Pogba, who is still only 30, showed elevated levels of testosterone in a test taken after Juve's season-opening win at Udinese, a match in which he did not even play. Pogba has since been a substitute in Juve's other two Serie A matches and despite picking up a thigh knock against Empoli earlier this month could well have featured in Saturday's home fixture against Lazio had he not been dealt the latest of a series of blows to his career.

The test result came soon after the release of an interview with Al Jazeera in which he said he wanted to make his critics "eat their words".

"I want to show them I'm not weak. They can talk bad about



Paul Pogba

me. I will never give up," he said.

He has only started one match since returning to Juve as a free agent from Manchester United in July last year, six years after leaving the Turin giants for a then world record 105 million euros with four Italian league titles to his name.

It was a move which was sup-

posed to regenerate his career which had gone stale in England, but he almost immediately suffered a serious knee injury in pre-season.

'Money changes people'

And his initial decision to not undergo surgery in a bid to make

the Qatar World Cup eventually back-fired, ending his chances of helping France defend their world title and further complicating his club campaign.

Pogba was a key figure in the 2018 triumph in Russia and scored one of France's goals in their 4-2 win over Croatia in that year's final, but he has not fea-

Sometimes I was just by myself thinking, 'I don't want to have money anymore. I just don't want to play anymore. I want to be with normal people, so they will love me for me – not for fame, not for money'

PAUL POGBA

tured for his country since a friendly win for Les Bleus over South Africa in March last year.

From being on top of the world Pogba has slowly slipped down to the depths, ravaged by injuries and a difficult personal life which he admits has been adversely affected by the vast sums of money earned by football's

top players. "Money changes people. It can break up a family. It can create a war," he said.

"Sometimes I was just by myself thinking, 'I don't want to have money anymore. I just don't want to play anymore. I just want to be with normal people, so they will love me for me – not for the fame, not for the money.'"

Halep gets four-year doping ban from tennis

London, United Kingdom - Former world number one Simona Halep has been given a four-year suspension from tennis following breaches of the sport's anti-doping programme, the International Tennis Integrity Agency said Tuesday.

The 31-year-old Romanian tested positive for the banned substance roxadustat last year and was charged with a separate second anti-doping breach in May "relating to irregularities in her athlete biological passport (ABP)".

Halep, a two-time Grand Slam singles champion, had been provisionally suspended since October 2022. An independent tribunal said this would count in her period of full suspension, which will now run from October 7 2022 to October 6 2026. The case remains subject to appeal.

An independent tribunal, which heard evidence from Halep, the winner of the women's singles titles at the 2018 French Open and 2019 Wimbledon championships, met in London on June 28-29. On September 11, the tribunal confirmed it had found Halep had committed intentional violations under Article 2 of the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme (TADP). One of these was the presence and use of roxadustat as evidenced in Halep's urine sample collected on August 29 2022 at the US Open.

LeBron, Curry among NBA stars eyeing Paris Olympics: reports

Los Angeles, United States - NBA superstars LeBron James and Stephen Curry are among several top players interested in competing for the United States at next year's Paris Olympics, according to multiple reports on Monday.

Two-time Olympic champion and four-time NBA champion James has been recruiting fellow NBA stars for a US squad that seeks a fifth gold medal in a row next year in France, according to The Athletic.

Curry, a four-time NBA champion guard with the Golden State Warriors, has expressed a desire to play on the Olympic squad guided by Warriors coach Steve Kerr, ESPN reported.

The news comes a day after a US team of 20-something NBA stars left the Basketball World Cup empty handed following losses to Canada in the bronze-medal game and to eventual champion Germany in a semi-final.

James, a 38-year-old forward, led the USA to Olympic gold in 2008 at Beijing and 2012 at Lon-



LeBron James meets young basketball players during a clinic in Riyadh

don but has not played since.

He knows the sting of defeat on the global stage, however, having been a reserve on the 2004 US squad that settled for bronze at the Athens Olympics and a 2006 team that took bronze at the Basketball World Cup. James is not only interested in playing for Paris Olympic gold but has called fellow former NBA Most Valuable Players Curry and Kevin Durant hoping to entice

them to play in 2024.

Two-time NBA champion Durant, a Phoenix Suns forward who turns 35 later this month, helped US Olympic gold-medal efforts in London as well as 2016 in Rio and in 2021 at Tokyo.

Curry has never played for the US Olympic squad but helped American clubs win the 2010 and 2014 World Cup crowns - their only such titles since 1994.

Others James has recruited

for the 2024 US Olympic team, according to The Athletic, include his Los Angeles Lakers teammate Anthony Davis, Golden State's Draymond Green and Boston's Jayson Tatum.

Phoenix's Devin Booker, a three-time NBA All-Star, and 38-year-old Chris Paul of Golden State, a 2008 and 2012 gold medalist, are also among those ESPN said are interested in the Paris Olympics.

NBA Rockets guard Porter arrested on assault charge: reports

New York, United States - Houston Rockets guard Kevin Porter Jr. was arrested Monday on charges of assault and strangulation of a woman in an early morning hotel room incident, according to multiple reports.

Police sources told ABC News, ESPN, the New York Post and Houston Chronicle that Porter had been locked out of his hotel room and after hotel security helped him enter, he attacked his girlfriend, a former Women's NBA player.

The woman, identified as Kysre Gondrezick, was taken to a hospital with neck pain and a cut on her face, according to the reports, while Porter was taken into custody.

They had appeared together at a Fashion Week event.

Porter, 23, was a first-round pick in the 2019 NBA Draft and played one season for the Cleveland Cavaliers before being traded to the Rockets in January 2021. "We are in the process of gathering information surrounding the matter involving Kevin Porter Jr.," the



Kevin Porter Jr and Kysre Gondrezick attend the Smart Tox kickoff event with Vogue on September 7 in New York

Rockets said in a statement.

An NBA spokesman told The Athletic and ESPN the league was aware of the reports and in contact with the Rockets while gathering more information.

Porter heads into the upcoming NBA campaign off the best season of his career, having averaged career-highs of 19.2 points, 5.3 rebounds and 1.4 steals a game for Houston last season.



Andy Murray

Murray confident as Davis Cup gears up for last 16

Paris, France - With the US Open, the last of this year's majors out of the way, the stage is cleared for the Davis Cup which enters its 16-team Finals group stage across four locations on Tuesday.

The top two from each group round-robin - they will be hosted in Bologna, Manchester, Valencia and Split - will move into the knockout phase in Spain in November.

It is still not certain whether the newly-crowned US Open

champion Novak Djokovic will play for Serbia this week - although he is slated to appear in Valencia - but there will be some big names on show, notably former world number one Andy Murray who is in the Great Britain team that hosts a group in Manchester.

World number two Carlos Alcaraz, however, was ruled out of the Spanish team after his semi-final exit at Flushing Meadows.

"I talked to him and his team throughout the US Open," said

Spain captain David Ferrer.

"I was there and watched most of his games, but it is true that he ended up very tired, with some physical problems."

With no Rafael Nadal either, Spain will instead be lead by Alejandro Davidovich, currently ranked 25th in the world.

It is Canada, however, drawing on the experience of Denis Shapovalov and Vasek Pospisil, who are ranked at number one in Davis Cup, having won their first-ever title last year.

Canada are one of four teams to qualify automatically, along with last year's runners-up Australia and wildcards Spain and Italy, who will meet the Canadians in a crunch match on Wednesday.

They have been joined by 12 qualifiers - Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, Serbia, South Korea, Sweden, Switzerland and United States.

Eleven of the 16 contenders have already won the Davis Cup

including Britain who claimed their tenth title with a Murray-inspired victory over Belgium in the 2015 final.

Now ranked 41 in singles after some serious career-threatening injuries and struggling to make an impact in Grand Slam tournaments, 36-year-old Murray is craving one last tilt at a major title. "I do genuinely believe the team can win the event," he said at the team press conference on Monday.

AFP

Crowley set fair to fulfil Irish great O’Gara’s hopes

Kohli, Rahul tons power India to 356-2 against Pakistan

Paris, France - The task of succeeding Irish talisman Johnny Sexton has been beyond some but in Jack Crowley Ireland may have at last found their man.

Joey Carbery and Billy Burns have in recent years been touted as potential successors, without managing to dislodge the 38-year-old from the No.10 jersey.

With 23-year-old Crowley, things could be different.

Even Ireland great Ronan O’Gara, who is not renowned for doling out compliments, has long tipped him to shine.

“Jesus, what a hope for Irish rugby,” O’Gara told Irish website 42.ie three years ago after watching Crowley score an astonishing individual try against Scotland Under 20’s.

Crowley has yet to produce such a moment at senior level but his glorious dink kick that set up Ireland’s 12th try in the dying moments of their 82-8 mauling of Romania in their World Cup opener was an indication of his vision.

That is what sets him apart from the steady but unspectacular Ross Byrne, the other pretender to Sexton’s throne once the 38-year-old departs the scene at the end of Ireland’s



Ireland’s fly-half Jack Crowley (R) passes the ball to Ireland’s lock Joe McCarthy during their Rugby World Cup Pool B match against Romania in Bordeaux, south-western France, on Saturday (AFP)

campaign.

That Crowley got the nod from head coach Andy Farrell as understudy for Sexton against Romania - with Byrne left to kick his heels in the stands - said much about the confidence the coaching team have in the Munster man.

He stands a good chance of Farrell naming him in the starting role for a tough clash with Tonga

in Nantes next Saturday.

Crowley has certainly been ruthless in his surge to the top, with Carbery the principal victim.

Having left Sexton’s province Leinster in a bid to secure more first team rugby, Carbery’s Munster hopes were dashed by Crowley’s prodigious talent.

Former Australia fly-half Stephen Larkham, who was Munster’s head coach in 2020,

anybody’s development and particularly as a 10,” said Crowley after Saturday’s victory over Romania.

“You need a game feel and build your game management, build everything you know, playing in pressure situations and being able to deliver in those situations.

“So being exposed to that for the first time was huge for me and I’m very fortunate that I got the opportunities to be exposed to those situations to learn.

“I know myself I’ve got a lot to do, and to get to those levels, you need game time.”

With just seven caps, Crowley is far from the finished article but he has absorbed much from training with the arch-perfectionist Sexton.

Competition for the starting jersey has not stopped the three fly-halves from being friends.

Crowley described it as “a special, special relationship.”

Crowley is a huge admirer of 2018 World Player of the Year Sexton, who scored 24 points in the win over Romania in what was his first competitive match in almost six months.

“The way he’s applied himself to training and the way that he applies himself to preparation and everything like that is massive,” said Crowley.

“You saw that it wasn’t just by fluke that he performs the way he does, the way that he can do certain things.”

AFP



Nathan Van Hooydonck

Belgian cyclist Van Hooydonck in serious car crash

Brussels, Belgium - Belgian cyclist Nathan Van Hooydonck of the Jumbo-Visma team was rushed to hospital after losing control of his car at a crossroads in Belgium, local police said Tuesday.

A police spokesman told AFP the 27-year-old professional cyclist was in critical condition and that the hospital were fighting to stabilise him.

Van Hooydonck raced the Tour de France in July, helping his teammate Jonas Vingegaard win the overall title.

On Tuesday he crashed his car in Kalmthout in northern Belgium after feeling unwell at the wheel, hitting five other cars at a crossroads before coming to a stop.

Van Hooydonck’s pregnant wife was also in the vehicle but was unhurt.

Jumbo sports director Grischa Niermann told media at the Vuelta a Espana the team’s riders were deeply upset by the news.

“We know he had an accident and is in hospital... I can’t confirm whether or not he’s in mortal danger,” said Niermann.

AFP

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FASHION DIVERSITY

MICHAEL KORS, ALTUZARRA, TORY BURCH BRING IN A FRESH BREEZE OF COOL OUTFITS WHICH SCORE HIGH ON WEARABILITY

vacation
vibes

A holiday air with Michael Kors, shivers from Altuzarra, and Tory Burch asserting herself in a spectacular setting - New York Fashion Week expressed its diversity on Monday, the fourth day of the spring-summer 2024 shows.

American designer Michael Kors took the audience on vacation at his spring-summer show, with Brooklyn's Domino Park, along the East River, transformed into a seaside promenade under the eyes of actresses Blake Lively and Halle Berry.

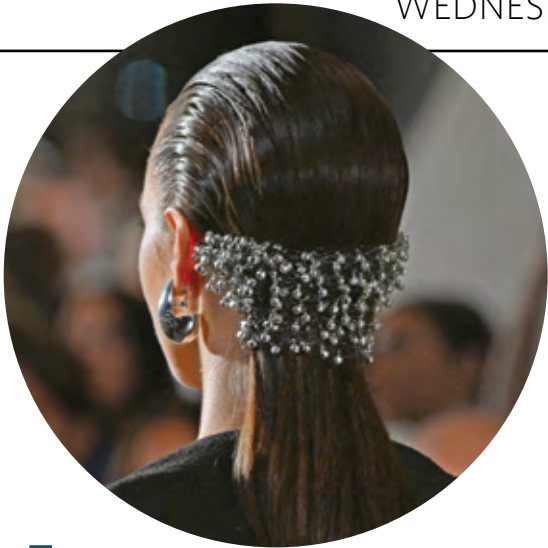
"I can't take you all to Capri, so I take you to Brooklyn," the 64-year-old Kors said smiling, referring to the Italian island.

Models showcased light outfits embroidered with lace, a mini-skirt and blouse set, short dresses and pants paired with small tops in the brand's first

show since the announcement that its holding company Capri would be purchased by Coach parent company Tapestry.

A loose sweater in cashmere and cotton drops to just below the beltline, leaving the wearer's legs completely uncovered - a nod to the recent 'no pants' trend, maybe, or perhaps something more practical - You can wear it in the heat. You can wear it when it's cool.

"We all know that the world has gotten too warm," Kors said. "We are



Models walk the runway during the Spring Summer 2024 runway show for Tory Burch and Michael Kors during New York Fashion Week at the American Museum of Natural History



In a world of chaos, I wanted a little bit of calm. But I didn't want to be minimalist

TORY BURCH

Shivers at Altuzarra

The atmosphere took a darker turn at the Altuzarra show, held in the Manhattan Central Library under a high dome with opaque windows.

French-American designer Joseph Altuzarra drew on Roman Polanski's timeless horror classic 'Rosemary's Baby' for inspiration, creating a dark setting accompanied by ominous music.

The collection gives pride of place to slip dresses worn under long jackets, and matching sets were transformed with crinkled satin and undone seams.

Short tulle overlay dresses were covered with a transparent organza veil, reminiscent of a doll.

With this collection, Altuzarra wrote in the show notes, he wanted to exude 'a haunting, enigmatic allure, while anchored in everyday style and pragmatism'.

Tory Burch asserts herself

"In a world of chaos, I wanted a little bit of calm. But I didn't want to be minimalist," Tory Burch said after her show, held in a grandiose setting under the roof and between the undulating granite facades of a new atrium at the American Museum of Natural History.

She stepped up the experimentation - ultra-short skirts worn under a parka or a collarless blazer in futuristic shiny purple, with tinted glasses. Among the most original pieces of the collection, there is a cape and dress set in knitted viscose which ends in rounded reliefs.

The fabrics are light, but they create structure. Like her other dresses, they are cut diagonally above the knees and leave one shoulder uncovered.

The American designer said she wanted to take items like corsets that were restrictive to women in the past and reclaim them and make them part of beautiful femininity.

AFP

Recall

Recall Date: 13th September 2023

Brand of Commodity	Year of Production	Number of Affected Commodities
NEW RANGE ROVER	2023 – 2022	45
NEW RANGE ROVER SPORT	2023	1
DEFENDER	2023 – 2022 – 2021 – 2020	51
VELAR	2022 – 2021	9
EVOQUE	2023 & 2021	4
DISCOVERY SPORT	2021	1

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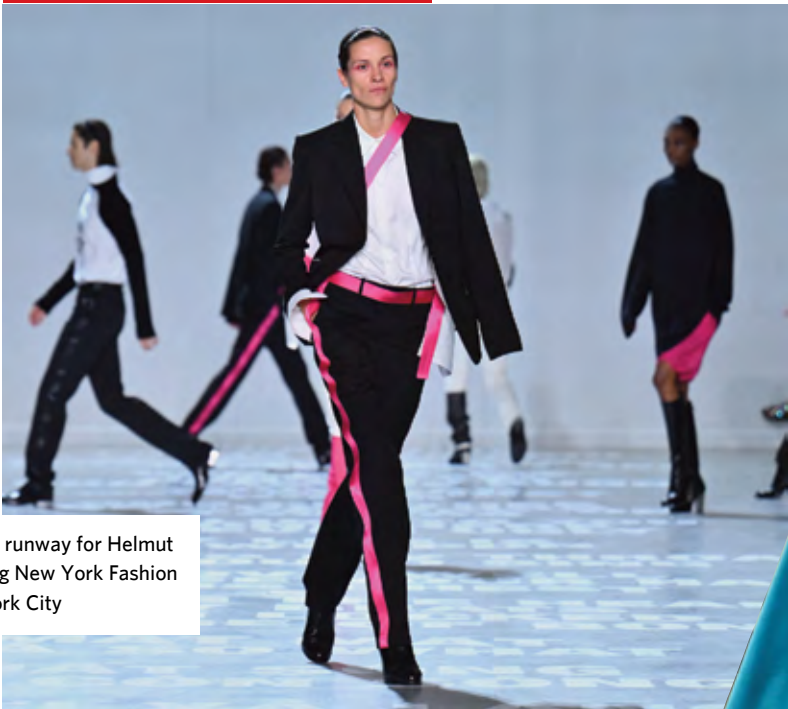


increasingly dealing with, 'How do we get dressed?' Particularly when it's too warm outside, and in the office, it's too cold and we're freezing."

Everything was in keeping with the vacation vibe, with flat sandals, and an artisanal, hand-woven wicker basket bag in a nod to the recently deceased singer and style icon Jane Birken.

"A British woman living in France, who had this very casual, laid-back attitude," said Kors. "I actually think it was very American."

NY FASHION WEEK



Models walk the runway for Helmut Lang show during New York Fashion Week in New York City



US model Christy Turlington walks the runway for the Ralph Lauren Spring Summer 2024 runway show during New York Fashion Week



Cornerstone of FASHION

HELMUT LANG AND RALPH LAUREN KICK OFF NEW YORK FASHION WEEK



Yellow cabs and urban looks at Helmut Lang, rustic woodwork and a ranch atmosphere at the Ralph Lauren show - New York Fashion Week kicked off on Friday in an atmosphere of stark opposites, which is what makes it so diverse.

With a dozen shows a day until at least Wednesday, New York opens the spring-summer 2024 fashion weeks, before London, then the more sought-after Milan and Paris.

The official programme features a flurry of young talent and emerging brands, alongside established names and a handful of heavyweights, including Ralph Lauren, Michael Kors, 3.1 Phillip Lim, Altuzarra, Gabriela Hearst, Carolina Herrera and Tory Burch.

The grand diversity allows New York to remain 'a cornerstone' of fashion, according to Steven Kolb, CEO of the Council of Fashion Designers of America (CFDA).

In the muggy heat, fashionistas



began lining up in the early afternoon at the foot of a glass building on Manhattan's Lower East Side for Helmut Lang's return to the calendar.

The brand was the talk of New York Fashion Week in the 1990s and 2000s, thanks to the minimalist, and at the time innovative, aesthetic of its founder, the Austrian designer who gave the brand its name and retired from fashion in 2005.

Today, Helmut Lang is part of Japanese fashion giant Fast Retailing, which also owns Uniqlo. The collection, concocted by one of the young talents on the New York scene, Vietnamese-born designer Peter Do (32), slipped into the founder's legacy.

Black jacket-trouser ensembles are worn comfortably, but crossed by near-fluorescent pink or gold-coloured stripes down the legs, on the belt and the shoulder strap.

Peter Do reinterprets the fundamentals, as in a denim jumpsuit with rolled-up sleeves and an open collar. And a nod to New York's yellow cabs, on whose neon lights Helmut

Lang placed his name in advertising in the late '90s - a first for a fashion designer.

"I really want to anchor and dress New York," stressed Peter Do, summing up the show with two words often associated with the city, 'chaotic and energetic'.

At Ralph Lauren, a symbol of preppy style and the epitome of American ready-to-wear, the atmosphere was much more intimate, with a rustic barn decor reminiscent of his Colorado ranch.

For Lauren, too, denim is a trademark. This time, it was reinvented as 'romantic evening wear', embellished with beads and embroidered feathers, or as a full skirt ending in a floral train.

With brightly coloured, elegant and sophisticated outfits, the Bronx-born designer wanted to celebrate 'a woman who is timeless and modern, bold and romantic, sophisticated and vibrant,' according to his collection note.

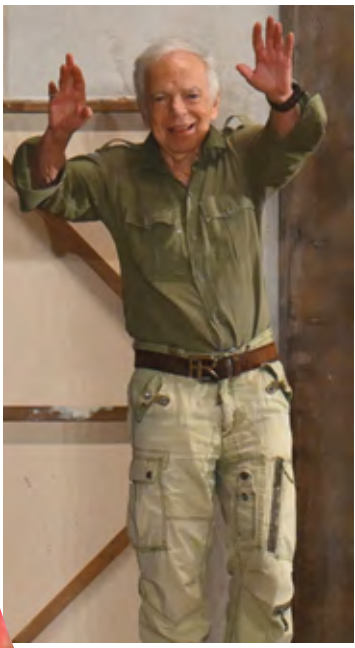
With model Christy Turlington on the catwalk and actresses Robin

Wright and Amanda Seyfried looking on, the show ended with golden dresses, including one with bangs that took 'over 800 hours of work by fifteen specialized embroiderers,' according to Lauren.

This season, Fashion Week is taking place against the backdrop of a double strike by Hollywood writers and actors for better pay. The strike has reduced the number of red carpets used for previews to a bare minimum, which means that brands have lost the opportunity to dress the stars and let the world know about it. But that doesn't worry the director of the CFDA.

"Certainly red carpet is a way to speak to audience," Kolb said. But the runway shows and the content distributed by the brands on social networks will "contribute to a very loud, very visible Fashion Week," he added.

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US fashion designer Ralph Lauren acknowledges guests



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