



## POMP, PAGEANTRY MARK NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Supreme Commander, presided over a military parade at Al Nasr Square in Dhofar on the occasion of the glorious 52nd National Day on Friday. Loyalty marches were held in many wilayats and patriotic events marked the day. Drone shows in Muscat and Salalah enthralled gatherings of tens of thousands of citizens and expatriates who queued up hours in advance to reach the show sites in Amerat in Muscat and Sahel Ittin in Salalah

See more on Page 04



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**Asyad Group's companies are honored to extend our heartiest praise and sincerest wishes to**

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**and the people of Oman**

**on the occasion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Day of Oman's flourished Renaissance**





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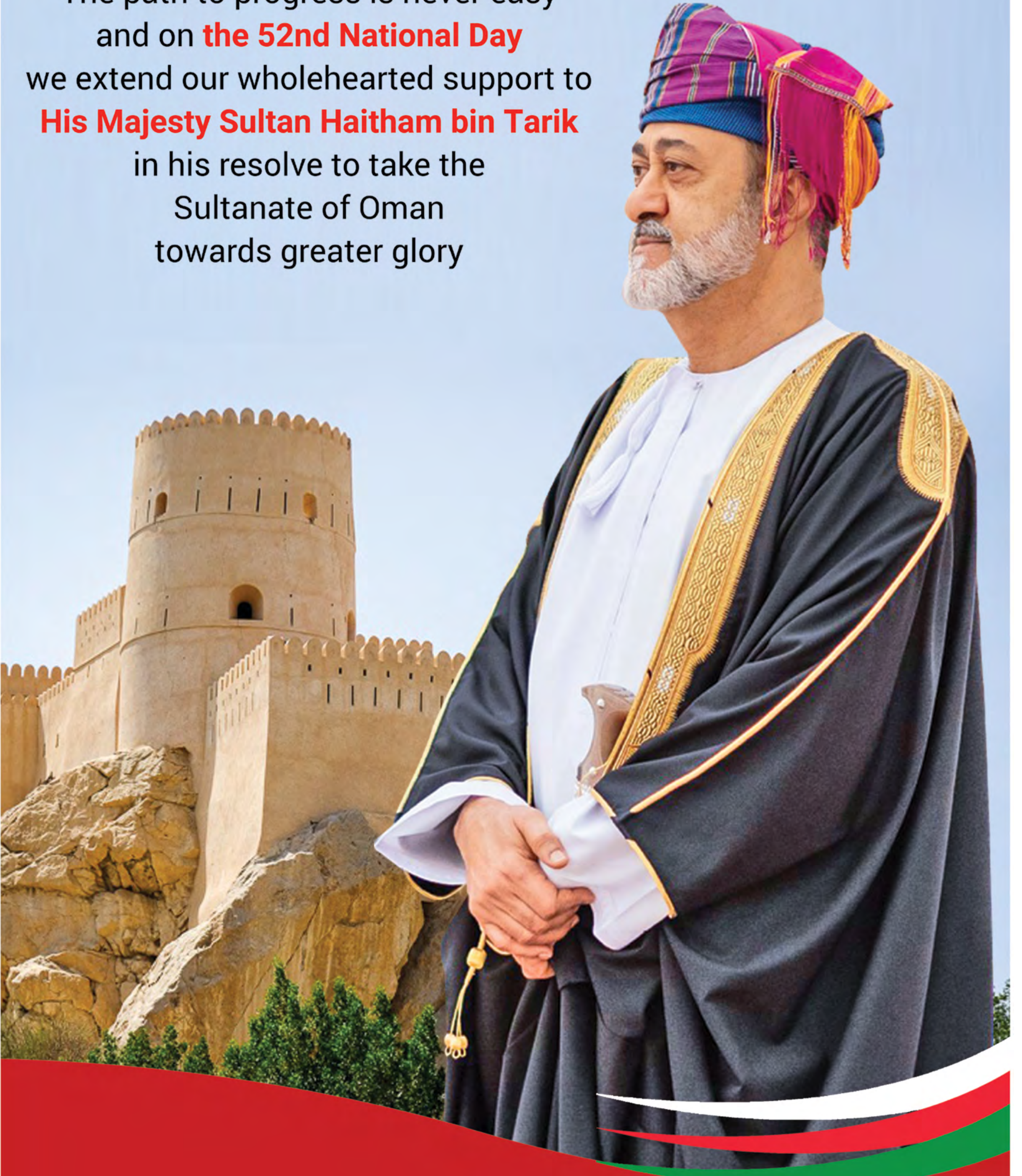
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*Oman marches on!*

The path to progress is never easy  
and on **the 52nd National Day**  
we extend our wholehearted support to  
**His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik**  
in his resolve to take the  
Sultanate of Oman  
towards greater glory



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# H M values prayers, greetings of people



Salalah - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik presided over a meeting of the Council of Ministers at Al Husn Palace in Salalah on Thursday.

His Majesty the Sultan greeted Omani citizens and expatriates on the occasion of the 52nd Glorious National Day. He prayed to Allah for a happy comeback of this glorious day and similar occasions at a time when Oman and its noble people are blessed with further progress, prosperity and tranquility.

His Majesty the Sultan valued the sincere sentiments, prayers and greetings of citizens and residents in all parts of Oman on this auspicious occasion. He commended citizens' and residents' joy and celebration of the national occasion in Dhofar, describing the festivities as a source of pride and evidence of allegiance and gratitude.

Next, His Majesty explored local, regional and international developments.

His Majesty the Sultan took note of the Council of Ministers' keenness to monitor and follow up on financial indicators in light of positive results achieved by the Medium-Term Fiscal Plan, which contributed to maintaining the safe financial position of Oman. In this context, His Majesty directed the launch of the National Fiscal Sustainability and Financial Development Programme for a period of three years starting in January 2023.

After the Council of Ministers elaborated on the economic performance, the 10th Five-Year Plan and projects endorsed for implementation within the duration of the plan, His Majesty instructed units of the State's Administrative Apparatus to double efforts to achieve the best results in economic diversification sectors to boost the economy and growth rate.

His Majesty underscored the importance of completing development projects endorsed for the 10th Five Year Plan and finalisation of projects as scheduled and within approved budgets.

His Majesty also gave directives for the execution of additional development projects alongside projects endorsed through the 10th Five Year Plan, including works on the Sultan Qaboos Dual-carriageway in Salalah, restoration of a rainwater drainage system for the same carriageway, and construction of a multi-purpose port in Masirah.

Following the Council of Ministers' keenness to continue offering necessary support and alleviate the impact of inflation on citizens, His Majesty endorsed a number of initiatives as follows:

1. The promotion of 2012 government employees of the civil service and other departments who are eligible for promotion, effective 2023.
2. Fixing vehicle fuel prices in accordance with October 2021 rates, as a maximum ceiling, until the end of 2023.

3. Extending the job security gratuity for citizens whose services are terminated within Oman until the end of June 2023.
4. Waiving outstanding housing loans of employees and retirees of Sultan's Armed Forces and Royal Guard of Oman who earn less than RO450 per month. This follows the norm of writing off outstanding loans of citizens who are beneficiaries of housing loans provided by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.

In efforts to revise government service fees, the Council of Ministers reviewed the outcome of the second phase of the government services pricing guide project. It was agreed to cancel, reduce and merge an additional set of government service fees in a manner that ensures support for the activities of the economic sectors, enhances the competi-

On regional and international developments, His Majesty stressed on the fundamentals of Oman's foreign policy, which espouse the approach of dialogue, peace and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.

At the conclusion of the meeting, His Majesty the Sultan spoke about several of aspects of interest to the country and citizens. He wished all success in realising the good of the nation.

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SEASON 2022-2023

# Pomp, pageantry mark National Day celebrations



Salalah - His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Supreme Commander, presided over a military parade held at Al Nasr Square in the Governorate of Dhofar on the occasion of the glorious 52<sup>nd</sup> National Day on Friday.

The event saw the participation of units representing the Royal Army of Oman (RAO), the

Royal Air Force of Oman, the Royal Navy of Oman, the Royal Guard of Oman (RGO), the Sultan's Special Force (SSF), the Royal Oman Police (ROP), ground and mounted military music bands, as well as Firqah Forces.

Upon His Majesty the Sultan's arrival at the parade ground, he was received by Sayyid Shihab

bin Tarik al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, Gen Sultan bin Mohammed al Nuamani, Minister of Royal Office, and Vice-Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis al Raisi, Chief of Staff of Oman's Armed Forces (SAF).

When His Majesty the Sultan ascended the Royal dais, columns of the parade performed the military salute. The

joint corps of military bands played the Royal Anthem, while the Sultan of Oman's Artillery fired a 21-gun salute to His Majesty the Sultan.

Then, the parade commander stepped forward, requesting His Majesty the Sultan to signal the start of the military show.

The joint corps of military bands representing the SAF, the

RGO, the ROP and the Royal Court Affairs (RCA) played sundry tunes as they marched before the Royal dais. Columns of the Protocols Guard joined the parade and performed ceremonial gestures to the accompaniment of melodies from the joint corps of military bands performing the military salute to His Majesty the Sultan.

This was followed by columns of personnel in camouflage uniforms, representing the SAF, the RGO, the SSF and the ROP, queued before the Royal dais, performing the military salute to His Majesty, the Supreme Commander, to the accompaniment of melodies by the joint corps of military bands.



RAO's Firqah Forces. They chanted their allegiance and gratitude to His Majesty the Sultan as they passed before the Royal dais and gave the military salute to His Majesty, the Supreme Commander.

Later, the columns of the parade proclaimed "Faith in Allah, loyalty to the Sultan, sacrifice for the nation." Then, the joint corps of military bands played the Royal Anthem, while the

columns of the parade performed the military salute marking the conclusion of the military show.

On the occasion, His Majesty the Sultan, the Supreme Commander, received a commemorative gift from the valiant armed forces. Sayyid Shihab had the honour of presenting the gift. Then, His Majesty the Sultan left the parade grounds.

ONA



## Oman Air restores 65% of pre-pandemic network

Muscat - Oman Air has restored 65 per cent of its pre-pandemic network, according to Abdulaziz bin Saud al Raisi, CEO of Oman Air.



Abdulaziz bin Saud al Raisi

He stressed that the national carrier is ready to increase its destinations with the increase in travel demand.

He told ONA that business is now improving, and that he expects the growth momentum to continue with the return of full operations of the fleet and destinations between the end of 2023 and the beginning of 2024.

The airline has already restarted most routes of its network of destinations that were suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, except for Morocco and China. "Beginning December, we will re-start flights to Moscow, with plans to launch more destinations in 2023."

Raisi added that a rise in fuel prices, the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and measures applied at a number of international airports had significantly affected the company's revenues.

"There is close cooperation between the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Omran Group and Oman Air to promote the sultanate as a unique and distinguished tourist destination, and we hope that this will contribute

to an increase in the number of tourists in 2023."

Raisi also informed that in view of the severe impact of the pandemic on the aviation sector, it was agreed with the manufacturer to postpone delivery of aircraft booked earlier to 2027.

"Our medium-term goals require a fleet of two sustainable aircraft variants, the Boeing 787 and 737, which will reduce our environmental footprint and increase our operational efficiencies," he said.

On Omanisation, Raisi affirmed that the company invests significantly in training Omani youth, especially in the field of employment-related training. "The employment policy implemented during the past five years resulted in raising the percentage of Omanisation to 94 per cent in the current year."

## Sayyid Badr hold talks with President Raisi

Tehran, Iran - Sayyid Badr bin Hamad al Busaidi, Foreign Minister, was received by Dr Ibrahim Raisi, President of Iran, in Tehran on Saturday.

During the meeting, Sayyid Badr conveyed the greetings of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and his good wishes to the President and the people of Iran for continued progress and prosperity, and for the relations between the two friendly countries to develop further.

On his part, Raisi conveyed his greetings and appreciation for His Majesty the Sultan, and his good wishes to His Majesty and the Omani people. He wished the relations between the two countries further progress and development. Raisi also congratulated Oman on the occasion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Day.

They reviewed bilateral relations and emphasised the keenness of both sides to strengthen and develop these in various fields in a way that brings mutual benefits.

Earlier in the day, Sayyid Badr held a meeting with his counterpart, Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Iran. Their meeting dealt with issues related to bilateral cooperation and ways to develop these.



## Gulf International Chemicals SAOG

(An ISO 9001:2008 Certified Company)

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS REPORT

#### Dear Shareholders,

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Gulf International Chemicals SAOG (GIC), I am pleased to present you a brief report on the company's activities for the third quarter of 2022.

Total revenue for the period under review was RO 1,555,903. The net loss after taxation amounted to RO 31,577 and the net asset per share stood at 122 Baiza.

During the third quarter of 2022, the regional construction markets were still in slow pace. In Oman, the construction sector remained slowed down during the period mainly due to limited government spending on construction and infrastructure projects. In UAE, the construction sector pace was adversely affected by the continuing general situation of the region. The UAE market remained in oversupply and less demand situation for construction chemicals for the period. The construction sector situation in both countries coupled with increase in raw materials prices internationally has put pressure on the margins which affected profitability.

The outlook for the remaining of the year 2022 is very conservative as it is linked to the improvement of regional circumstances, improvement in the investment climate in the construction sector and improvement in the marketplace after the repercussions of the decline following the spread of Corona Covid 19 virus.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to His Majesty and the Government for the generous support and for paving the way for growth and prosperity.

Best Regards,

Chairman

### CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30 SEP 2022

|                                                                   | Group<br>2022    | Group<br>2021    |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>ASSETS</b>                                                     |                  |                  |
| <b>Non-current assets</b>                                         |                  |                  |
| Property, plant and equipment                                     | 133,613          | 171,796          |
| Right-of-use assets                                               | 12,629           | 22,390           |
| Intangible asset                                                  | 69,185           | 77,096           |
| Financial assets at fair value through other comprehensive income | -                | -                |
|                                                                   | 506,191          | 584,614          |
| Deferred tax asset                                                | 80,232           | 66,521           |
| <b>Total non-current assets</b>                                   | <b>801,850</b>   | <b>922,417</b>   |
| <b>Current assets</b>                                             |                  |                  |
| Inventories                                                       | 254,482          | 257,269          |
| Trade and other receivables                                       | 1,072,391        | 1,119,974        |
| Term deposits                                                     | 550,000          | 300,000          |
| Cash and bank balances                                            | 306,568          | 492,813          |
| <b>Total current assets</b>                                       | <b>2,183,441</b> | <b>2,170,056</b> |
| <b>Total assets</b>                                               | <b>2,985,291</b> | <b>3,092,473</b> |
| <b>EQUITY AND LIABILITIES</b>                                     |                  |                  |
| <b>Capital and reserves</b>                                       |                  |                  |
| Share capital                                                     | 2,100,000        | 2,100,000        |
| Legal reserve                                                     | 598,850          | 596,428          |
| Fair value reserve                                                | (169,020)        | (44,197)         |
| Revaluation reserve                                               | 50,110           | 50,110           |
| Retained earnings                                                 | (13,380)         | 25,066           |
| <b>Total capital and reserves</b>                                 | <b>2,566,560</b> | <b>2,727,407</b> |
| <b>Non-current liabilities</b>                                    |                  |                  |
| Lease liabilities                                                 | 12,760           | 13,674           |
| Employees' benefit liabilities                                    | 81,844           | 76,522           |
| <b>Total non-current liabilities</b>                              | <b>94,604</b>    | <b>90,196</b>    |
| <b>Current liabilities</b>                                        |                  |                  |
| Lease liabilities                                                 | 914              | 3,363            |
| Trade and other payables                                          | 323,213          | 262,692          |
| Income tax payable                                                | -                | 8,815            |
| <b>Total current liabilities</b>                                  | <b>324,127</b>   | <b>274,870</b>   |
| <b>Total liabilities</b>                                          | <b>418,731</b>   | <b>365,066</b>   |
| <b>Total equity and liabilities</b>                               | <b>2,985,291</b> | <b>3,092,473</b> |
| <b>Net assets per share (OMR)</b>                                 | <b>0.122</b>     | <b>0.130</b>     |

### CONSOLIDATED UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS FOR THE PERIOD ENDED 30 SEP 2022

|                                              | Group<br>2022    | Group<br>2021    |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|------------------|
| <b>Revenue from contracts with customers</b> | <b>1,555,903</b> | <b>1,645,444</b> |
| Cost of sales                                | (1,275,706)      | (1,308,135)      |
| Gross profit                                 | 280,197          | 337,309          |
| Other income                                 | 46,026           | 44,779           |
|                                              | 326,223          | 382,088          |
| <b>Expenses</b>                              |                  |                  |
| General and administrative expenses          | (263,464)        | (261,906)        |
| Selling and distribution expenses            | (93,562)         | (90,969)         |
| <b>Profit from operations</b>                | <b>(30,803)</b>  | <b>29,213</b>    |
| Finance cost                                 | (774)            | (855)            |
| Profit before tax for the period             | (31,577)         | 28,358           |
| Taxation                                     | -                | (3,700)          |
| <b>Net profit after tax for the period</b>   | <b>(31,577)</b>  | <b>24,658</b>    |
| <b>Earnings per share</b>                    | <b>(0.002)</b>   | <b>0.001</b>     |

# New system of OCCI is a quantum leap in delivering the voice of private sector



The Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OCCI) witnessed radical changes in the recent past, which contributed to enabling it to perform its role as a representative of the private sector in the Sultanate of Oman and its responsibility to communicate the voice of the private sector to the competent authorities.

Oman Chamber of Commerce and Industry confirmed that the new system was issued by Royal Decree No 56/2022, which came in line with the requirements of the current stage of the renewed renaissance under the wise leadership of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik.

The new system aims to provide all support to private sector institutions, to achieve Oman Vision 2040 and enables the private sector to express its opinion on economic laws related to the private sector and submit proposals to amend the applicable laws.

Also, it enhances the role of the Chamber in framing the legislation that is issued, which is related to economic affairs and affects the activities of the private sector. The legislations must be presented to the chamber before they are issued.



The new system granted the Chamber the authority to classify companies into categories, which gives various entities real information about the business environment in the sultanate and the role of private sector institutions.

The new system works to enable the Chamber to contribute to the development of performance in various commercial, industrial and economic sectors and to diagnose challenges, by building strategic partnerships with universities and research centres to develop all other sectors.

The new system also supports the efforts of the Chamber's branches in the governorates with various agencies to attract investment in the governorates to achieve the goals of the current stage that require decentralisation and acceleration of achievement.

This is in addition to enabling the Chamber and its branches in the governorates to communicate directly with the various units of the state's administrative apparatus and to strengthen the roles assigned to the governors' offices in developing and implementing economic development plans that achieve prosperity for the sultanate.



18  
November

## Deeply-rooted Civilization and Rejuvenated Renaissance

“ Elevating Oman to the higher strata of progress that it deserves is a national duty and an immense responsibility to be shouldered by each and every citizen. Let's take pride in our identity and the core essence of our personality, while at the same time opening up to the world in a balanced and objective manner and in a positive stance that does not compromise our originality or identity or make us lose or forget either of them. ”

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik



## NLGIC to purchase minority shares in Al Ahlia Insurance

Muscat - Following the completion of the sale of Royal & Sun Alliance Middle East (RSA Middle East) to National Life & General Insurance Company (NLGIC), a public notice was made on July 7, 2022 by NLGIC of its intention to purchase the minority shares of Al Ahlia Insurance Company, a subsidiary of RSA Middle East.

Further to the public notice, on November 20, 2022, NLGIC issued a public announcement to purchase 47.5 per cent of Al Ahlia's shares.

The transaction aims to transform both companies into a larger, stronger, and more competitive regional insurance player emerging from Oman. The transaction is subject to approvals from the respective regulators and shareholders, NLGIC said in a press release.

For the avoidance of doubt, this announcement is a takeover offer advertisement as defined by the Takeover and Acquisition Regulation (E/2/2019).

Established in 1985, Al Ahlia is one of the longest serving non-life insurance companies in Oman. The company offers a wide range of products and services in the retail sector including motor, travel, personal accident and home products.

With its 24 branches, over 26 exclusive agents, a dedicated call center and a convenient online platform, Al Ahlia provides its customers with unmatched sales and service support. It also offers a wide range of commercial insurance products including property, casualty, motor, construction, marine, specialty lines and SME solutions.



NLGIC is a subsidiary of Oman International Development and Investment Company (Ominvest). Listed on the Muscat Stock Exchange, NLGIC is the market leader and the largest insurance

company in Oman with branches in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Kuwait. The company has been in the insurance industry for more than 25 years, offering a wide range of insurance solutions in medical, life and general insurance seg-

ments with a successful track record of business performance across various financial parameters.

NLGIC is the market leader in Oman in the motor and health in-

offers solutions for both commercial and retail clients, across a range of product lines, including motor, property, medical, SME as well as tailored solutions for large corporates. It has operated in the region for over 50 years, bringing best-in-class international solutions and expertise to the Middle East.

RSA Middle East is a joint venture formed by RSA Insurance Group, with majority shareholding, and regional shareholders in the Middle East. It has operations in Bahrain, UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia. It operates as local publicly listed companies in Oman, under Al Ahlia Insurance Company, and in Saudi Arabia, under Al Alamiya for Cooperative Insurance Company.

*The transaction aims to transform both companies into a larger, stronger and more competitive regional insurance player emerging from Oman*

## H E Aufi to deliver keynote address at Green Hydrogen Summit Oman 2022

Muscat - H E Eng Salim bin Nasser al Aufi, Minister of Energy and Minerals, will present the keynote speech at the opening of the Green Hydrogen Summit Oman 2022 (GHSO), which will be held at Oman Convention and Exhibition Centre in Muscat, during December 5 - 7, 2022.

The keenly anticipated opening address will shed light on, among other issues, Oman's newly unveiled strategy for the development of a world-scale green hydrogen industry to support the decarbonisation of the Omani economy, as well as cater to the energy transition goals of other nations.

An overview of this ambitious vision was shared recently by officials of the ministry, joined by representatives of Oman 2040 Vision, Energy Development Oman and the newly established hydrogen-centric energy firm Hydrom. At the heart of this strategy is a commitment to reducing Oman's climate-warming CO2 emissions to Net Zero by 2050 - a goal that envisions investments of an estimated US\$140bn in a full-fledged domestic green hydrogen industry over the next several decades.

Held under the auspices of the Ministry of Energy and Minerals, the three-day GHSO Summit and Exhibition has been organised by Birba Energy Services with the support of a number of prominent local and international energy-related organisations, according to a press release.

Underscoring its appeal and reach, the forum will be attended



H E Eng Salim al Aufi

by a distinguished gathering of energy ministries representing hydrogen producers and importers, as well as policymakers, energy pundits and CEOs of international energy companies, technology providers and energy think-tanks. High-level representatives from the International Energy Agency (IEA) will be in attendance as well.

Over the course of the three-day forum, a total of 12 strategic sessions will be held, focusing on nine strategic themes: Oman green hydrogen economy and strategy; global hydrogen review; Oman as a global player in the hydrogen space; Oman as a green hydrogen hub; Oman green hydrogen infrastructure; green hydrogen value chain (in-country value); partnership and investment; green hydrogen projects' finance and bankability; and green hydrogen projects in Oman.

Additionally, a technical conference will take place in parallel with the main conference. Inter-

national experts representing key segments of the hydrogen value chain will conduct a series of masterclasses on December 5th covering four categories: green hydrogen technology, green hydrogen application, green hydrogen regulations and policy, and green hydrogen safety.

Prefacing the summit is an exclusive VIP session scheduled to take place at Kempinski Hotel Muscat on December 5th. A number of ministers representing leading energy producing and importing nations will be in attendance, joined by policymakers, experts and CEOs from leading energy companies from Oman and around the world. H E Al Aufi will also address this 'by-invitation only' event.

As a one-stop expo on green hydrogen, GHSO 2022 will also include a full-fledged exhibition featuring leading international and local energy players, investors and developers, technology providers, and other companies that form part of the green hydrogen ecosystem. The three-day exhibition begins on December 5, 2022 and is open to visitors.

Reflecting the widespread appeal of the summit, more than 600 local and international delegates have so far registered to attend the proceedings. Further, to enable young Omani research scholars and budding energy professionals to benefit from the event, Birba Energy has offered 100 seats free of charge to interested participants.

## Amazon begins laying off employees

San Francisco, US - Amazon confirmed that it is laying off staff, after days of rumors that the e-commerce behemoth would become the latest tech giant to unleash a large-scale redundancy plan amid a souring economic environment.

"The economy remains in a challenging spot and we've hired rapidly the last several years," wrote chief executive Andy Jassy in an internal memo published on the Amazon website.

US media have previously reported that the platform and its various branches will lay off about 10,000 employees.

Jassy did not confirm the figure, but he said that the process had begun and would continue early next year. The first teams affected were those dealing with the brand's electronic devices such as Kindle e-readers. Physical shops will also be impacted.

AFF

## Qatar World Cup reaps revenue bonus for FIFA

Doha, Qatar - FIFA will earn up US\$700mn more from the Qatar World Cup than it did four years ago despite relentless criticism in the build-up to the tournament, president Gianni Infantino said on Saturday.

Infantino said media rights were up about US\$200mn compared with the 2018 tournament in Russia, sponsorship was US\$200mn extra and tickets and hospitality would bring in US\$200mn to US\$300mn more.

"All in all this World Cup will generate for FIFA around US\$600mn-\$700mn more than the last World Cup," he said ahead of the Sunday's opening match between Qatar and Ecuador.

Infantino said he would reveal FIFA's global revenues for the past four years to national associations on Sunday.

But he insisted the Qatar tournament - which has faced criticism over rights issues and its climate - had defied doubters.

"I was told that sponsors will



Gianni Infantino speaks at a press conference at Qatar National Convention Center in Doha on Saturday (AFP)

jump from FIFA, people will switch off their TV, they will not watch the World Cup because of the scandal, nobody will come to Qatar anyway because it is winter."

Hailing a "commercial success", Infantino said: "If so many people around the world have invested so much money in the World Cup in Qatar, they invest because they believe in FIFA" and "trust" Qatar.

"Either those people are stupid, or somebody, those who say nobody will watch it, that nobody cares about this World Cup, might be little bit wrong as some of the polls in some countries were wrong as well."

Infantino justified a decision announced Friday to ban the sale of beer around the eight stadiums on the "flows" of fans in the city.

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MOH No: 558/2022

# Lulu celebrates National Day by promoting Omani products

Coinciding with Oman's 52nd National Day celebrations, Lulu Hypermarket launched its signature initiative to promote Omani products in all its stores. The Omani products exhibition was inaugurated by H E Qassem al Ameri, Member of the Shura Council, representative of the Wilayat of Seeb on November 17 at Lulu Hypermarket, Al Bandar, Mawaleh.

The campaign, held under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, aims to provide endorsement and support to SMEs by providing them an opportunity to promote their local products in the market, which will directly support the economy. The promotion will run from November 17 to December 10 at selected Lulu outlets across the country.

Commenting on the campaign, Saif al Mamari, Export Development Director General Assistant at the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion, said, "The Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion devotes its efforts to raising awareness of the importance of supporting local made products and increasing their competitiveness."

"By buying local products, we help stimulate the economy and contribute to achieving the diversification goals of Oman Vision 2040," he added.

As part of National Day celebrations, all the Lulu outlets have been decked up in national colours. Various cultural activities and other exciting events have also been planned. Also, specially devised aisles reflect the Omani market concept and



replicate the traditional style. Different SMEs will showcase their products in the Omani market, creating awareness among consumers and motivating them to buy locally manufactured products.

Speaking on the promotion of the Omani products, Ananth A V, Director of LuLu Hypermarkets Oman & India, stated, "I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the citizens and residents of this nation on the occasion of the 52nd National Day. We are proud to play a small part in this remarkable transformation journey. This is a momentous occasion for each of us to celebrate the country's growth and achievements under the able leadership of His Majesty."

"We are glad to have

launched this promotion to coincide with our 52nd National Day celebrations as an ideal platform to market Omani products. We are sure this promotion will also create awareness among local and expat consumers on the high quality and uncompromising standards of locally manufactured products and highlight the importance of buying local products to contribute to the national economy," he added.

Shabeer K A, Regional Director - Lulu Hypermarkets, Oman, stated, "The Omani products promotion is in line with our commitment to encourage customers to buy local products to provide a fillip and thrust to the local producers. This is also an initiative to extend support to Omani entrepreneurs and owners of small and medium businesses to develop their ventures

as well as market their local products. We thank the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion for supporting us in organising this promotion to spread awareness on the importance of supporting Omani products among various segments of the society."

As part of this promotion, all Lulu outlets have been stocked up with a wide range of local products for customers to choose from. Separate counters have also been set up to display a wide range of Omani products on special discounts and offers. Locally sourced products, including honey, dates, incense, Omani sweets, coffee, spices, nuts, milk and dairy products, perfumes, cosmetics, gift items and other household items, will be available across all hypermarkets during the promotional period.

# Oman LNG hosts ICV Global Connect event in Muscat

Attesting to its In-Country Value efforts, Oman LNG hosted the In-Country Value (ICV) Global Practitioners Connect event in Muscat, organised in collaboration with Petroleum Development Oman (PDO) and Shell Development Oman (SDO).

The three-day event, which was wrapped up on November 16 with a high-level report out session attended by senior officials, featured expert-led panel discussions which shed light on best ICV practices and methods that could ultimately benefit the country and its people. To achieve its 'learning and education' scopes, the event also highlighted the role of ICV in supporting local SMEs to foster a robust ecosystem that promotes collaboration within the energy industry.



International industry experts, practitioners, specialists and enthusiasts joined the event to share their experiences and discuss the various trends and challenges associated with ICV, with greater focus placed on sharing challenges and best practices relating to policies and operations.

Several panel discussions focused specifically on the role of oil and gas sector in promoting

ICV, the energy transition, and disruptive technology such as the transition to renewables, skills transition, climate change, IT, digitalisation, and further exploring potential industry collaborations. The event attracted many regional and international partners including Peterson Institute, FDI Advisory Board and different ICV delegations from Kazakhstan, Brunei, Norway, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria.

# Vodafone, Al Mouj Muscat kick off strategic partnership

As part of a long-term strategic partnership, Vodafone and Al Mouj Muscat are joining hands to deliver an unforgettable season of public events at Oman's premium leisure and lifestyle destination. Under the new partnership, an exciting calendar of activities, performances and launches that make up a series of entertainment experiences are being planned for the local community and visitors to enjoy.

"We have big plans for Oman and since our launch we have forged ahead, building partnerships with like-minded organisations where we jointly foster great opportunities for growth and seek to create value for our customers and communities,"



said Bader al Zidi, CEO of Vodafone in Oman. "Al Mouj Muscat is a thriving destination in the heart of Muscat and we believe that together we will take the upcoming season to a whole new level. Our teams have been working tirelessly, looking at every detail and touch-point to ensure that every person joining

us will enjoy a differentiated experience." Al Mouj Muscat CEO Nasser bin Masoud al Sheibani said, "Our lifestyle destination welcomes close to 4mn visitors a year and it is home to 8,000 residents. We are known as the community where people enjoy the very best in how to live, work and play."

# Bank Muscat showcases heritage, culture in National Day celebration

Bank Muscat, the leading financial services provider in Oman, celebrated the glorious 52nd National Day with a grand celebration at its head office at Airport Heights. National pride and patriotic fervour were on full display at the mega event at the head office, which was well decorated with the national colours of red, green and white.

The bank's management team and employees participated actively in the celebrations and extended their sincere appreciation and best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the people of Oman on the occasion.

The highlights of the 52nd National Day celebrations included live performances by a traditional Omani music band and a classical ensemble. An Omani crafts exhibition featuring traditional weaving and pottery stations was the other highlight of the festivities.

It enthralled both employees and visitors alike while showcasing the sultanate's vibrant heritage and culture and offering a rare opportunity to interact with veteran craftsmen pursuing popular traditional crafts.



A selection of traditional Omani cuisine was also served to those gathered for the festivities via a live food station featuring tradition Omani cuisine like Rakhal bread, Luqaimat and Omani halwa, with large numbers of customers and visitors enjoying the celebrations.

As the nation's flagship bank, Bank Muscat seizes every opportunity, especially occasions of na-

tional importance, to reach out to citizens and residents across Oman. To enhance public participation in National Day celebrations, the Bank launched competitions on its social media channels (Instagram and Twitter) and FM radio channels for the general public to promote the National Day celebrations. Exciting prizes will be given away to the lucky winners. To know more

about the competitions, please check out the details from the bank's official accounts on Twitter and Instagram.

Over the past decades, Bank Muscat which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, has been closely involved in facilitating the development of projects in Oman, in line with its strong support for Public-Private Partnership efforts including those

that promote Oman as a unique destination.

Bank Muscat, which is itself a major milestone in the Renaissance of Oman, continues to contribute significantly to the rapid growth and development of Oman and its people. With about 95 per cent Omanisation across its various departments and sections as a result of its continuous investments in human resources, Bank Muscat is a dream employer for Omani youth and well known for its positive work culture, common values, fostering of innovation, employee engagement activities, and sound HSE (Health, Safety and Environment) practices.

Bank Muscat is also the first choice for over 2mn customers in Oman, with 174 branches and more than 800 touchpoints including ATMs, Cash Deposit Machines (CDMs) and Fully Functional Machines (FFM) installed across the country.

The Bank continues to play an important role in enhancing financial inclusion in Oman through a number of new products and services targeting different demographic segments.

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Offer valid from 1<sup>st</sup> October to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022. Raffle draws will be held at Oasis Water Company, Azaila with a total of 3 raffle draws. Dates: 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022 and 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023. Winners will be intimated directly. Oasis Water Company employees are not eligible to participate in this promotion. Gifts shown are for illustrative purpose only. Actual may vary. Promotion at Lulu, Nesto, Carrefour, Makkah Hypermarkets & The Sultan Center.

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Warmest wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and the people of Oman on the occasion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Day

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FIFA WORLD CUP

# Qatar2022



SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022 MUSCAT DAILY 09

## NO LOVE LOST

PSG trio Lionel Messi, Neymar and Kylian Mbappe set for World Cup rivalry in Qatar

Doha, Qatar - There is a thread that connects the three leading favourites to win the World Cup starting in Qatar on Sunday.

Brazil, Argentina and holders France have been cited as the main contenders for good reason, not least because of the identity of their star players.

Lionel Messi captains an Argentina team on a 36-game unbeaten run, Neymar leads a formidable Brazil side and France's hopes of retaining the trophy will depend to a large extent on Kylian Mbappe.

The trio of Messi, Neymar and Mbappe have been united at Paris Saint-Germain by the wealth of the French club's Qatari owners.

Their relationship has dominated headlines in France this season, and their performances have been outstanding.

Qatar created shockwaves in December 2010 when it won the right to host this year's World Cup. A little over six months later, Qatar Sports Investments bought PSG.

Fast forward a decade and they have been transformed from an ailing club into a major force.

Mbappe and Neymar became the two most expensive signings in football history when they moved to PSG in 2017. Messi joined them in Paris last year following his departure from Barcelona.

They are one of the favourites to win this season's Champions League, with Messi, Mbappe and Neymar having scored 46 goals between them in PSG's 22 games so far. The World Cup has been cited as a reason for their superb form, in particular in the case of Messi and Neymar.

### 'Messi is the best'

At 35, Messi knows he is unlikely to get another chance to win it. "It's my last World Cup, surely," he told ESPN Argentina recently.

A brief walk along Doha's Cor-



Argentina's Lionel Messi (L), Brazil's Neymar (C) and France's Kylian Mbappe during a Paris Saint-Germain training session (AFP)

*The World Cup is my greatest dream. It has been since I understood what football was*

NEYMAR

niche or in the nearby Souq Waqif marketplace is enough to gauge Messi's popularity in Doha.

Supporters, often from Qatar's large South Asian population, sport Argentina shirts with Messi's name and number on the back as they sample the atmosphere on the eve of the tournament.

Some waited outside Argentina's base into the early hours of Thursday, hoping for a glimpse of Messi as Lionel Scaloni's squad arrived in Doha.

"Messi is the best. We like how

Argentina are playing at the moment and with Messi they are the best," one fan, a 36-year-old finance worker called Shabi originally from the Indian state of Kerala, told AFP.

Like Messi, Neymar is among the players whose images adorn the giant buildings in downtown Doha.

### Neymar's past trauma

At 30, Neymar might have at least one more World Cup in him after this one, even if he has previously

hinted that this could be his last. Injury ruined the 2014 World Cup for him before Brazil lost to Belgium in the quarter-finals in 2018.

Since then injuries have hampered him in Paris. Until this season, when he has appeared fitter and sharper than ever. "The World Cup is my greatest dream," Neymar told British newspaper The Daily Telegraph this week. "It has been since I understood what football was."

### Mbappe is the future

In stark contrast to his two club colleagues, Mbappe has already won the World Cup and was still a teenager when he did so with France in 2018.

It is he who represents the future, which is why PSG splashed

huge sums to persuade him to sign a new deal at the end of last season rather than join Real Madrid.

Le Parisien recently reported that Paris would be paying Mbappe 630 million euros (\$652m) before tax over the duration of the three-year contract he signed in May.

PSG dismissed that report as "sensationalist", but the figures mentioned highlight Mbappe's status.

"Kylian is an extraordinary player," his France teammate Lucas Hernandez said on Friday. "It is an honour to have him in our team."

Mbappe's France ended the hopes of Messi's Argentina in the last 16 in 2018.

AFP

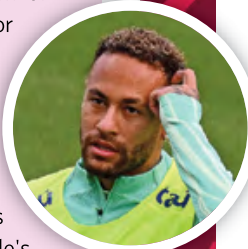
### Lionel Messi (Argentina)

Arguably the greatest player of all time, Messi has yet to emulate past legends Pele and Diego Maradona by winning the World Cup. He did finally win a major international tournament with Argentina at the Copa America last year. The 35-year-old has said this will "very likely" be his last World Cup and will be desperate to go one better than 2014, when they lost to Germany in the final.



### Neymar (Brazil)

Brazil head into the tournament as favourites to win a record-extending sixth World Cup. The strong form of Neymar this season for PSG will be a big plus point for coach Tite after a difficult spell for the 30-year-old. Neymar heads to Qatar just two goals short of equalling Pele's all-time Brazil scoring record, albeit having already played 29 more matches. The Selecao were beaten by Belgium in the quarter-finals four years ago.



### Kylian Mbappe (France)

His France teammate Karim Benzema is the current Ballon d'Or holder but the world champions' most important player remains Mbappe, more than four years since he starred at the 2018 World Cup. The Paris Saint-Germain forward became the first teenager to score in a World Cup final since Pele with his strike in France's 4-2 victory over Croatia.



## Six possible breakout stars of the World Cup

The World Cup always provides a stage for young players to make a name for themselves and they will be eagerly awaiting Sunday's start of the 2022 edition. We take a look at six of the possible breakout stars of the tournament in Qatar hoping to follow in the footsteps of Pele and Kylian Mbappe.



### Moises Caicedo (Ecuador)

Much of the focus of the opening match will be on hosts Qatar but Caicedo will be aiming to run the game from Ecuador's midfield. The 21-year-old has been a key player for Brighton in the Premier League since breaking into the first team last season. He has been linked with a potential move to several big clubs, most notably Liverpool. Caicedo has already made 25 international appearances, including 15 starts in Ecuador's successful World Cup qualifying campaign.



### Jude Bellingham (England)

The Borussia Dortmund midfielder is fast becoming a global star and is still only 19 years old. He was a member of the England squad that reached the European Championship final last year but was behind Declan Rice and Kalvin Phillips in the pecking order. Bellingham is now a sure starter for Gareth Southgate after a fine 12 months, capped by four goals in this season's Champions League. Real Madrid and Liverpool are among the teams chasing his signature.



### Cody Gakpo (Netherlands)

The 23-year-old winger only made one brief substitute appearance at Euro 2020 but is expected to feature far more heavily in Qatar. Gakpo has already netted 13 goals for PSV Eindhoven in all competitions this season, just seven fewer than his total tally last term. With the more established Memphis Depay having been out of action since September due to injury, Gakpo could start the Netherlands' first outing against Senegal on Monday.



### Gio Reyna (United States)

Reyna has always drawn praise for his performances for Dortmund despite struggling with injuries in his short career so far. He made his league debut for Dortmund in January 2020 aged 17, becoming the youngest American to play in the Bundesliga, taking now international teammate Christian Pulisic's record. Reyna, now 20, is likely to be competing with Lille forward Timothy Weah and Leeds' Brenden Aaronson for a spot in the United States' starting line-up.



### Jamal Musiala (Germany)

The 19-year-old has enjoyed a brilliant start to the campaign with Bayern Munich, scoring 12 goals and creating nine more. Musiala, who also played for England's youth teams before declaring for Germany, could start for Hansi Flick's men, even at the expense of veteran Thomas Mueller. Germany may need Musiala to fire if they are to seal a fifth World Cup, with the possibility Flick will play without an out-and-out striker following an injury to Timo Werner.



### Mohammed Kudus (Ghana)

Kudus was still playing for Ajax's youth team as recently as last year, before making an impact on the big stage with four goals in this season's Champions League. The 22-year-old from Accra has already made his mark for Ghana with five goals in 18 appearances. Kudus, who possesses great close control, will be an important figure for the last African nation to reach a World Cup quarter-final, alongside the more experienced Andre Ayew and his brother Jordan.



FIFA WORLD CUP

# Qatar2022



10 MUSCAT DAILY | SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2022

## MOMENT OF TRUTH

Qatar face acid test in World Cup opener against Ecuador after 12 years of spending

Doha, Qatar - Qatar will finally get their home World Cup under way on Sunday, 12 years after the nation's successful bid put into motion wide-ranging preparations which cost billions of dollars.

It is widely accepted the Gulf state has spent \$200 billion on hosting football's biggest event and Qatar will get their first glimpse at the final product at the Al Bayt Stadium in Al Khor when the hosts take on Ecuador.

Organisers say that 2.9 million of the 3.1 million tickets have been sold and they will be expecting a 60,000 sell-out on Sunday.

The home team's players have also been preparing tirelessly, spending months outside Qatar in isolated training camps, in an attempt to reach the knockout phase on their World Cup debut.

"Our situation is different (compared to other teams) and we have to work with what we've got," coach Felix Sanchez told a press conference on the eve of the tournament.

"It's true it's a massive sacrifice, many time away from our families and abroad and this shows the commitment of the players to compete and it all starts tomorrow."

The Group A match, which was moved forward from Monday to allow Qatar to play in the opening game, will be an acid test for the



Qatar defender Bassam al Rawi heads the ball during a team training session in Doha on Thursday (AFP)

*"On paper, they (Qatar's three opponents) should get the three points, but we of course are here to show our people that we can be a competitive team"*

FELIX SANCHEZ

hosts both on and off the pitch.

FIFA and the tournament organisers will be hoping the kick-off can help put several controversies in the shade.

Qatar had to face severe criticism over the human rights record

and the environmental fallout from holding the event.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino had called on World Cup teams to "focus on football" in a letter earlier this month and accused critics in Western countries of "hypocrisy"

on Saturday.

### 'We'll bring 'A' game'

Qatar will be wary of following the dozen years of work and spending with the embarrassment of becoming only the second host country to crash out in the first round.

To avoid joining South Africa in that exclusive club, Sanchez's men have been tasked with getting out of a group also containing European giants the Netherlands and African champions Senegal.

A win against the less-fancied

Ecuador would make those next two matches appear less daunting.

"On paper, they (Qatar's three opponents) should get the three points, but we of course are here to show our people that we can be a competitive team," said Sanchez.

"We'll bring our 'A' game and play our football, and try to bring joy..."

"We know that it will be a great challenge for us but we're very eager to play this match and are very happy to be here."

### Qatar ready for 'historic moment', says Sanchez

Doha, Qatar - Qatar coach Felix Sanchez said the hosts were excitedly looking forward to a "historic moment" when his team open the 2022 World Cup against Ecuador on Sunday.

The Qataris, playing in their first World Cup, take on the South Americans at Al Bayt Stadium in the tournament curtain raiser, before further Group A matches with Senegal and 2010 finalists Netherlands.

"It's a very important day for us, it's a historic moment, it's a very happy day for us, for the players and the staff," Sanchez said at the pre-match press conference on Saturday. "It's an extraordinary day... We have made a huge investment in this country."

"I hope we can enjoy football, our sport, and do our talking on the pitch. I hope all the countries in the world can come together to enjoy this."

Qatar will be playing in the global showpiece for the first time, but are hoping to replicate the form which saw them win the Asian Cup three years ago.

AFP

## Count on consumer experience

Oman's Most Trusted Brand Awards (OMTB) - the sultanate's ultimate stamp of approval by consumers who salute the supremacy of brands that score high on quality and service - is now into its 6th year.

Keeping alive a 'tradition of trust', OMTB helps acknowledge the efforts put in by the top brands in winning the confidence of their customers. At the same time, customers get a chance to prove their loyalty towards their favourite brands.

The ultimate wave of approval is about to surge, as consumers decide which brands rule supreme!



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PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

THIS IS AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF AN OFFER (THE "OFFER") TO ALL SHAREHOLDERS OF (TOGETHER THE "AAIC SHAREHOLDERS" AND EACH AN "AAIC SHAREHOLDER") OF AL AHLIA INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG ("AAIC") BY NATIONAL LIFE AND GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANY SAOG (THE "OFFEROR" OR "NLGIC") TO ACQUIRE 47.5 PERCENT OF THE ISSUED SHARE CAPITAL OF AAIC (THE "ISSUED CAPITAL") PURSUANT TO THE TAKEOVER AND ACQUISITION REGULATION (E/2/2019) (THE "TAKEOVER REGULATION").

| OFFER DETAILS                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Offeror or NLGIC                                  | National Life and General Insurance Company SAOG, a public joint stock company, licensed to do insurance business, bearing Cr No. 1487876, with registered office at Building No: 115, Plot No: 330, Greater Muttrah, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman and mailing address of PO Box 798, Postal Code 117, Wadi Kabir, Sultanate of Oman. The Offer is only being made by the Offeror and there are no persons acting in concert with the Offeror in making the Offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Offeree or AAIC                                   | Al Ahlia Insurance Company SAOG, a public joint stock company, licensed to do insurance business, bearing CR no. 1754807, with registered office at Ominvest Business Centre, Building no. 95, Way no. 501, Airport Heights and mailing address of PO Box 751, Postal Code 112, Ruwi, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Offer                                             | The offer by the Offeror to all the shareholders of AAIC excluding RSA Middle East B.S.C.(c) to acquire the remaining 47.5 percent. of the Issued Capital which would increase the Offeror's beneficial shareholding in AAIC to 100.0 per cent of the Issued Capital (being 100,000,000 fully paid-up AAIC Shares as at the Record Date).<br>Offer Completion is subject to acceptance by AAIC Shareholders representing a minimum of 90 percent of the Offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Offer Document                                    | Offer Document approved by Capital Market Authority, Oman ("CMA") for the Offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Offer Dates                                       | Offer Opens: 5 December 2022<br>Offer Closes: 25 December 2022<br>Note: The offer shall be open for 21 days but shall close prior to offer close day, if it receives acceptance from AAIC shareholders amounting to 100 percent of the offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Announcement Date                                 | 20 November 2022.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Record Date (for purpose of the Offer)            | 4 December 2022.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Offer Notice                                      | Offer Notice published by NLGIC via a disclosure made on Muscat Stock Exchange ("MSX")'s website dated 20 November 2022. Copy of the notice is available on NLGIC's website.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| Suspension of Trading                             | The trading in AAIC shares to be suspended once the Offer is accepted by 90 percent AAIC shareholders during the Offer Period, subject to regulatory approvals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Offer Objective                                   | The Offeror is making the Offer with the following objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A strategic decision for NLGIC which shall consolidate NLGIC and AAIC's combined position in the insurance sector in the region.</li><li>• By merging the operations of NLGIC and AAIC, the combined entity is expected to enhance efficiency and derive the benefit of synergies thereby creating value for its policyholders, shareholders, and other stakeholders.</li><li>• Upon completion of the Offer, all employees of AAIC will continue in their employment and there will be no immediate change to the employment structure. AAIC employees will be subject to periodic appraisals and restructuring, as standard course of business, giving due considerations to operational synergies and business requirements.</li><li>• It is expected that AAIC shares will be delisted from the regular market in MSX and converted into a closed joint stock company, subject to regulatory approvals. Post Offer Completion, there may be a restructuring exercise for both entities.</li></ul> |
| Offer Price                                       | A cash only Offer of OMR 0.466 per AAIC Share which is in line with the previous disclosure of 7 July 2022, and represents the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1.15x of AAIC's book value as on 30 September 2022.</li><li>• represents 52.3% higher than the AAIC's six months average price of OMR 0.306 prior to the disclosure of 7 July 2022.</li><li>• a 50.3% premium over the closing price of RO 0.310 as of the disclosure date of 7 July 2022, and 2.2% premium compared to the closing price of OMR 0.456 as of 14 November 2022.</li></ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Offer Acceptance Qualification                    | In the event that AAIC Shareholders who hold in aggregate less than 75 percent, except RSA Middle East B.S.C.(c), of the Offer accept the Offer for the Offer Price in accordance with the terms of the Offer Document (together the "Selling AAIC Shareholders" and each a "Selling AAIC Shareholder"), NLGIC may choose to either withdraw the Offer or acquire the relevant number of AAIC Shares from the Selling AAIC Shareholders.<br>In the event that Selling AAIC Shareholders who hold in aggregate more than 90.0 percent of the Offer accept the Offer for the Offer Price in accordance with the terms of the Offer Document, NLGIC will compulsorily acquire the shares from the remaining shareholders in order to acquire 47.5 percent direct shareholding in AAIC which amounts to a 100 percent beneficial shareholding in AAIC.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Encumbrances                                      | Only an AAIC Shareholder whose AAIC Shares are not subject to an encumbrance may accept the Offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Compulsory Acquisition                            | As provided in the Takeover Regulation, once AAIC Shareholders holding 90 percent or more of the shares in AAIC accept the Offer, NLGIC intends to exercise the "compulsory acquisition" provisions of Articles 62 to 65 (inclusive) of the Takeover Regulation, subject to regulatory approvals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Compulsory Acquired Shares                        | AAIC Shareholders who do not respond to the Offer during Offer Period will have their shares compulsorily acquired by NLGIC, subject to regulatory approvals.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Cash Consideration for Compulsory Acquired Shares | As per Article 65 of the Takeover Regulation, NLGIC will pay the shareholders of the Compulsory Acquired Shares the Offer Price as stated in the Offer Document.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| Offer Completion                                  | The completion of the Offer which shall occur on the date the Offer Price is paid to the Selling AAIC Shareholders post completion of the Offer Period and implementation of the Compulsory Acquisition.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Offer Completion Date                             | The date on which the Offer Completion occurs.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Offer Rationale                                   | Offer Completion will result in the formation of a stronger insurance company that the Board of Directors and management of NLGIC envisages would become more competitive, both locally and regionally.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Offer Manager                                     | Ubhar Capital SAOC, a closed joint stock company incorporated in Oman with registered office at PO Box 1137, PC 111, CPO, Oman. Ph.: +968 24 949 051 Email: ubhar-corporatefinance@u-capital.net                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |

| OTHER DETAILS                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shares in AAIC Already Held by NLGIC | NLGIC does not have any direct shareholding in AAIC as of the date of this Offer Announcement. However, RSA Middle East B.S.C.(c) which holds 52.5 percent of the Issued Capital of AAIC is a wholly owned subsidiary of NLGIC as of the date of this Offer Announcement.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Other Information                    | (i) Neither NLGIC nor AAIC have any outstanding convertible securities.<br>(ii) As of the date of the Offer Document, details of the number and percentage holding of voting AAIC Shares held directly or indirectly by the following persons are as set out below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• RSA Middle East B.S.C (c): 52,500,000 AAIC Shares - 52.5 percent.</li><li>• NLGIC shareholding in RSA Middle East B.S.C (c): 100 percent</li><li>• NLGIC Directors: Nil AAIC Shares Nil per cent.</li></ul><br>The parties under paragraphs (i) and (ii) above have not dealt in the voting shares in question during the period commencing six months prior to the beginning of the Offer Period and ending with the date of this Offer Document |

| INDICATIVE OFFER TIMELINE |                                                             |                  |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| 1                         | Offer Announcement                                          | 20 November 2022 |
| 2                         | Offer Document sent out to AAIC Board and AAIC Shareholders | 24 November 2022 |
| 3                         | The Offer Period opens                                      | 5 December 2022  |
| 4                         | The Offer Period closes                                     | 25 December 2022 |
| 5                         | NLGIC to pay the Offer Price                                | 29 December 2022 |
| 6                         | NLGIC acquires remaining shares – Compulsory Acquisition    | 29 December 2022 |

Note: The above timeline is indicative only and may be subject to change, following review, input, and approval from the competent authorities.

| ACCEPTANCE OF OFFER–TERMS, CONDITIONS,& PROCEDURE      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Notice Procedure                                       | Only electronic copy of this Offer Document will be sent based on Muscat Clearing & Depository Company SAOC ("MCD") data and be available on NLGIC, Ubhar Capital SAOC and the Capital Market Authority, Oman ("CMA") websites.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Acceptance Form                                        | The acceptance form to be used by AAIC Shareholders to submit their acceptance of the Offer pursuant to the terms of the Offer Document. These forms will be sent to each AAIC Shareholder through email based on MCD data. The acceptance form will also be available on NLGIC, Ubhar Capital SAOC and CMA websites.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Procedure for Acceptance of Offer by AAIC Shareholders | In order to accept the Offer, the AAIC Shareholders are required to; <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• deliver the Acceptance Form duly completed and signed to Ubhar Capital SAOC located in OMINVEST Business Center, PH Level, Building no. 95, Way no. 501, Airport Heights, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.</li><li>or alternatively,</li><li>• the AAIC Shareholders can send an email to ubhar-corporatefinance@u-capital.net stating their acceptance of the Offer along with a scanned copy of the Acceptance Form duly completed and signed.along with the requisite documents (as set out below) on or before 2 pm, on the Offer Closing Date.</li></ul> Completed Acceptance Form/ email once submitted cannot be revoked by AAIC Shareholders.<br>The Offer will remain open for acceptance for 21 days starting from 5 December 2022 to 25 December 2022 (both days inclusive). Acceptances received after working hours i.e., 8am -2pm on Offer Closing Date shall not be accepted.                                                                |
| Required Documents                                     | Letter/form of acceptance furnished by the AAIC Shareholder(s) without the requisite documents listed below may be rejected by the Offer Manager as being incomplete and invalid.<br>The letter/form of acceptance must be accompanied by the following documents:<br><b>For Individual Applicants:</b><br>A copy of Omani ID for Omani national AAIC Shareholders and Passport copy for Non-Omani national AAIC Shareholders.<br>Birth Certificate of the minor AAIC Shareholder, if the father is accepting the Offer on behalf of his minor children.<br>A copy of a valid power of attorney duly notarised by the relevant authorities must be included in the event the acceptance is on behalf of another person (with the exception of an acceptance made by a father on behalf of his minor children).<br><b>For Corporate Applicants:</b><br>ID Card of signatories, Commercial Registration Certificate Copy of the company board resolution authorizing persons to accept the Offer with specimen signatures of such authorized persons, if applicable. |
| Acceptance by NLGIC                                    | The acceptance by NLGIC of the AAIC Shares tendered by the AAIC Shareholders and settlement is subject to the following conditions:<br><b>Offer Completion.</b><br>Approval of the CMA for the final Offer result.<br>The settlement for the tendered AAIC Shares does not contravene any Applicable Law.<br>The letter/form of acceptance being duly and validly completed along with the required documents and submitted to the Offer Manager on or before the Offer Closing Date.<br>The person accepting the Offer is a valid AAIC Shareholder.<br>NLGIC not withdrawing the Offer in accordance with the provisions of the Takeover Regulation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Timing of Payment of the Offer Price                   | Upon receipt of valid letter/form of acceptance along with the requisite documents and subject to satisfactory verification, the Offer Manager will notify the eligible AAIC Shareholders regarding acceptance of the Offer and arrange to make payment via bank transfer in coordination with MCD (based on bank account details available with MCD) in favour of the AAIC Shareholder within 10 (ten) days of the Offer Closing Date. No interest, mark-up, surcharge, tax, or other increment will be payable for any cause or reason on the aggregate price for the AAIC Shares purchased by NLGIC from any AAIC Shareholder for any cause or reason. After a Selling AAIC Shareholder has accepted the Offer, he/she/it shall not be permitted to sell their relevant AAIC Shares to any other party unless and until NLGIC withdraws the Offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| OFFER RELATED PARTIES & CONTACT PERSONS |                                                  |                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Offeror                                 | National Life and General Insurance Company SAOG | Offer Manager                | Ubhar Capital SAOC                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|                                         |                                                  |                              | Contact: Muhammad Kashif Sabih Head Corporate Finance and Advisory PO Box 1137, PC 111, CPO, Sultanate of OmanTel: +968 24 949008Email: ubhar-corporatefinance@u-capital.net                                   |
| Offeree                                 | Al Ahlia Insurance Company SAOG                  | Legal Advisor to the Offeror | Younis Al Amri Advocates and Solicitors                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                         |                                                  |                              | Contact: Taher Noor Sayed Managing Partner Building no.1135, 1st Floor, Office No. 113, Behind Bader Al Sama, Way No.4505, Al Khuwair, Muscat, Sultanate of Oman Tel: +968 24473212 Email: taher@anlawoman.com |



FIFA WORLD CUP

# Qatar 2022

GROUP

**A**

QATAR (QAT)  
 ECUADOR (ECU)  
 SENEGAL (SEN)  
 NETHERLANDS (NED)

GROUP

**B**

ENGLAND (ENG)  
 IRAN (IRN)  
 USA (USA)  
 WALES (WAL)

GROUP

**C**

ARGENTINA (ARG)  
 SAUDI ARABIA (KSA)  
 MEXICO (MEX)  
 POLAND (POL)

GROUP

**D**

FRANCE (FRA)  
 AUSTRALIA (AUS)  
 DENMARK (DEN)  
 TUNISIA (TUN)

# Match Sched

Group  
Matches

Round  
of 16

Sunday 20 November  
Monday 21 November  
Tuesday 22 November  
Wednesday 23 November  
Thursday 24 November  
Friday 25 November  
Saturday 26 November  
Sunday 27 November  
Monday 28 November  
Tuesday 29 November  
Wednesday 30 November  
Thursday 1 December  
Friday 2 December  
Saturday 3 December  
Sunday 4 December  
Monday 5 December  
Tuesday 6 December  
Wednesday 7 December

Al Bayt  
Stadium

1

QAT  
v.  
ECU

8 PM

12

MAR  
v.  
CRO

2 PM

20

ENG  
v.  
USA

11 PM

28

ESP  
v.  
GER

11 PM

36

NED  
v.  
QAT

7 PM

44

CRC  
v.  
GER

11 PM

51

1B  
v.  
2A

11 PM

Khalifa  
International  
Stadium

3

ENG  
v.  
IRN

5 PM

11

GER  
v.  
JPN

5 PM

19

NED  
v.  
ECU

8 PM

27

CRO  
v.  
CAN

8 PM

35

ECU  
v.  
SEN

7 PM

43

JPN  
v.  
ESP

11 PM

49

1A  
v.  
2B

7 PM

Al  
Thumama  
Stadium

2

SEN  
v.  
NED

8 PM

10

ESP  
v.  
CRC

8 PM

18

QAT  
v.  
SEN

5 PM

26

BEL  
v.  
MAR

5 PM

34

IRN  
v.  
USA

11 PM

42

CAN  
v.  
MAR

7 PM

52

1D  
v.  
2C

7 PM

Ahmad  
Bin Ali  
Stadium

4

USA  
v.  
WAL

11 PM

9

BEL  
v.  
CAN

11 PM

17

WAL  
v.  
IRN

2 PM

25

JPN  
v.  
CRC

2 PM

33

WAL  
v.  
ENG

11 PM

41

CRO  
v.  
BEL

7 PM

50

1C  
v.  
2D

11 PM

Lusail  
Stadium

8

ARG  
v.  
KSA

2 PM

16

BRA  
v.  
SRB

11 PM

24

ARG  
v.  
MEX

11 PM

32

POR  
v.  
URU

11 PM

40

KSA  
v.  
MEX

11 PM

48

CMR  
v.  
BRA

11 PM

56

1H  
v.  
2G

11 PM

Stadium 974

7

MEX  
v.  
POL

8 PM

15

POR  
v.  
GHA

8 PM

23

FRA  
v.  
DEN

8 PM

31

BRA  
v.  
SUI

8 PM

39

POL  
v.  
ARG

11 PM

47

SRB  
v.  
SUI

11 PM

54

1G  
v.  
2H

11 PM

Education  
City  
Stadium

6

DEN  
v.  
TUN

5 PM

14

URU  
v.  
KOR

5 PM

22

POL  
v.  
KSA

5 PM

30

KOR  
v.  
GHA

5 PM

38

TUN  
v.  
FRA

7 PM

46

KOR  
v.  
POR

7 PM

55

1F  
v.  
2E

7 PM

Al Janoub  
Stadium

5

FRA  
v.  
AUS

11 PM

13

SUI  
v.  
CMR

2 PM

21

TUN  
v.  
AUS

2 PM

29

CMR  
v.  
SRB

2 PM

37

AUS  
v.  
DEN

7 PM

45

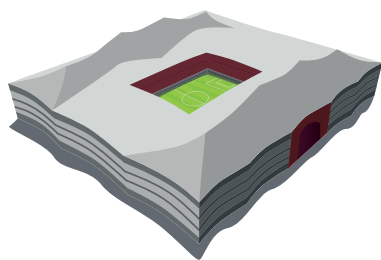
GHA  
v.  
URU

7 PM

53

1E  
v.  
2F

7 PM



AL BAYT  
STADIUM

- 6 x Group matches
- Round of 16
- Quarter-final
- Semi-final

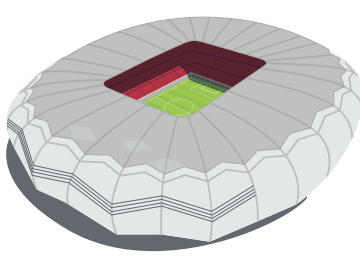
• 60,000 capacity



AHMAD BIN ALI  
STADIUM

- 6 x Group matches
- Round of 16

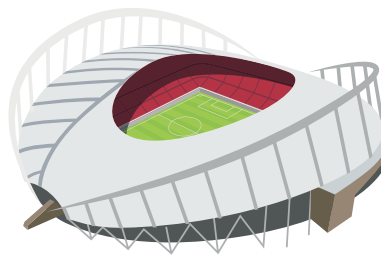
• 40,000 capacity



EDUCATION CITY  
STADIUM

- 6 x Group matches
- Round of 16
- Quarter-final

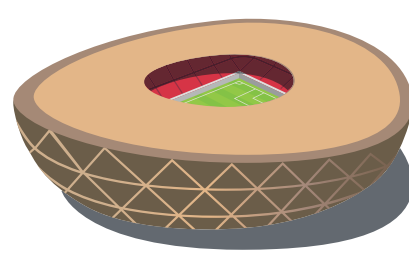
• 40,000 capacity



KHALIFA  
INTL. STADIUM

- 6 x Group matches
- Round of 16
- 3rd place match

• 40,000 capacity



LUSAIL  
STADIUM

- 6 x Group matches
  - Round of 16
  - Quarter-final
  - Semi-final
  - The Final
- 80,000 capacity



S

• 6

• 4

• 4

Rest days



# Climate fund breakthrough offers ‘hope’ at UN COP27

Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt - COP27 host Egypt scrambled to salvage UN climate talks on Saturday with the European Union signalling a breakthrough over the contentious issue of ‘loss and damage’ funding for climate vulnerable nations.

Nearly 200 countries’ representatives have gathered at the COP27 in Egypt for two weeks with the aim of driving forward action to fight climate change as the world faces a worsening onslaught of weather extremes.

But the talks stalled over the terms under which wealthy polluters provide ‘loss and damage’ funding for countries wracked by climate disasters, as well as over ratcheting up ambition in tackling global warming. After the European Union roundly rejected a document shown by Egypt overnight, a source from the bloc said at least the loss and damage issue was ‘agreed’ as far as it was concerned.

A European source confirmed ‘a deal has been reached on loss and damage which targets the fund to vulnerable countries’.

A draft document on creating a specific loss and damage fund was published by the Egyptian presidency on Saturday.

It takes some language from three earlier proposals - from the EU, Britain and the G77 and China bloc of 134 developing nations - and appears to kick some of the thornier issues, particularly over the sources of funding, into next year. “The draft decision on loss and damage finance offers hope to the vulnerable people that they will get help to recover from climate disasters and rebuild their lives,” said Harjeet Singh, head of global political strategy at Climate Action Network International.

**Temperature check**

Earlier, European Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans said the EU would ‘rather have no result than a bad result’ and was willing to walk out of the negotiations altogether.

The EU wants COP27 to have strong language on cutting emissions and to reaffirm the aspirational goal of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial levels.

Scientists say this is a far safer guardrail against catastrophic climate impacts, with the world currently far off track and heading for around 2.5C of warming under current commitments and plans.

“We are not here to produce papers, but to keep the 1.5C target alive,” said German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

The Egyptian COP27 presidency also released a new draft final statement that states the need to accelerate ‘efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies’. And another document was released specifically covering ambitions for curbing planet-heating emissions.

On the need to be more ambitious in slowing the rise in global temperatures, Tom Evans of the think tank E3G said it is ‘a copy-paste’ of the agreement made at Glasgow without building on the agreement made a year ago.



A climate activist sits near banners laid on the ground demanding protection of human rights and climate reparations, during the COP27 climate conference in Egypt's Red Sea resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh on Friday (AFP)

Under the 2015 Paris Agreement, countries agreed to limit global warming to ‘well below’ 2C and preferably 1.5C.

This more ambitious 1.5C target was embraced last year in Glasgow, with countries agreeing to annually review their carbon reduction goals.

AFP

**Counter proposal**

Many developing countries see the creation of a loss and damage fund at this meeting as a defining issue of the talks.

The G77 and China bloc called for the immediate creation of such a fund at COP27, with operational details to be agreed later. A counter proposal from the EU called to prioritise the most climate-vulnerable countries as recipients. They also said the money should come from a ‘broad funder base’ - code for countries including China and Saudi Arabia that have become wealthier since they were listed as developing nations in 1992.

Earlier, Timmermans warned that if not enough is done to slash emissions and keep 1.5C alive, ‘there is no amount of money on this planet that will be able to address the misery that will occur through natural disasters, etc, that we’re already seeing’, he said.

## Over 100 unmanned vessels to be deployed in Gulf waters

Manama, Bahrain - A US-led task force will deploy over 100 unmanned vessels in the Gulf region's strategic waters by next year to stave off maritime threats, the US Central Command chief said on Saturday.

The announcement by General Michael Kurilla at the annual Manama Dialogue conference in Bahrain came after Israel and the United States blamed Iran for a drone strike off the coast of Oman this week that hit a tanker operated by an Israeli-owned firm.

The attack, which coincided with heightened tensions between Tehran and Washington, was the latest in a string of disruptions in Gulf waters that are a key route for world energy supplies. ‘By this time next year, Task Force 59 will bring together a fleet of over 100 unmanned surface and subsurface vessels operating together, communicating together and providing maritime domain awareness,’ the CENTCOM chief said.

Launched in September 2021, Task Force 59 was created in Bahrain, home to the US navy's Fifth Fleet, to integrate unmanned systems and artificial intelligence into Middle East operations following a series of drone attacks blamed on Iran. While airborne and subsea unmanned vessels are quite well developed, unmanned surface boats are a new technology that are essential for security in the future.

AFP



European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen speaks at the 18th IISS Manama Dialogue in Bahrain's capital on Friday (AFP)

## Philippines says Saudi Arabia to pay 10,000 Filipino workers owed wages

Manila, Philippines - Saudi Arabia will compensate 10,000 Filipino workers who lost their jobs in the Gulf country years ago and are still waiting for their salaries, Philippine officials said.

The announcement came after Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos met on Friday on the sidelines of an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok.

Philippine Migrant Workers Secretary Susan Ople said the compensation package of two billion riyals (US\$532mn) would ‘help our displaced workers’.

It was unclear if unpaid workers from other countries would also receive some of the money.

“This is very good news. He (Prince Mohammed) told me this is their gift to us,” Marcos said late Friday.

Saudi Arabia plunged into economic crisis in 2015 following a sharp decline on oil prices, leading construction companies to lay off tens of thousands of foreign workers.

Saudi officials took legal action on behalf of unpaid employees from the Philippines and other Asian countries in an effort to recover their wages.

“I’m pretty sure that this gesture will somehow give them hope and will make up for so many years of anguish and disappointment,” Ople told AFP.

AFP was unable to reach the Saudi embassy in Manila for comment.

The Philippines earlier this month resumed the deployment of domestic workers to Saudi Arabia following a year-long ban.

Manila had stopped sending of household workers to the kingdom - a popular destination for Filipinos working abroad - after reports emerged of abuse and unpaid wages.

Both countries have agreed to boost protective measures for migrants.

Among other things, workers will be allowed to quit before the end of their contracts if their employer is abusive, and insurance coverage will be provided for unpaid wages.

More than 700,000 Filipinos work in the kingdom, most of whom are domestic and construction workers, according to latest official data.

Millions of Filipinos work abroad due to low wages or lack of jobs in their own country of 110mn people.

The money they send back to their families helps prop up the economy.

AFP



Mohammed bin Salman (AFP)

## Iran forces shoot dead three protesters in Mahsa Amini’s home province

Paris, France - Iranian security forces shot dead at least three people on Saturday in the western province of Kurdistan in the latest deadly protests sparked by the death of Mahsa Amini, a rights group said.

The country's clerical leadership under Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is facing its biggest challenge since the Islamic Revolution of 1979, in two months of violent demonstrations following Amini's death in custody on September 16.

The authorities have responded with a crackdown that Oslo-based group Iran Human Rights says has left dead at least 342 people, half a dozen already sentenced to death and more than 15,000 arrested.

On Saturday, Hengaw, a Norway-based rights group which monitors abuses in Kurdish areas, told AFP that ‘the government’s repressive forces opened fire on protesters in the town of Divandarreh, killing at least three civilians’.

Protesters have been killed in 22 of Iran’s 31 provinces, IHR said on Wednesday, including 123 in Sistan-Baluchistan and 32 in Amini's home province of Kurdistan.

Amini, a 22-year-old Iranian of Kurdish origin, died three days after her arrest in Tehran by the notorious morality police over an alleged breach of the Islamic republic's mandatory hijab headscarf law.

**Protester’s corpse ‘seized’**

Protests raged overnight in the town of Bukan in Kurdistan, where Revolutionary Guards opened fire on family members mourning a slain protester and taking his body from hospital before burying it in an undisclosed location, Hengaw said.

Activists accuse Iran's security forces of carrying out secret burials of protesters they have killed, to prevent more violence from flaring at their funerals.

“Last night, after (IRGC) Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps forces attacked Shahid Gholi Pur Hospital in Bukan, they seized Shahryar Mohammadi’s body and buried him secretly,” Hengaw said, adding that the forces ‘opened fire on his family and inflicted injuries on at least five of them’.

Elsewhere, hundreds of mourners were seen marching on Saturday along a road near Mahabad in West Azerbaijan province for the funeral of Kamal Ahmadpour, a young man shot dead by the security forces, in a video published by the 1500tasvir monitor.

“The Islamic Republic of Iran's forces have significantly increased the use of lethal weapons in attacks on protesters in the past five days,” Hengaw told AFP.

The rights group said the security forces had killed at least 25 people in Kurdistan since Tuesday, when protesters thronged streets on the anniversary of a lethal 2019 crackdown known as ‘Bloody Aban’ - or Bloody November.

“Twenty-three people were killed by direct fire, one by torture, and one by knife stabs,” Hengaw said.

The state-run Iran newspaper on Saturday reported that 14 security personnel had been killed in the three days of protests called to mark the November 15 anniversary. Hundreds were killed in the 2019 crackdown on street violence that erupted over a hike in fuel prices.

**‘Deliberate silence’**

Iran’s foreign ministry hit out at the ‘deliberate silence of foreign promoters of chaos and violence in Iran in the face of... terrorist operations in several Iranian cities’.

“It is the duty of the international community and international assemblies to condemn the recent terrorist acts in Iran and not to provide a safe haven for extremists,” it added.

AFP



Iranians mourn in front of the coffins of people killed in a shooting attack, during their funeral in the city of Izeh in Iran's Khuzestan province, on Friday (AFP)

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# Kim oversees North Korean ICBM launch with his daughter in tow

Seoul, South Korea - North Korean leader Kim Jong Un oversaw a test of Pyongyang's newest intercontinental ballistic missile with his daughter in tow for the first time, state media reported on Saturday.

Declaring he would meet perceived US nuclear threats with nukes of his own, Kim supervised the launch on Friday of the black-and-white missile, which the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said was the Hwasong-17 - dubbed the 'monster missile' by analysts.

The launch of the 'new major strategic weapon system' was successful, KCNA said.

KCNA said Kim attended the launch together with his beloved daughter and wife, and state media images showed a beaming Kim accompanied by a young girl in a puffer jacket and red shoes as he walked in front of the missile.

North Korean state media has never mentioned Kim's children, and this was the first official confirmation that he had a daughter, experts said.

KCNA's report on Saturday did not name the daughter, however.



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un walking with his daughter as he inspects a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) 'Hwasong Gun 17', ahead of its launch at Pyongyang International Airport on Friday (AFP)

## 'The fourth generation'

The most significant takeaway from Friday's ICBM launch is 'the permanence of the Kim regime's weapons programme, because it is so integral to Kim's own survival and the continuity of his family's reign', Soo Kim, a former CIA analyst now with the RAND Corporation, told AFP.

With the state media coverage, 'we have seen with our own eyes the fourth generation of the Kim family', she said.

Kim - the grandson of North Korea's founding leader Kim Il Sung and the third generation of the Kim family to lead the country - married his wife Ri Sol Ju, in 2009, according to South Korea's spy agency.

She gave birth to their first

child the following year, with their second and third born in 2013 and 2017, the agency has said.

The only previous confirmation of the children's existence had come from former NBA star Dennis Rodman, who claimed he met a baby daughter of Kim's called Ju Ae during a 2013 visit to North Korea.

The daughter revealed in the

photographs is presumed to be Ju Ae, who is likely Kim's second child, Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute in South Korea told AFP.

## Kim's warning

KCNA said on Saturday that Kim Jong Un slammed 'hysterical aggression war drills', and said that if the United States continued to make threats, Pyongyang would 'resolutely react to nukes with nuclear weapons and to total confrontation with all-out confrontation'.

North Korea has conducted a record-breaking blitz of launches in recent weeks.

Pyongyang - and Moscow - have repeatedly blamed them on Washington's moves to boost the protection it offers to allies Seoul and Tokyo.

Fears have grown that the launches are building up to a nuclear test.

KCNA said the latest missile hit a maximum altitude of 6,040.9km (3,750 miles) and flew 999.2km, matching estimates by Seoul and Tokyo on Friday.

AFP

# Xi, Harris call for open channels in latest meeting

Bangkok, Thailand - Chinese President Xi Jinping and US Vice President Kamala Harris called for open communication during a brief meeting on Saturday, days after his extensive talks with President Joe Biden aimed at keeping tensions in check.

Harris and Xi met during an Asia-Pacific summit in Bangkok where another US rival, Russia, saw itself isolated, with no top leader attending and a statement issued showing wide condemnation of its war in Ukraine.

Speaking to Xi on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, Harris reinforced Biden's message that 'we must maintain open lines of communication to responsibly manage the competition between our countries', a White House official said. On Monday, Biden and Xi met for three hours at a Group of 20 summit in Bali, the first in-person talks between the leaders of the world's two largest economies since they each became president.

Chinese state media quoted Xi as telling Harris that his meeting with Biden was 'strategic and constructive, and has important



US VP Kamala Harris (AFP)

guiding significance for China-US relations in the next stage'.

"It is hoped that the two sides will further enhance mutual understanding, reduce misunderstanding and misjudgement, and jointly promote the return of China-US relations to a healthy and stable track," added Xi, who is on only his second overseas trip since the pandemic.

US and Chinese officials have both put a positive spin on the renewal of diplomacy, while stopping short of predicting any substantive resolution of issues dividing them. Xi and Biden agreed that Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit China early next year, the first visit by a top US diplomat since 2018.

AFP

# NATO bid a 'natural' step', says Finland

Manama, Bahrain - Finland's application to join NATO was the 'natural step' to take following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the Nordic country's foreign minister told a conference in Bahrain on Saturday. Finland and Sweden dropped decades of military non-alignment and scrambled to become NATO members in May, after Russia's war. All 30 NATO member states except Hungary and Turkey have ratified Finland's accession, which requires unanimous approval. Hungary has said it will support Finland's bid.

The decision to apply for NATO membership is 'a result of the drastic change in our security environment', Finland's top

diplomat Pekka Haavisto told the annual Manama Dialogue conference in Bahrain.

"Applying for NATO membership was... a natural step for us to take," he added.

In 2004, Finland said it would take the so-called 'NATO option', in the event that its security environment 'changes dramatically', the foreign minister said.

"And what would be more dramatic for a change than the attack of your neighbour towards a country of 50mn people?" Haavisto asked.

On Friday, Finland unveiled a plan to increase security on its border with Russia, including a 200km (124-mile) fence.

AFP

# Malaysia polls close with parties in close race

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia - Voting closed in Malaysia on Saturday with jailed ex-leader Najib Razak's scandal-hit ruling party seeking to cement its power in a tight race with Anwar Ibrahim's coalition.

The popular opposition leader campaigned on a promise to fight corruption in Southeast Asia's third-largest economy where people are struggling with soaring food prices.

There were long lines at polling centres across the country despite concerns about monsoon rains, and the voters AFP spoke to said they hoped for political stability and economic improvement. "I want a strong government and a stable economy so that there will be more job opportunities for the youth,"



Malaysia's Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob and his wife Muhaini Zainal Abidin cast their vote in Bera, Pahang state, on Saturday (AFP)

Nurul Hazwani Firdon, a 20-year-old tutor, said as she went to cast her ballot in the rural town of Bera in Pahang state.

Social media posts showed people lining up in knee-deep waters outside a voting centre in

Sarawak state on Borneo island.

One video on Twitter showed an old woman being carried on someone's back into a flooded polling place.

The Election Commission said turnout for the 21mn registered

voters was at 70 per cent as of 4pm (0800GMT), two hours before the polls closed.

Najib's United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) usually dominates Malaysian politics but it suffered a humiliating defeat in the 2018 general election after a massive corruption scandal at state fund 1MDB.

The former prime minister, who was at the centre of the 1MDB storm, is currently serving a 12-year jail term.

Because of infighting in the two successive governments since 2018, UMNO crept back into power last year despite lingering corruption allegations, and is seeking a stronger mandate in Saturday's election - called 10 months ahead of schedule.

## Anwar's dream

The UMNO-dominated ruling Barisan Nasional bloc is up against Anwar and his allies.

With age catching up, this may be Anwar's last chance to fulfil his long-standing dream of leading Malaysia.

"A win today would certainly be gratifying after more than two decades of fighting to win the hearts and minds of the people," Anwar, 75, told AFP before casting his vote in Penang state.

He added he was 'cautiously confident' that his Pakatan Harapan (Alliance of Hope) could secure a simple majority in the 222-member parliament.

Caretaker Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, from the ruling coalition, cast his vote in Bera.

AFP

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*Guzel Zakir, an Uyghur artist hailing from Almaty, South Kazakhstan, presents a unique solo exhibition titled 'Monobrow' at Matti Sirvio Art Gallery, drawing attention to an ancient cultural symbol of fertility that has been a great source of inspiration to the artist*



SOLO EXHIBITION

# Diva Monobrow

Hubert Vaz

The title of the exhibition and the exhibits on the entrance promise an element of intrigue at Matti Sirvio Art Gallery, in Jawharat al Shatti, where a solo exhibition by a visiting artist from Kazakhstan opened last evening. The theme deals with a unique aspect of facial beauty that is familiar in the Arab world, with cultural roots that run deep.

The exhibition, curated by Hungarian designer and artist Anetta Szabo, was inaugurated under the auspices of H E Najmedin Muhametali, Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It will continue till December 19.

"I always draw a monobrow on the images of my paintings. This is the most recognisable element of visual language. In Almaty (in south Kazakhstan), people call me 'Diva Monobrow', and I like it. The monobrow symbol is of special importance to me and is part of a personal story. Although it is a beautiful, unique part of my culture, I felt I needed to reject it due to certain trauma in my childhood," says Guzel who later learnt that her monobrow was an important cultural code that revealed the answers to questions about her identity.

She further said, "Today, it has become a significant resource and inspiration for my art. The monobrow - fused eyebrows - dates back to an ancient symbol of fertility. They embody the ideal notion of a woman."

She pointed out, just as the cow has symbolised fertility and abundance - the horns resemble the crescent moon, and its milk, the Milky Way - so also, the crescent shape moon, the monobrow, marked on the forehead of the female became an important central feature for eastern women.

## Traditional honour

Outgrown eyebrows became quite popular and gained high status in society. Even today, thick outgrown eyebrows are viewed as a sign of womanhood. In Uyghur



“**May be today, the monobrow is seen as stigma, but for me, it is like an ancient silken thread linking me to my ethnic and culture identity**

**GUZEL ZAKIR**  
The artist



“**I am amazed by how her art and her life is so woven together, her genuine love for people, her care for their joys and sorrows is revealed in her works**

**ANETTA SZABO**  
The curator



culture, the traditional honour for fertility still holds strong today as we continue to 'sacredly' join our brows with dye, Guzel explains, adding, "It is common for Turkic women to have eyebrow dyeing ceremonies, parties or secret gatherings.

"The ladies in my family still embrace this ancient practice. My mother would squeeze out the juice of 'osma' (woad plants) with her hands and make a paint brush from cotton and broom sticks. She would then sit my sisters and me down and join our brows with the dye. It would be almost impossible to wash off the green dye. I would often get mocked by my friends for this," she said, also wondering whether inspiration for painting did come to her through this act.

Though she never liked her monobrow, she later realised that it was part of her culture, and understood its significance. "The more I researched this ancient practice, the more I learned about my history, my people, my family and ultimately, myself. A journey of self love and acceptance emerged... My monobrow is a story of internal decolonisation.

"May be today, the monobrow is seen as stigma, but for me, it is like an ancient silken thread linking me to my ethnic and cultural identity. The exhibition 'Monobrow' is about the significance of fused eyebrows in the culture of Uyghur women."

## Dialogue through art

On display are 12 paintings, one series of a ceramic composition, and a set of prints. In Oman on a short stay of three weeks, Guzel has been very impressed by the villages scenes, people, and the unique landscapes. She loved the topography - the sand, and the many different rock formations that create a great platform for artists.

"In my art, I focus on dialogue between women in art and dialogue through art. The value of women - encouraging women through art and evolving them into my art projects. Monobrow is an important symbol for me. From this topic, my journey of art began. I have exhibited on this topic in Almaty, Istanbul, and plan to continue my

research and work on this topic in the future. It connects people, and has greatly affected my becoming an artist."

About beauty in the Arab world, she noted that there is beauty that is concealed. "Many Arab women have a monobrow, therefore, I feel connected with them instantly, as I consider it an aspect of beauty in its own special way. I feel my story could be their story - there are strong connections."

## Language of women

Curator of the exhibition, Anetta Szabo said, "Besides her cultural background and the local culture, Guzel's paintings touch human issues, concerns, and values that connect to all of us, regardless of culture. Paintings like 'Pure', 'Judges', 'Sacrificial'... refer to our human existence.

"Knowing about Guzel's highly professional background - having exhibited in Istanbul, Almaty, several solo exhibitions - during these last weeks I had this incredible privilege of following her work from the first day till the last nail on the wall. I am amazed by how her art and her life is so woven together, her genuine love for people, her care for their joys and sorrows is revealed in her works. The way she values people in her art was proven in her life in Oman through these weeks, and now continues in the exhibition."

About the paintings on display - half of which were inspired during her residency in Oman and half from her earlier work in Kazakhstan - Anetta said, "She has painted paintings inspired by Oman, besides sharing her own story and culture. Many of her subjects closely relate to Arab women - stories of middle-eastern women. Guzel speaks the language of women here, without knowing Arabic."

Of the works on display, Anetta considers 'Sacrificial', 'Becoming the Same' and 'Hidden Beauties' the strongest pieces. "Sacrificial because of the strong expression on the concept of sacrificial act (that might be disappearing in a world, where people tend to love themselves more...) I value this topic greatly, and Guzel has expressed this secret value in a beautiful way. 'Hidden Beauties' because of her own story behind it. And 'Becoming the Same' because of the strong, creative visual expression," she asserted.

Acknowledging Guzel's inner change of acceptance and love for her culture as strong aspects of her personality, she said, "I love the flow of Guzel's life and her art. She has gone through transformation where she was encouraged by several people, and now she has the strength to encourage other women through her art and walk boldly in her calling as a visual artist."